

Dr Ashwani Kumar's "Ehsas – o- Izhar" and a distinguished celebration : The Oberoi New Delhi 02 Apr 2018

An august gathering and an evening of Verse

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The author, Mr M Hamid Ansari, Dr Manmohan Singh and ex CJI Mr T S Thakur

At a very well-attended function 02.04.2018 in the Capital, Dr Ashwani Kumar's anthology of well-known Urdu poems was released by 2-term Vice President of India Mr M. Hamid Ansari .

Former Law Minister and noted public intellectual **Dr Ashwani Kumar**, who had penned books on politics and democracy, gave a glimpse of another aspect of his multifaceted personality ... and he has put together an anthology of poems of 60 well-known Urdu poets.

Titled *Ehsas-o-Izhar* (Niyogi Books), the first copy was presented to 2-term Prime Minister and former Professor D School, Dr Manmohan Singh. The release was followed by a discussion between noted lyricist Javed Akhtar, writer-translator (also, **DU alumnus**) **Pavan K. Varma** and the author.

Describing the book as an "autobiographical endeavour", Dr Kumar, said, "Encompassing love, pain, longing, hope and happiness, the verses are a reflection of my life as a politician, lawyer, and my personal experiences."

When asked how he zeroed in on the 60 poets, the eminent lawyer explained, "I chose the different verses on the basis of the impact they had on me in my personal, political and social life over the years. These influenced my thinking, resonated with me and gave meaning to my life. The substance of a couplet is always appreciated with reference to one's circumstances. *That is the first principle of poetry appreciation.* ... It is only when a poet feels something, that he pens it down and if you can relate to it then the verse is yours like Iftikhar Arif's '*Dayar-e-noor mein tera Shabon ka sathi ho, koi to ho meri vehshaton ka saathi ho*' resonated with my desire for companionship. That was my talisman on choosing from the vast repertoire of poems by innumerable poets."

The poets included in the anthology are Mir Taqi Mir, Bahadur Shah Zafar, Mirza Ghalib, Allama Iqbal, Jigar Moradabadi, Josh Malihabadi, Sahir Ludhianvi, Madan Lal Didi, Dagh Dehalvi, Rahat Indori, Indira Varma, Momim, Salim Kausar, verses both in Devanagri (Hindi) and Roman (English) script.

When asked why the poems were not in Urdu, Ashwani said, “The idea was to reach out to a vast number of people, many of whom can’t read the Urdu script but long to know about these poems and poets.”

Agreeing with him, Mr. Varma said, “Urdu is not dependent on any script. Its beauty itself is enough to draw people in droves. This collection will be beneficial for many, especially the young, who are eager to know Urdu verses.” noted writer – lyricist **Javed Akhtar** pointed out, “Most of us are not even aware of the Urdu words we use in daily life. *Majority of the Hindi film dialogues and lyrics are in Urdu.*”

He quipped: “***Jab tak samajh aata hai, log sochte hain ki Hindi hai, jab nahin to khete hai Urdu hai.***”

The function concluded with Dr Kumar reading poems by Indira Varma and Kalim Aziz, and rendering of ghazals by **Radhika Chopra**.

Held at the iconic **Oberoi**, the event was attended by the Capital’s Who’s Who, including former Cabinet Minister Dr Murli Manohar Joshi, former **Chief Justice of India T S Thakur**, (3-term CM and **DU alumna**) **Sheila Dikshit**, former Cabinet Ministers and present Parliamentarians Kamal Nath and Anand Sharma, Professor Shamim Hanfi , among so many others...