

**Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival proudly presents  
'When Ghalib Met Manto - Ek Guftagu'**

**A discussion and a performance**

**Kolkata, 11<sup>th</sup> January, 2013:** Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival 2013, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies (MAKAIAS) and Anamika Kala Sangam in association with Indian National Trust for Art & Cultural Heritage (INTACH) and Random House India, brought to Kolkata a spectacular twilight conversation titled 'When Ghalib Met Manto – Ek Guftagu' set against the façade of the city's heritage monument of St. John's Anglican Church.

The evening commenced with the introduction to the two giants of two different segments of literature- Mirza Ghalib and Saadat Hassan Manto - by writer-diplomat Pavan K. Varma and Mira Hashmi, grand-daughter of the legendary poet Faiz Ahmed Faiz. This was followed by dramatized readings, in English and Urdu, by celebrated actor and theatre personality, Tom Alter, along with veteran film actor and author, Barun Chanda in Bengali. The excerpts were from Arunava Sinha's English translations of Rabishankar Bali's 'Dozakhnama, a biography of Manto and Ghalib and a history of Indian culture rolled into one.

As the evening progressed, setting in the night chill, the occasion witnessed a special performance by The National Academy of Performing Arts Repertory Theatre (NRT), from Karachi, Pakistan, which included the ghazals of Ghalib.

The enigmatic presentation testified the bond that was created between the two literary giants, one a 19<sup>th</sup> century poet and the other 20th century story-teller, brought together by time and space. As the two mavericks engaged in a conversation with proses and poetry from their respective sepulchers the ambience in the regal St John's Anglican Church illuminated with their aura and greatness that reverberated through the evening. As Manto and Ghalib conversed, entwining their lives in shared dreams, the literary torch enlightened the darkness of the history of this subcontinent. The unexampled repartee told by reflections in a mirror with the fires of hell, was both an oral tale and a shield against oblivion.

The occasion showcased an outstanding performance of subterranean memory. It highlighted how Manto had learnt the secret of brevity of words from Ghalib which ushered in courtesy and respect to Ghalib. Perhaps joining Ghalib and Manto in repartee, was Job Charnock, founder of Calcutta, who lies buried in the precincts of the Church... truly an out of this world experience!

### **About Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival (AKLF) 2013:**

A Community initiative by the Apeejay Surrendra Group, the annual literary festival hosted since 2010 in Kolkata is the first international literary festival in Kolkata, a city celebrated for its intellectual depth and cultural heritage. An array of special curated discussions, performances and some of the finest literary events are scheduled for the fourth edition from 9th- 13th January, 2013. A noteworthy literary and cultural representation from across India and overseas will be seen at the Festival, amongst the finest minds from India and overseas. Prominent personalities attending will be Ramachandra Guha, William Dalrymple, Shyam Benegal, Pavan Varma, Yasmin Ali Bhai Brown, Amit Chaudhuri, Leila Seth, Manil Suri, Ruchir Joshi, Onir, Urvashi Butalia, Shobhaa De and Tishani Doshi and several others. Events are scheduled at significant cultural and heritage venues across Kolkata like National Library, St John's Church, banks of Hooghly, Lascar Monument, and at India's finest and most loved 92 year old iconic bookstore- Oxford Bookstore, Kolkata. Amongst the many highlights is Festival's collaboration with the Tibor-Jones South Asia Prize to recognize and encourage new and emerging writers in the South Asian region.

**For event videos & pictures Log On to <http://www.aklf.in/>**

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