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Sahitya Akademi

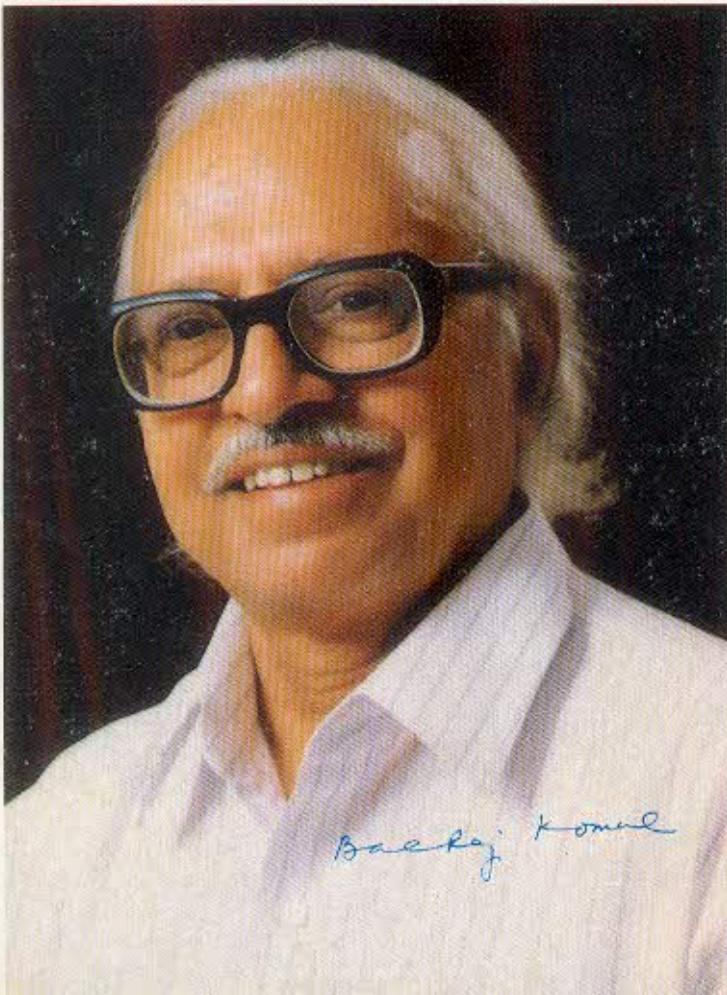


India International Centre

invite you to

meet the author

Balraj Komal



BALRAJ Komal, one of the leading Urdu poets of to-day, is a poet of rare sensitivity, warmth of feeling and profound human understanding. Born in 1928 at Sialkot in Pakistan, he took his Master's degree in English Literature. He started writing at the age of nineteen when he accidentally discovered himself as a poet. A serious reader of Urdu and English literatures, Balraj Komal published his first poem "Akeli" in 1948, which was an instant success and brought him fame. When he discovered the poet in him, he picked up whatever experience of every day life came his way and rendered it into poetry in a language that was free of clichés and the traditional ornateness of the Urdu language.

Balraj Komal's first book of poetry, *Meri Nazmein* appeared

in 1954; *Rishta-e-Dil* (1963), *Safar Mudam Safar* (1969), *Nazad-e-Sang* (1975), *Parindon Bhara Aasmaan* (1984), *Sahr Mein Ek Tahrir* (1987) and *Agla Waraq* (1996) followed it. Though he experimented with *ghazal* and *nazm*, initially he discovered that his preference was for *nazm*. His poems won deeper and wider appreciation in the fifties and sixties when modernist trends gained acceptance.

Balraj Komal has a special fondness for the innocent, particularly children. A good number of his poems are about children. "Mera Pota," "Kaghaz Ki Nao," "Nannha Shahsawar" "Yeh Zard Bachchey," "Talib-i-Ilm," and "Lambi Kali Jheel," are a few of the poems which are prominent in this category.



Receiving the Sahitya Akademi Award 1985 from Prof. V.K. Gokak



With his children

Balraj Komal is a keen observer of life. He is more interested in the present moment — its hazards, its challenges, and its pathos rather than the gory past. Love, an important aspect of human relationship, has been dealt with by him extensively as well as intensively.

He is a gifted poet, capable of conveying the sincerity of his emotions to an admirable degree. Also, he is progressive in the real sense of the word. His poetry takes us to a world of new meanings.

His capacity to render experience into the language of poetry through metaphor, image and symbol instead of 'saying' and 'stating' things has sustained him over the years in spite of some peripheral difficulties. He is a poet of the people, of human beings. Komal writes from reactions rather than thematic pressure. He describes himself as a poet of "immediate experience". "What has sustained me as a poet over

the years is my active interest and involvement in the life around me," says Balraj Komal.

Balraj Komal's literary career as a poet, critic, fiction writer and translator is spread over the last five decades. He has by now over 17 books to his credit, including his translation and two volumes of anthologies of short stories edited by him. He has done some original writings in English and Hindi also. He published two collections of his critical essays, *Aankhen aur Paon* (1981), *Adab Ki Talash* (1985) and a book of short stories and a novelette *Haryali Ka Ek Tukra*. His perceptive criticism covers poetry, fiction and various aspects of contemporary literature. He has presented papers on different aspects of Urdu literature and miscellaneous literary problems at the seminars organised by several Indian universities and leading literary organisations and also



*In Oslo at a poetic symposia,
1990*



Presiding over a session of Urdu Academy seminar, 1997

at SAARC Cultural Festival 1992 at Jaipur and Calcutta.

He is a renowned translator too and has translated several writings from Urdu into English and vice versa. About his experience as a translator Sri Komal says he always tries to “strike a balance between the conflicting individualities of two languages. Instead of creating artificial rhyme schemes and rhyme patterns, I have preferred prose rendering.” While talking about Balraj Komal’s skill as a translator, Shiv K. Kumar says, “Balraj Komal has shown (through his translations) that he can manipulate both Urdu and English with the same imaginative skill. In fact, so assured is his mastery over the English language that I cannot help feeling that Komal could have also taken to writing

verse in this language and emerged as one of our major Indian-English poets”. He has organised and conducted three workshops on translations.

As a poet of distinction, Sri Balraj Komal has won several awards and honours which include U.P. Urdu Academy Award, Mir Academy Award, Delhi Urdu Academy Award, Sahitya Akademi Award, Firaq Foundation Award 1995 and Government of India Senior Fellowship. He has travelled widely to participate in literary symposia as mostly a delegate from India. He has served in several committees of literary bodies and is presently a member of the Executive Board of the Sahitya Akademi and Governing Council of the Urdu Academy.



A Select Bibliography

Poetry

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Rishta-e-Dil, 1963
Nariyal Ke Per (Selected poems in Devnagri script), 1967
Safar Mudam Safar, 1969
Intikhab, 1971
Nizad-e-Sang, 1975
Parindon Bhara Aasman, 1984
Shahr Mein Ek Tahrir, 1987
Selected Poems (In English translation), 1989
Akeli (Selected poems in Urdu), 1989
Parindon Bhara Aasman (Hindi translation), 1989
A Sky Full of Birds and Other Poems (English translation of *Parindon Bhara Aasman*), 1992

Agla Waraq, 1996

Short Stories

Aankhen Aur Paon, 1981

Novelette

Haryali Ka Ek Tukra (In Hindi), 1968

Literary Criticism

Adab Ki Talash, 1985
Tawatur Aur Tasalsul, 1995

Translations (Into Urdu)

Wonders of Space by M. Sunder Rajan, 1980
Toru Dutt by P. Sengupta, 1985
The Serpent and the Rope by Raja Rao, 1996



At House of Cultures of the World with Indian and Pakistani writers, 1991

A Chronology

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|-------------|---|-----------|--|
| 1928 | Born at Uddowar — Sialkot (now in Pakistan) | 1977 | Mir Academy Imtiaz-e-Mir Award |
| 1948 | Graduated from Panjab University Published his first poem "Akeli" | 1985 | Sahitya Akademi Award for his collection of his poems <i>Parindon Bhara Aasman</i> |
| 1951 | Took his Masters degree in English Literature from Panjab University | 1986 | Retired from Directorate of Education |
| 1952 | Joined Directorate of Education, Delhi | 1988 | Visited Iraq and Mauritius |
| 1954 | Married Gargi Published his first collection of poems: <i>Meri Nazmein</i> | 1989 | Govt. of India Senior Fellowship |
| 1969 | Govt. of India, Ministry of Education Award for his Hindi novelette: <i>Haryali Ka Ek Tukra</i> | 1990 | Visited Norway and Denmark |
| 1971 & 1982 | Uttar Pradesh Urdu Academy Award for his collection of poems <i>Safar Mudam Safar</i> and then for his collection of short stories <i>Aankhen Aur Paon</i> , respectively | 1991 | Visited Germany, Denmark, Sweden and England |
| | | 1993-1997 | Member, Advisory Board — Urdu Sahitya Academy |
| | | 1998-2000 | Member, Executive Board, Sahitya Akademi |
| | | 1998-1999 | Member, Governing Council, Urdu Academy |



Exchanging greetings with the then President of India Giani Zail Singh