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Sahitya Akademi

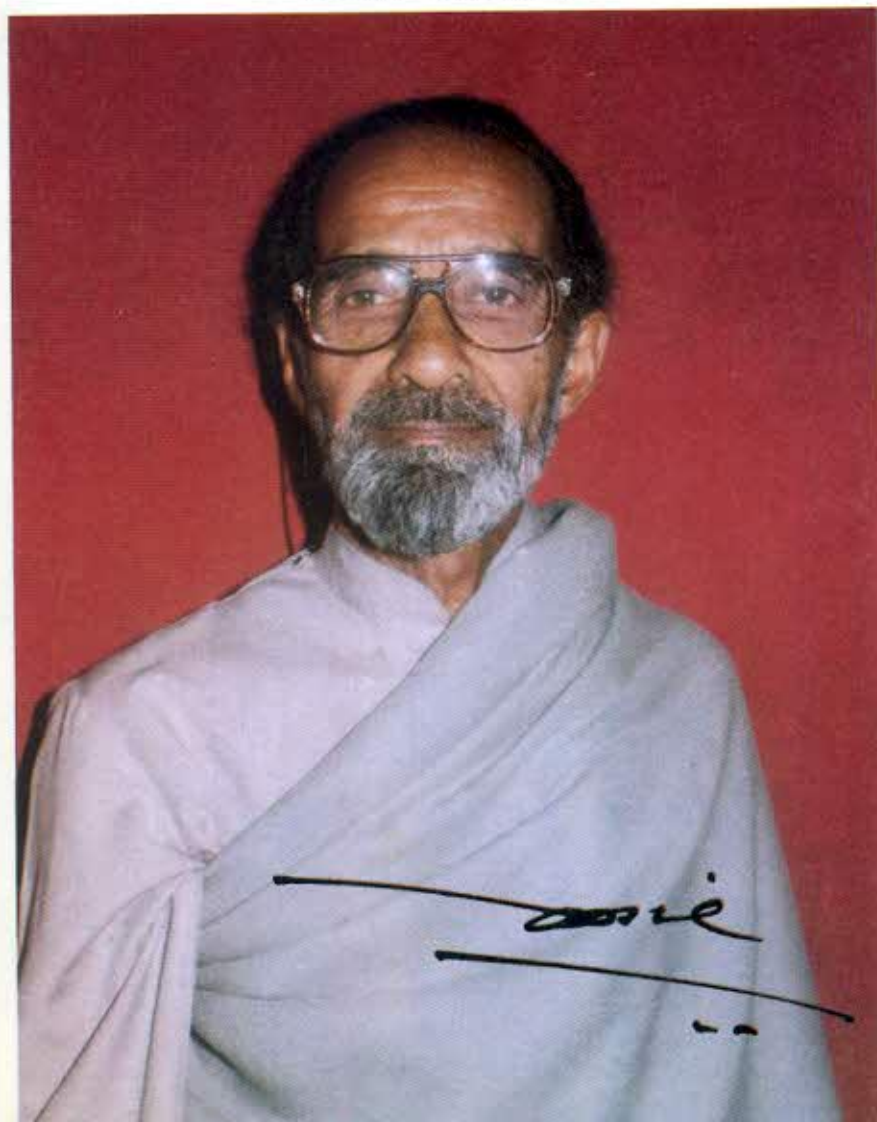


J&K Academy of Art, Culture  
and languages

invite you to

**meet the author**

**Amin Kamil**





**A**min Kamil, along with Dinanath Nadim and Rehman Rahi, constitutes the trinity of Kashmiri poets who ushered in a new era in Kashmiri literature in the post-Mahjoor period. They have been true renaissance figures. Their influence on contemporary Kashmiri literature goes to the extent of defining it. Kamil was born in 1924 at Kaprin, a village in South Kashmir. He graduated in Arts from the Punjab University and took his degree in Law from the Aligarh Muslim University. He joined the Bar in 1947 and continued to practise Law till 1949, when he was appointed a Lecturer

in Sri Pratap College, Srinagar. He was closely associated with the writers' movement of that time and under its influence switched over from Urdu to Kashmiri as his medium of expression. He joined the State Cultural Academy when it was set up in 1958 and was appointed the Convenor for Kashmiri language. He later became Editor for Kashmiri and edited the two journals of the Cultural Academy – *Sheeraza* and *Son Adab* with distinction for many years. He retired from the service of the Cultural Academy in 1979.

Kamil, besides being an eminent poet and the foremost exponent of Kashmiri *Ghazal*, has also written short stories and a novel besides works of literary criticism. He has also written a number of plays and musicals for the radio. His critically edited collection of Sufi poetry (*Sufi Shair*, 3 vols., 1964-65) remains a definitive text and has been widely acclaimed. He has also edited the collected verse of Nund Rishi, and that of Habba Khatoon.



With Dina Nath Nadim and G.R. Santosh



*With Qurratulain Hyder*

In 1958 appeared his *Gati Manza Gaash* (Light amidst darkness) that, was inspired by the well-known observation of Mahatma Gandhi in the context of the aftermath of the partition of the Indian sub-continent in 1947, that in the midst of darkness prevailing everywhere he had found a ray of light in Kashmir alone. Kamil has attempted to provide this concept with blood and bone which, of course, is a highly exacting task. The heroine Fatima, an educated young Muslim maiden of a distant village, working as a school teacher in Baramulla, the scene of carnage committed by the tribal invaders, prefers to be known as the widow of Ramkrishan, an ugly and illiterate Hindu, who had given his life to protect her honour. It is the only Kashmiri novel that is based on historical events. With the arrival of *Gati manza gaash*, it may be said, the novel came to stay in Kashmiri.

Kamil is a master of the

Kashmiri *Ghazal* and has been instrumental in fashioning it into an entity distinct from its Urdu and Persian counterparts. His poetry is marked by freshness of sensibility, maturity of expression and striking technical innovation which together give him a diction uniquely his own. Kamil has also given us some memorable poems in the *Nazm* form.

Kamil edited an independent journal – *Naeb* – for some time. As a critic he



*Receiving Sahitya Akademi Award by President of India Dr. Zakir Husain in 1967*



*With his family*

has acquired wide recognition. He also helped create the modified alphabet presently used for Kashmiri language. Kamil has also contributed to the field of translation. His translation of Tagore's *Dak Ghar*, as also the poetry of Iqbal have been significant additions to the corpus of translated literature available in Kashmiri.

Kamil employs subtle humour with devastating effect in his poetry. Through it he mirrors contemporary life and makes a social comment on his milieu. It, however, is satire or humour that does not bruise, but heals. Kamil is metaphysical and introspective as well and in some ways represents the continuity of the quintessence of his own literary tradition minus its ponderousness. He has the quality of being simple as well as profound at the same time. This he does in a purely Kashmiri tenor. In spite of his erudition he has never fallen prey to the transplantation of an alien

metaphor, borrowing of a foreign concept or trend in literature.

Amin Kamil won the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1967 for his book of poems, *Laveh Te Praveh*. "What distinguishes this book from the poetry of the sixties is the conversational tone producing intimacy, blending of Persian and Kashmiri words and expressions, aphoristic comments on life, intermingling of satire and pathos, use of musically potent metres, masterly use of simile and image, oblique but esoteric expression, and finally the use of Persian and Indian mythological allusions", to quote Shafi Shauq. The style established in this anthology gets further refinement in Kamil's later collections of poetry, namely, *Beyi suy paan* (Again the Same Self, 1967) and *Padis pod t'shay* (One Foot Shadowing the Other, 1972).

Amin Kamil has influenced a whole generation of Kashmiri poets, in particular



*With G.R. Santosh and Krishan Chander*

the Ghazal writing poets. Many have tried to approximate his diction, but he stands alone. This is in part due to his poetic concerns that are deeply humanistic, his rich word-hoard which is informed by his upbringing as well as a deep study of tradition, and his literary rectitude. His mastery over prosody and nuanced

understanding of his chosen language has also contributed towards this pre-eminence. Writing in the *Encyclopaedia of Indian Literature*, Ghulam Nabi Gauhar sums up Kamil thus: "He is a master of Kashmiri Ghazal and has to his credit poems of eternal value."

## **A Select Bibliography**

### **Novel**

*Gati Manz Gash*, 1958

### **Short Stories**

*Kathi Manz Kath*, 1966

### **Poetry**

*Tasweer-i-Alam* (Urdu), 1950

*Mas Malar*, 1955

*Laveh Te Praveh*, 1965

*Beyi Suy Paan*, 1967

*Padis Pod T'shay*, 1972

### **Edited Works**

*Sufi Shair* (3 vols.), 1964-65

*Noor Nama* (Collection of Nund Reshi's poetry), 1966

*Asan Traye* (Kashmiri Humour and Satire), 1982

*Roohani Falsafa* (Articles on mysticism), 1984

*Kuliyat-e-Habba Khatoon* (Complete works), 1995

*Lol Nagma* (Collected poems on Kashmiri classical music), under print

## Essays and Criticism

*Achchar Zaan*, (The new Kashmiri alphabet), 1966

*Mahjoor Nen Bonen Tal*, (Articles on Mahjoor), 1999

*Jawaban Chhu Arz, Vol.1*, (Articles on diverse subjects), 1999

## Translations

*Dak Ghar* (Tagore's play)

*Yaad-e-Khuda* (Prayers in Kashmiri), 1957

*Zeehi Halam* (Iqbal's poems), 1974

## A Chronology

1924	Born, Kaprin, Kashmir	1968	State Academy Award
1947	Completed B.A.LL.B.	1974	Robe of Honour
1947-49	Practice of Law	1974	Radio Kashmir recorded documentary on him
1950-52	Lecturer, S.P. College, Srinagar	1975	State Academy Award
1955	Best Radio-play award for "Silai ki Machine"	1986	Bakshi Robe of Honour
1958	Convenor, Kashmiri, State Cultural Academy	1987	Srinagar Door-darshan made a documentary on him
1958-79	Editor, Kashmiri, State Cultural Academy	1988	State Cultural Academy Archives prepared documentary on him
1967	Sahitya Akademi Award		



With Mahjoor (sitting), P.N. Jalali, and Aziz Haroon