

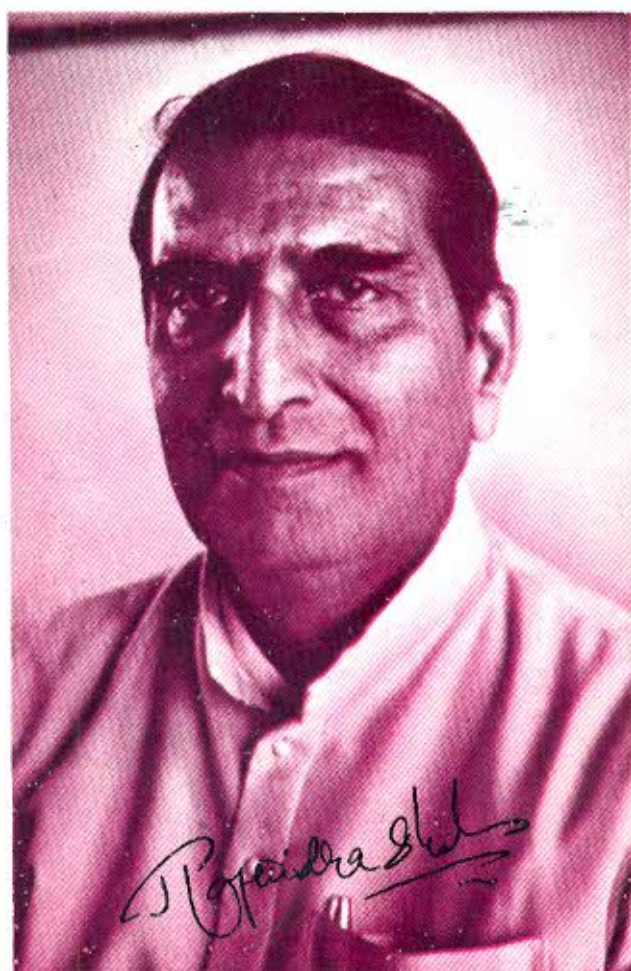
19 November 1995



Sahitya Akademi
&
N. C. P. A.

invite you to
meet the author

Rajendra Shah



Aimless

I wander in the world fascinated.

In slightly dirty clothes.

Sometimes the fragrance of flowers

Embrace me,

Sometimes calls me

Sweet cooling of a cuckoo;

I am maddened

Seeing the colourful world

I must go where my mind leads

clad with love

... ..

I enjoy with everybody

And yet remain I, at the end.

Rajendra Keshavlal Shah prominent lyric poet in Gujarati and one of the pioneers of the new trend in Gujarati poetry in the post Independence period expresses himself so ardently in his said poem which is included in his maiden collection of poems 'Dhvani'. He was born in 1913 at Kapadvanaj in district Kaira. Having lost his father at the tender age of two his mother brought him up in the strict religious tradition of the family. Up to Matric he studied in his home town. Later he joined Wilson College, Bombay and Graduated from the M.S. University, Baroda. He has had varying experiences as teacher, grocer, partner in a business firm and owner of a printing press.

During his stay at Baroda, Shah came into close contact with Sri Upendracharya, whom he accepted as his Guru and nourished the better vision of life reflected in his poetry. But it was his stay at Ahmedabad which was important in moulding him as a poet. Here he started to attend the 'Buddhsabha', a poetry club run by Bachubhai Rawat,

the editor of *Kumar*. In poetry Nanalal and Kalapi in his early years and in later years Umashankar, Sundaram and Sridharani greatly influenced him.

Rajendra Shah's first collection of poems *Dhvani* (Cosmic Sound) created quite a stir when it was first published in 1951, though his first poem was published in 1933 in *Wilsonian*, the magazine of the Wilson College, Bombay. There are 11 collections of poems to his credit - *Dhvani* (1951), *Andolan* (1951), *Shruti* (1957), *Morpinchh* (1960), *Shant Kolahal* (1962), *Chitrana* (1967), *Kshan je Chirantan* (1968), *Vishadne Sad* (1968), *Madhyama* (1978), *Udgiti* (1979) and *Ikshana* (1979).

Patralekha (a volume of epistles) is one of his latest works. His collection *Vishadne Sad* shows his commitment to society at large, but it is the commitment of an artist, not that of a social reformer or a political worker. But his main pursuit is to seek beauty and sing of it. Umashankar Joshi rightly called him 'the poet enamoured by beauty'.

Shah excels in songs dealing with such universal subjects as love, nature, God, death, urbanity, modern civilization,



myths, politics and the simple beauty of rural life. His intensity of emotion, innovation in form and artistic expression made him a significant poet. A sensitive observer of life he has experimented with various forms of lyrics, such as songs, sonnets, elegy, ode, ghazals, haiku, etc. He has also tried to write a verse-play. His lyrics are unbeaten in the beauty of words, musicality and lucidity of rhythm. The mystical tone of his poetry is an extension of the poetry of great medieval masters as Narsimha, Kabir, Akho, etc. As a creative artist he has sustained his interest through poetry in all the vicissitudes of life.

Shah was awarded the 'Kumar Chandrak' in the year 1947 for the best contribution of poems to the *Kumar*. Till now he has bagged almost all coveted prizes and awards such as Ranjitram Suvarna Chandrak in 1956, Sahitya Akademi Award in 1964, Mahakavi Nanalal Prize in 1968, Narmad Chandrak in 1977, Aurobindo Suvarna Chandrak by Gujarati



With his wife Manjulaben

Sahitya Parishad in 1989, Bharatiya Bhasha Parishad Award in 1985, Dhanaji Kanaji Suvarna Chandrak in 1986, Murdhanya Sahityakar Samman by Gujarat Sahitya Akademi in 1993, Narsimha Mehta Award by Gujarat Government in 1994 and many other prizes from various institutions.

Shah started the poets' meet named 'Kavilok', when he reached Bombay, to encourage new young poets and also started the publication of *Kavilok* the first ever bi-monthly of Gujarati poetry in 1957, which is still coming out regularly. He is the managing trustee of 'Kavilok Trust' and the President of Gujarati Sahitya Parishad, the oldest literary body in Gujarati.

Receiving Sahitya Akademi award 1964 from Dr. Zakir Hussain





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With his friends

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RAJENDRA SHAH
by Daksha Vyas, Ahmedabad:
Adarsh Prakashan, 18.5 Cm.

A Chronology

- 1913 - January 28: Born at Kapadvanaj, Gujarat
- 1930 - Discontinued studies: arrested in Civil Disobedience Movement and sentenced to jail.
- 1931 - Married Manjula Agrawala.
- 1933 - Joined Wilson College, Bombay for higher studies.

- 1934 - Joined Baroda College ,Baroda, to continue higher studies:
- 1937 - B.A.(Philosophy) M.S.University,Baroda.
- 1938-44 - At Ahmedabad; a school teacher, a grocer.
- 1945 - Shifted to Bombay
- 1947 - Kumar Chandrak awarded.
- 1951 - Published First collection of poems DHVANI and second ANDOLAN;DHVANI was awarded first prize by the then state Govt.of Bombay.
- 1954 - Strated his own printing press 'Lipini'.
- 1956 - Awarded Ranajitram Suvarna Chandrak.
- 1957 - Published 'Kavilok', the everfirst bi- monthly of Gujarati poetry.
- 1960 - 'MORPINCHH' - a collection of children poetry published and awarded first prize by the then state Govt.of Bombay.
- 1963 - Sahitya Akademi Award for his collection of poetry 'SHANT KOLAHAL'.
- 1968 - Mahakavi Nanalal Paritoshik for his collection of poetry 'KSHAN JE CHIRANTAN'
- 1970 - Voluntary retirement from the business.
- 1977 - Narmad Chandrak for his collection of poetry 'MADHYAMA'
- 1979 - Managing Trustee -Kavilok Trust.
- 1980 - Aurobindo Suvarna Chandrak by Gujarat Sahitya Parishad, Ahmedabad
- 1983 - Published 'SANKALIT KAVITA' an omnibus volume of poems till date.
- 1985 - Honoured by Bharatiya Bhasha Parishad, Calcutta.
- 1986 - Dhanji Kanji Suvarna Chandrak, Gujarat Sahitya Sabha, Ahmedabad
- 1992 - 'Murdhanya Sahityakar Sanman' Gujarat Sahitya Akademi, Ahmedabad.
- 1993 - 'Narsimha Mehta Purskar by; Gujarat Government, Elected President of 'Gujarati Sahitya Parishad', Ahmedabad.

Being honoured by Ritubhai Parikh

