

MEN OF LETTERS SERIES
MAJEED AMJAD
(1914 - 1974)
COMMEMORATIVE POSTAGE STAMP
June 29, 2017

SALIENT FEATURES

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Printing Technology	: Litho Offset
Paper	: 100 GSM Crescent and Star Water Mark Paper
Gum	: PVA
Quantity	: 0.1 Million (One Lac)
Designer	: Naveed Awan
Printer	: Pakistan Security Printing Corporation : Karachi.



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Majeed Amjad enjoys a distinct position amongst the most celebrated Urdu poets of the 20th century. Critics have often regarded him as a "philosophical poet of depth and sensitivity". His poetry has been translated in several languages and his poem have been sung by many noted artists of Pakistan.

Amjad was born on June 29, 1914 in Jhang, a small town in the Pakistani province of Punjab into a reputable literary family and completed his initial education there. He then moved to Lahore and received his bachelor's degree in 1934 from Islamia College, Lahore. His first sustainable job as editor of a weekly journal *Urooj* ended in 1939. Thereafter, he qualified as inspector of civil supplies in the Department of Food and Agriculture in 1944 and served till his retirement in 1972. He lived in Sahiwal for the most part of his life. He died a lonely death on May 11, 1974. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto the then Prime Minister of Pakistan approved scholarship in recognition of his matchless poetic talent and the scholarship was received by his widow in 1974.

Amjad's first collection of poetry, *Shab-e-Rafta*, was published in 1958. This was published by *Naya Idara* in Lahore and was the only collection published in his lifetime even though he had written steadily throughout his life. After his death, the manuscripts of his unpublished poetry were preserved by Javed Qureshi who was then the Deputy Commissioner of Sahiwal. In 1976, Javed Qureshi and others published a second collection of his poetry titled "*Shab-e-Rafta ke Baad*". It was not until 1989 that the Urdu critic Khawaja Muhammad Zakariya edited and published a complete collection of his works called "*Kuliyat-e-Majeed Amjad*".

Amjad's life has been the subject of several biographical essays and even a full length biography. Critics such as Dr. Nasir Abbas Nayyar believes that Amjad influenced, more than any other poet, the '**nazm**' (poem) written in Pakistan after the late sixties. In his book on the life and works of Amjad, Dr. Nayyar observes that Amjad gave importance to the neglected things in his surroundings and it was he who instilled aesthetics of locality in his poetry. He didn't sing paeans of grand narrative about a hollow world either. What he did was that he focused on the ordinary. His work covers varied themes like the tribulations of survival in the period between the two World Wars, colonization, Partition of the sub-continent, socio-economic disparity and so on.

Amjad bravely experimented with metrical forms and rhythms. His vocabulary was extremely diverse and universal. There is an earthiness in his verse, a sense of grounding with the here and now. The Slow and soothing lilt of his

signature rhythmic style and choice of words reflective of the local culture set his work apart from the rest.

Amjad's poetry is excessively subjective. It is rare to come across a poet who penned so many poems about his personal angst and failure, and who has such a low opinion of himself. Some such melancholic poems include: '*Mere Khuda Mere Dil*', '*Autograph*', '*Nigah-e-Bazgashi*' and '*Munich*'.

To his credit Amjad has the achievement of introducing novel subjects previously unexplored through poetry. He wrote poems on environment conservation years before it became a fashionable topic. His innate sensitivity enabled him to empathise with trees, rivers, flowers, and birds in a manner that makes nature appear as an entity that is alive. Poems like '*Jalsah*' and '*Kuch Din Pehle*', for example, lament over cut trees and polluted highways.

Amjad was not an ideological poet affiliated with a particular group. He allowed none to use his poetry as a means of propagating their philosophy and even the Progressive Movement or '*Jadidiyat*' of the 1960's didn't have a bearing on his style of work. Amjad's style was not steeped in symbolism, allusions and abstractions like the '*Jadid nazm*' (modern poem). He tailored his own ideology of compassion and humanity and made his own distinctive path.

Amjad was known as a quiet and reticent personality whose introverted nature manifested no desire for self-marketing. His financial struggles; a difficult marriage; and negligible recognition of his work during his lifetime cast a sorrowful shadow over his entire life. Despite a very concise list of influential advocates of his literary talent that he had during his lifetime, Amjad's popularity has only increased ever since his death.

A number of theses on Ph.D., M.Phil and M.A level highlighting different aspects of Majeed Amjad's life and literary achievements have been written in various universities of Pakistan. The details of research work done by various scholars on this unique poet are as follows:

● Dr. Aamir Sohail	Bauhuddin Zakaryia University	Ph.D
● Ummat-ul-Mateen	Quaid-i-Azam University	M.Phil
● Tabinda Gul	Bauhuddin Zakaryia University	M.A
● Farid Kanwal	Punjab University	M.A
● Fozia Ashraf	Punjab University	M.A
● Tasneem Naz	Punjab University	M.A
● Nawazish Ali	Punjab University	M.A
● Mohammad Zubair Khalid	Punjab University	M.A

On Birth Anniversary of Majeed Anjad , a commemorative postage stamp of Rs. 8/- denomination is being issued by Pakistan Post on June 29, 2017.

TERMS OF SALE

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