

Classic Poetry Series

**Inshaullah Khan Insha
- poems -**

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Inshaullah Khan Insha(1752-1817)

Inshaullah Khan Insha is one of the leading master-poets of Urdu. His contributions to the language and literature is more than the contributions of a mere poet. He was also an excellent prose writer and a grammarian. He had a superb sense of humour and through his wit has overwhelmed his contemporary poets in various verbal encounters.

 Biography

His name was Inshaullah Khan and the nom de plume was Insha. His father, Syed Hakeem Meer Mashallah Khan, was a leading tabeeb (physician) of his time. His ancestors had migrated to India from Najaf. His great grandfather, Syed Rasheeduddin would go walking to Mecca every year to perform Haj. His son (Insha's grandfather), Syed Noorullah, had gone back to Najaf and stayed there for quite some time. Insha's father, Meer Mashallah Khan was born in Najaf itself.

Syed Noorullah returned to India during the reign of Farrukh Siyar, sometime in the second decade of the eighteenth century. He had a reputation as a tabeeb. Consequently, when the king fell ill he was summoned to treat him. When the king got well because of the treatment of Syed Noorullah, he conferred on him the title of Nawab Khan Bahadur and rewarded him with substantial amount of gold and jewels. Insha's father, Meer Mashallah Khan, too became an exceptional tabeeb and thus, earned lot of wealth and fame. In the aftermath of destruction of Delhi caused by the invasion of Nadir Shah in 1739, Meer Mashallah Khan was forced to leave Delhi. He went to Murshidabad and joined the court of Ali Vardi Khan Mahabat. Besides being a first-rate tabeeb, Meer Mashallah Khan was also a poet and would use Masdar as his nom de plume. He had married twice and Insha was born to his second wife in December, 1752, at Murshidabad.

His father took special care to give Insha the best education that was prevalent in those days. Beginning from the reading of Quran, Insha acquired deep knowledge of Arabic and Farsi. Later on he also learnt Urdu, Hindi, Punjabi, Bengali, Turkish and Pushtu languages. He went to Faizabad along with his father when he was about 12. Within four years of his arrival in Faizabad, he completed his deewan (collection of poetry). His mastery over various languages and his poetic talent facilitated him becoming a courtier of Nawab Asaf-ud-Daulah in the Lucknow Court. In 1780, he went to Delhi to join the Cort of the king, Shah Alam Sani Aaftab, and stayed there for two years. Since the political situation in Delhi

was chaotic and the king himself was facing the financial crunch, Insha went back to Lucknow. The son of the king, Mirza Suleiman Shikoh, too shifted to Lucknow as his father, Shah Aalam Sani Aaftab, was dethroned and blinded by Ghulam Qadir Rohila. Insha became a companion of Mirza Suleiman Shikoh in Lucknow. He also helped a renowned contemporary poet, Mus-hafi to join the court of Suleiman Shikoh. Subsequently, an intense rivalry developed between the two poets and in this connection various anecdotes got recorded in the history of Urdu poetry. Insha died On May 19, 1817, at Lucknow.

 As a Poet

He was a highly skilled poet. He would compose poetry eulogizing the beauty and pleasant things of life. He had a razor-sharp mind that he put to creative use in composing poetry. His wit and sense of humour was legendary that made him very famous during his lifetime. We can easily trace the impact of tasawwuf (mysticism) and profound thoughts in his poetry. He, by temperament, was an optimist and, therefore, he wouldn't compose any poem on any tragic or pessimistic topic. His entire poetry is the reflection of his disposition. Furthermore, except for a brief period at the fag-end of his life he never faced any financial difficulty. Thus the major portion of his poetry consists of themes like love, romanticism, beauty, flowers, nightingales, fun, humour etc. He was also a well read person and in some of his poems his knowledge about different disciplines is also on display. Urdu. Insha died in Lucknow in 1817.

Achha Jo Khafa Hum Se Ho Tum Ae Sanam Achha

Inshaullah Khan Insha

Ghazal 1- English

All the friends are prepared and ready to move on
Many have already left, the remaining are also ready

O wind of springtime! Don't annoy [me] and move on your way
You intend to play whereas I feel wretched

Because of feebleness I feel, for hours together
To rest wherever I find the shadow of a wall

Is it a new manner of coyness you've learnt [O my sweetheart!]
Or else you've sat besides me a hundred of times

O Insha! Who gets respite from the turns of fortune!
It's blessing indeed that a few friends are still with us!

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'Insha' Jii Utho Ab Kuuch Karo Is Shahar Me.N Jii Kaa Lagaanaa Kyaa

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Kamar Baandhhe Huwe Chalne Ko

Inshaullah Khan Insha

Khayaal Kiijiye Kyaa Kaam Aaj Mai.N Ne Kiyaa

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