

FOR SENIOR SECONDARY-PART II

(ELECTIVE COURSE)

12

# THE LITERARY PETALS

COMMUNICATION SKILLS  
THROUGH LITERATURE



**PUNJAB SCHOOL EDUCATION BOARD**

## FOREWORD

In the wake of changed priorities in the realm of Language Teaching at Senior Secondary stage (+2 stage) consequent upon the introduction of the new education policy, it became imperative that the teaching of literature in English be re-oriented in order to exploit some good literary passages for the development of the linguistic competence and communication skill of the learners who are taking up English as a second language. Also, language learning, as per our national aspirations, must be made a socially and individually relevant activity. It is with these ends in view that the present book has been designed. It contains a fair sprinkling of interesting, readable and delightful literary pieces (both poems and stories) from different periods and by Indian as well as foreign authors. In order to project a spectrum of the national ethos, the selection is heavily weighted in favour of Indian authors, including some from Punjab where the book is primarily to be used. Every lesson carries an introductory note about the author, his works and the theme of the text that follows. Each text is followed by a large number of exercises on comprehension (both local and global), vocabulary, grammar, composition and pronunciation. The exercises on poems contain some suggested reading lists also. It is hoped that the book will meet the desired ends, make the learning of language useful and enjoyable and help comparatively mature students evolve proper reading strategies.

**Chairman**  
Punjab School Education Board

## ABOUT THE BOOK

### (A Note to the Teachers)

This book is designed for intensive study for students of literature in English who have yet to gain deep insight into the mechanism of language. In order to improve the communicative competence of the learners, special exercises have been devised to provide training in all language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking). Each lesson is preceded by an introduction that focuses on the life and work of the author. It also embodies a statement of the theme or the central idea, desired to be conveyed through the text.

The paragraphs (lines, in the case of poems) have been serially numbered to facilitate location of the individual words and phrases in the glossary. The glossary contains explanation and meanings of the difficult words. Whenever required, foot-of-the-page notes have been given, furnishing additional explanation. With a view to emphasising the importance of the spoken part of the language, the pronunciation of every word in the glossary is represented in phonemic transcription, using standard phonetic symbols employed by almost all standard English Pronouncing Dictionaries. The editor has depended on the Advanced Learner's Dictionary by A.S. Hornby (6th Edition) for standard pronunciation. A Key to Phonetic symbols other than those resembling the letters of the Roman alphabet is given on every page containing the glossary, for ready reference.

The exercises contain some important rules, guidelines for correct pronunciation, one teaching item being selected for each lesson. The guidelines are meant to solve some of the baffling problems of pronunciation faced by students in this country.

Another set of exercises is meant to test comprehension of the textual lessons. There are two types of comprehension questions - one meant to test factual comprehension and the other, to test global or inferential comprehension. Moreover, care has been taken to ensure that the students do not encounter cultural or conceptual comprehension questions in their own language. The teacher should facilitate the learning

by actively involving the class in a discussion session on the basis of these comprehension questions.

A fair sampling of Grammar Exercises aims at giving sample practice in various grammatical items e.g. voice, narration, analysis and synthesis of sentences, basic sentence patterns, etc. Taking these exercises as samples the teachers are expected to devise their own practice materials to enable the students to cope with the exigencies of language learning.

Every lesson is also followed by a set of Vocabulary Exercises meant to enlarge the vocabulary of the students. It is presumed that the students are already familiar with about 2000 to 2500 lexical items. The vocabulary exercises consist of practice in the use of words and phrases, antonyms, synonyms, same words as different parts of speech, one word for many, word-formation, similar words often confused, etc., etc. It is expected that these exercises would add another five hundred or so odd words to the existing words in the learner's repertoire.

Last, but not the least, are a set of Composition Tasks that call upon the learners to write small paragraphs on different situations related to those in the textual passages. These are meant to encourage independent writing and give sufficient practice in extended composition. The teachers can frame similar exercises and provide sufficient practice to students so that they are able not only to think for themselves but also to express themselves coherently and lucidly.

Comprehension questions on poems included in the book are meant to be discussed in the class to make them really enjoyable and educative. Notes and explanations, it is hoped, would promote independent reading of the poems by the students.

In the hands of an imaginative teacher, a book like the present one can have immense possibilities. It would be presumptuous on the part of any author / compiler to claim that no further improvement is possible. In fact, sky is the limit in the matter of standards of excellence. The present work is only a humble attempt to set a new trend in classroom teaching at the +2 stage. It will go a long way in extending the linguistic horizon of the students by exposing them to the house beautiful of creative writing. In the process they are likely to imbibe values and attitudes that will enthuse them to confront the challenges and complexities of life in the modern age.

I am grateful to Dr. D.V. Jindal, Lecturer, Post Graduate, Deptt. of English, S.D. Govt. College, Ludhiana and Dr. Ranbir Singh, Lecturer, Post Graduate Deptt. of English, Govt. Mohindra College, Patiala for making this project a success. They have done real good work in making proper selections and giving suitable exercises for the book. My thanks are also due to Mr. Manoj Kumar, Subject Expert (English) and other members of the Board of Studies in English who have ably associated in the preparation of this book.

Manoj Kumar  
Subject Expert (Retired)

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# 1

## **Hind Ki Chadar Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur**

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The story of Guru Tegh Bahadur's supreme sacrifice for the sake of upholding the human right of freedom of conscience is known to one and all. Prof. Jagdish Singh, a noted scholar, has presented in the following pages, a very lucid account of this unique sacrifice of the ninth master. The martyrdom of the Guru has great relevance to the strife torn contemporary world.

The saga of the ninth Guru's sacrifice illuminated the dark and bleak space of the second half of the seventeenth century which had witnessed the horrid drama of the state managed, forcible and massive conversion of Hindus to the fold of Islam. The Guru's laying down his life for the freedom of faith in that fanatical age constitutes a luminous landmark in the history of our land.

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1. The life of the ninth *Guru*, Tegh Bahadur, before his accession to the holy gaddi, was most unusual. For twenty long years he lived a solitary life in deep meditation in a basement cell in the village of Bakala, near Amritsar. Even as a child he was quite different from his brothers in temperament and attitude to life.

He was the youngest son of Guru Har Gobind, and was born in Amritsar in April, 1621.

2. As a young boy he was accompanying the marriage party of his elder brother Baba Gurditta, dressed in fine clothes. A naked boy with no clothes to wear was looking with longing eyes at the gorgeous dresses worn by the marriage party. The young Tegh Bahadur's eyes fell on the naked boy. He took off his costly dress and gave it away to him. As Tegh Bahadur ran home for another dress, his mother enquired curiously about his previous clothes. The young Tegh Bahadur answered innocently : " Dear mother, no one would have given the poor boy any clothes to wear. I was sure you would give me another dress."
3. Guru Tegh Bahadur was installed as the ninth Guru in 1664 at the age of forty three, as indicated by Guru Harkishan when he merged with the infinite in Delhi.
4. When Dhirmal, one of Guru Har Gobind's grandson, learnt of the formal proclamation of Guru Tegh Bahadur as the ninth Guru, he lost his temper. He hatched a conspiracy to have the Guru killed. He sent a Massand by the name of Shihan, who aimed a gun at Guru Tegh Bahadur and fired. The Guru's life was saved, but his ear got a gunshot wound. The Guru remained calm and unperturbed. The other accomplice of Shihan looted all the property of the Guru. Some traders and the other Sikh devotees decided to avenge Dhirmal's attack on the Guru. They took away all the belongings of Dhirmal as well as a copy of the Holy Granth Sahib. When the news reached Guru Tegh Bahadur, he admonished his Sikhs and directed them to return Dhirmal's property and also the Holy Book. He advised his devotees that forgiveness of the sinner was a divine quality which they should cultivate. This incident highlights the forgiving nature of Guru Tegh Bahadur's personality.
5. The culminating point in Guru Tegh Bahadur's life came when five

hundred Brahmins from all over India came to see him under the leadership of Pandit Kirpa Ram of Mattan. Aurangzeb had issued orders for the forcible conversion of Hindus to Islam by removing their sacred threads. The religious leaders of Hindus were greatly perturbed. They appealed to Guru Tegh Bahadur to save the Hindu faith from the tyranny of the Mughal ruler. Guru Tegh Bahadur listened to their tale of woe. He sat absorbed in deep thought. His young son, Gobind Rai, who was just nine years of age, then appeared on the scene. Seeing his holy father sitting in deep thought he enquired respectfully what the matter was. The Guru told him of the sad plight of the Kashmiris. The young son asked his dear father how their faith could be protected. Guru Tegh Bahadur answered, "By the sacrifice of a holy man."

"Who can be holier than you, revered father?" remarked the young son.

6. Guru Tegh Bahadur was immensely pleased to hear this from his son. He told the Kashmiri Pandits: "Go and tell the Mughal rulers that you will agree to embrace Islam, if they can persuade your Guru Tegh Bahadur to be converted to the Muslim faith."
7. The Brahmins felt greatly relieved on hearing this. They bowed in reverence of the Guru and departed. On return to their native place, they conveyed Guru Teg Bahadur's message to Governor Zabardast Khan. He passed on this news to Aurangzeb. Orders were issued by the Emperor that Guru Tegh Bahadur be arrested and brought to Delhi immediately. The Guru had already prepared himself for proceeding to Delhi. Bidding farewell to his brave son, his wife Mata Gujri and his mother, Mata Nanki he left for Delhi. He halted at several places on the way- Patiala, Jind, Rohtak and Agra. Every where divans of religious **assemblies** were held by his devotees, at which hymns were sung. As the Guru reached Agra, huge armed forces of Mughal escorted him to Delhi. Aurangzeb was not in Delhi, but he had left instructions that Guru Tegh Bahadur be ordered to embrace Islam or face death.
8. The Chief Kazi **Wahab-Ullha** tried his utmost to persuade the Guru to accept Islam. Guru Tegh Bahadur would at no cost give up his faith. In order to terrify the Guru into submission, the Mughal

officials tortured one of his disciples Bhai Mati Das most barbarously by sawing him alive. Another disciple Bhai Dayal Dass was boiled in a huge cauldron of hot water and still another Bhai Sati Dass was burnt alive. All these inhuman acts were performed before the eyes of Guru Tegh Bahadur. The Guru sat absorbed in deep meditation all the time. He did not waver and even when the Mughal officials again tried to persuade him to change his mind, he expressed his determination that he was prepared to lay down his life, but not renounce his faith. Thereafter, he was shut in a cage. Finding him unrelenting, orders were issued by Aurangzeb that the Guru be executed publicly in Chandni Chowk. This was announced by beat of drum in the whole city. People were shocked that the Emperor had ordered the execution of such a holy man as the Guru.

9. On November 11, 1675 Guru Tegh Bahadur took his early morning bath and recited the sacred Japuji. Thereafter he was brought out, of the Kotwali and seated on a platform. Hindus and Muslims had gathered there in large numbers. Guru Tegh Bahadur sat absorbed in deep meditation. The executioner took out his sword and at one stroke severed the Guru's head from his body.

People cried out in anguish, "what horror ! A saintly man has been killed."

10. Suddenly a dark, furious thunder storm enveloped the city. Even Nature shed tears of grief at this heinous crime committed by the tyrannical Mughal rulers. People ran for cover. There was great consternation. In this confusion one of the Guru's devoted Sikh, Bhai Jaita rushed forward and picked up the martyred Guru's severed head swiftly, covered it respectfully and slipped out of the crowd. In the company of two other Sikhs he reached Kiratpur and delivered the sacred head to his son Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth guru. The young Guru embraced the three devout Sikhs who belonged to a caste considered low. Guru Gobind Singh hugged the devoted Sikhs and pronounced,

**Ranghrette Guru Ke Bete**

**(Ranghretas are the sons of the Guru)**

Guru Tegh Bahadur's head was cremated with due reverence at Anandpur Sahib.

11. Another devotee of Guru Tegh Bahadur, Bhai Lakhi and his son Nagahia, pushed a long row of bullock carts loaded with cotton and other goods into the street of Chandni Chowk. Being a carrier of goods for the Government, no one prevented him from proceeding forward. In the confusion caused by the fierce storm and people running helter skelter, Bhai Lakhi and his son picked up the body of Guru Tegh Bahadur quickly, concealed it under the heap of cotton in a bullock cart and drove quickly to their huts in Raisina. On arrival at their house they offered prayers respectfully to the memory of the holy Guru and set their huts on fire. People thought Lakhi's thatched huts had caught fire accidentally, but the devout Sikh of Guru Tegh Bahadur had secretly cremated the body of the martyred Guru with due respect.
12. The famous Gurudwara Rakabganj in New Delhi, adjacent to the North Block of the Central Secretariat of the Govt. of India, stands, as a fitting memorial to the unique sacrifice of the Ninth Guru, Tegh Bahadur. The devotees of the great martyr Guru Tegh Bahadur visit the shrine and pay their homage to their respected Guru. In the words of Guru Gobind Singh in *Bachittar Natak*.

He protected the paste-mark, tilak and the sacred thread-janeu.

It was a great tragedy of the time.

The Guru did this for Holy men.

He sacrificed his life without a groan.

He laid down his life for the protection of Dharma.

He sacrificed himself but did not give up his principles.

Guru Tegh Bahadur laid down his life for the protection of Hinduism. To this day Guru Tegh Bahadur is remembered as Hind-Ki-Chadar, the covering sheet or protector of the honour of the India. He sacrificed his life for upholding the human right of freedom of worship. One does not find another parallel in history to this unique sacrifice for the protection of the right of faith of all people.

**Key to Phonetic Symbols**

/g/ get	/dʒ:/jam	/θ/ thin	/ʃ/ ship	/y/ yes
/tʃ/ chain	/ŋ/ long	/ð/ then	/z/ measure	
/i:/beat	/ɑ:/part	/u:/boot	/ei/late	/ɔɪ/boy
/ɪ/bit	/ɒ/hot	/ʌ/but	/əʊ/go	/ɪə/hear
/e/pet	/ɔ:/saw	/ɜ:/bird	/aɪ/fly	/eə/pair
/æ/bat	/o:/put	/ə/away	/əʊ/now	/pə/poor

**I. Glossary :**

<b>1. accession</b> (n)	/ək'seʃn/	reaching a rank or position
<b>unusual</b> (aj.)	/ʌn'ju:ʒl/	strange, remarkable
<b>basement</b> (adj.)	/'beɪsmənt/	lowest room or part of a building (below ground level)
<b>cell</b> (n)	/sel/	small room for one person
<b>temperament</b> (n)	/'tempərəmənt/	person's disposition or nature
<b>2. longing</b> (adj.)	/'lɒŋɪŋ/	having or showing an earnest desire
<b>gorgeous</b> (adj.)	/'gɔ:dʒəs/	magnificent, richly coloured
<b>3. formal</b> (adj.)	/'fɔ:ml/	in accordance with rules
<b>lose one's temper</b>		get angry, lose one's balance of mind out of anger
<b>hatch</b> (v)	/hætʃ/	think out and produce (a plan or plot)
<b>conspiracy</b> (n)	/'kɒn'spɪrəsi/	act of conspiring
<b>accomplice</b> (n)	/'ækəmptɪs/	helper or companion
<b>admonish</b> (v)	/'ædmənɪʃ/	give a mild warning
<b>cultivate</b> (v)	/'kʌltɪveɪt/	try to develop or acquire

HIND KI CHADAR - GURU TEGH BAHADUR

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- |                                  |                   |   |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|---|
| <b>4. culminating</b> (adj.)     | /kʌlmɪnɪŋ/        | concluding, final                               |
| <b>tyranny</b> (n)               | /tɪrənɪ/          | cruel or unjust use of power                    |
| <b>plight</b> (n)                | /plaɪt/           | serious and difficult condition                 |
| <b>5. immensely</b> (adj.)       | /ɪmɛnsli/         | in large degree                                 |
| <b>6. reverence</b> (n)          | /rɛvərəns/        | deep respect                                    |
| <b>devotee</b> (n)               | /dɛvəti:/         | person who is devoted to                        |
| <b>7. torture</b> (v)            | /tɔ:tʃə(r)/       | cause severe sufferings to                      |
| <b>saw</b> (v)                   | /sɔ:/             | cut a body into two parts by using a long blade |
| <b>cauldron</b> (n)              | /kɔ:ldrən/        | large deep pot in which things are boiled       |
| <b>renounce</b> (v)              | /rɪ'naʊns/        | agree to give up                                |
| <b>unrelenting</b> (adj.)        | /ʌnrɪlɛntɪŋ/      | not becoming less intensity                     |
| <b>execute</b> (v)               | /ɛksɪkjʊ:t/       | put to death as a legal punishment              |
| <b>8. anguish</b> (n)            | /æŋɡwɪʃ/          | severe suffering                                |
| <b>9. envelope</b> (v)           | /ɪn'velɒp/        | wrap up, cover on all sides                     |
| <b>heinous</b> (adj.)            | /hɛɪnəs/          | odious, atrocious                               |
| <b>consternation</b> (n)         | /kɒnstəneɪʃn/     | surprise and fear, dismay                       |
| <b>sever</b> (v)                 | /sevə(r)/         | cut, break                                      |
| <b>hug</b> (v)                   | /hʌɡ/             | put the arms round tightly                      |
| <b>10. helter-skelter</b> (adj.) | /heltə'skeltə(r)/ | in disorderly haste                             |
| <b>conceal</b> (v)               | /kənsi:l/         | hide  |
| <b>11. unique</b> (adj.)         | /ju'ni:k/         | being only one of its sort                      |
| <b>homage</b> (n)                | /hɒmɪdʒ/          | expression of respect                           |
| <b>groan</b> (n)                 | /grəʊn/           | deep sound made when in pain                    |
| <b>12. uphold</b> (v)            | /ʌp'həʊld/        | support, approve                                |

**II. Pronunciation:**

Study the following guidelines carefully. These would help you in the correct pronunciation of a few words :

- i. In the consonant combination 'alk/alm, l, is generally silent. **Examples:**

walk	balm
talk	psalm
stalk	palm
calm	

- ii. n after m in the word final mn combination is generally silent.

**Examples:**

damn	hymn
column	solemn
condemn	autumn

But in the derivatives of above words, where m and n belong to two different syllables, n is not silent.

**Examples:**

damnable	hymnal
columnist	solemnity
condemnable	autumnal

Pronounce all the words given above with the help of a pronouncing Dictionary.

**III. Vocabulary:**

- (a) Distinguish between the following pairs of words by framing meaningful sentences :

1. cell,	sell	6. dear,	deer
2. carrier,	career	7. bow,	bough
3. temper,	tamper	8. envelop,	envelope
4. advise,	advice	9. accept,	expect
5. tale,	tail	10. due,	dew

- (b) Give one word for each of the following expressions :

- (i) the act of reaching a rank or position.
- (ii) a state of loneliness.
- (iii) change of religion or religious faith.
- (iv) a song sung in praise of God.
- (v) a state of great anxiety, fear and dismay.

- (vi) something that has no equal or no match.
- (vii) person who is killed or made to suffer hard for his belief or faith.
- (viii) companion in an evil act or in a crime.
- (ix) anything associated with God.
- (x) a gathering of people for a specific purpose.

**IV. Comprehension:**

- (a) (i) What was unusual about the early life of Guru Tegh Bahadur ?
- (ii) How did Guru Tegh Bahadur treat Dhirmal who conspired to kill him ?
- (iii) How did Guru Tegh Bahadur's son inspire him to offer himself for sacrifice for the sake of Kashmiri Brahmins ?
- (iv) What did the Mughal officials do in order to terrify the Guru into submission ?
- (v) How was Guru Tegh Bahadur's body cremated ?
- (b) (i) How did Nature express her grief at the cruel killing of Guru Tegh Bahadur at the hands of the Mughals ?
- (ii) What made Guru Gobind Singh remark : "Ranghrete Guru Ke Bete" ?
- (iii) What is the importance of Gurudwara Rakabganj in New Delhi ?
- (iv) What did Guru Tegh Bahadur lay down his life for ?
- (vi) What is the relevance of the supreme sacrifice of Guru Tegh Bahadur to the social and political climate of our country today ?

**V. Grammar:**

- (a) *Change the voice in the following sentences :*
  - (i) He was moved by the plight of the boy.
  - (ii) He directed them to return Dhirmal's property.
  - (iii) Aurangzeb has issued orders for the forcible conversion of Hindus.
  - (iv) The Guru was ordered to embrace Islam or face death.
  - (vi) This was announced by the beat of the drum.



(b) *Join the following pairs of sentences into a single sentence, (complex or compound) each by using suitable conjunction.*

- (i) Every where diwans were held by his devotees. Hymns were sung at these diwans.
- (ii) The Chief Kazi tried his best to persuade the Guru to accept Islam.  
He refused to give up his faith at any cost.
- (iii) He expressed his determination.  
He was prepared to lay down his life.
- (iv) The executioner took out his sword.  
He severed the Guru's head from the body at one stroke.
- (v) The Guru's life was saved.  
His ear was, however, wounded by the bullet.

**VI. Composition :**

- (a) Relate, in your own words, the heart-rending story of Guru Tegh Bahadur's public execution at Delhi (150 words).
- (b) Write a paragraph (150 words) on :  
Communal Harmony.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Border Guards

(Shiv K. Kumar)

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Poet, novelist, short-story writer playwright, translator, critic and educationist, Professor Shiv K. Kumar was elected a fellow of Royal Society of Literature (London) in 1978 and he received the Sahitya Academy Award in 1988 for his collection of poems (English): *Trapfalls in the Sky*. He has a rich variety of poetical collections, novels, short-stories, play and critical writings to his credit.

He is at present working as consultant (Director) Creative Writing Course (English), Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi. Amongst his well-known collections of poems are *Articulate Silences*, (*Writers Workshop*, 1970), *Cobwebs in the Sun* (Tata McGraw Hill, Delhi 1974), *Subterfuges* (*Oxford University Press*, 1975), *Woodpeckers* (Sidgwick & Jackson, London, 1979) and *Trapfalls in the Sky* (Macmillan, 1986). Several write-ups on the author have appeared in *The Times Of India*, *The Hindustan Times*, *The Indian Express*, *The Patriot*, *The Newstime*, *The Hindu*, *The Deccan Chronicle*, *The New Delhi Magazine*, etc.

*Border Guards* is one of his well-known poems in which he sensitively talks of the inborn instinct of love and sympathy animating the two 'enemy soldiers'. It is a thought provoking poem that shakes the reader into seriously thinking over the futility of man-made political boundaries or borders that create artificial divisions between man and man. The two soldiers sitting on the opposite sides of the fence are human beings with the same human heart in them. They are brothers to each other but political divisions make them into enemies without any reason. Had they met somewhere away from those countries in some restaurant or on a sea-beach they would have behaved like friends ready to help or save each other. Is not that a great irony of human situation ?

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On the other side  
of the impregnable fence  
enmeshed with warlord's gory  
threats and counterthreats

whimpers my counterpart  
over a letter from home  
(his wife's illness? his son's death?)  
his recoilless gun sitting negligently 8  
between his knees.

My fingers bleed to think  
of the fence's spikes  
that will not let me caress 12  
the anguished face  
of this other man -  
my country's alleged enemy

but my soul's brother 16  
in loneliness.

---

**Glossary and Notes:**

- L.1 *the other side of the impregnable fence* on the other side of the border, border line that cannot be broken, crossed or overcome.
- L.2 *enmeshed* - entangled
- L.3 *gory* - violent and bloody
- L.4 *threat* - expression of one's intention to punish
- L.5 *whimper* - whine, cry softly
- L.8 *negligently* - carelessly, uncared for
- L.11 *spikes* - sharp pointed pieces of iron used as a border railing
- L.12 *caress* - touch lovingly, comfort
- L.13 *anguished* - in severe physical or mental pain
- L.14 *alleged* - stated as fact but without proof or basis

**Understanding the Poem:**

1. It is the poem about two soldiers belonging to two different countries. Who gives threats and counter-threats and to whom?
2. How does the soldier know that his counterpart is whimpering over a letter from home? Is it a mere guess work?
3. Who is this 'my' in the poem? Can you write a few lines about him?
4. How does the narrator react to the sadness of his counterpart?
5. Why does the narrator use the word 'alleged' when he talks of the enemy soldier?
6. How are the two soldiers related?
7. What is the central idea of the poem?

**Related Readings:**

1. *The Man He Killed* by Thomas Hardy.
2. *No Men are Foreign* by James Kirkup.

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### 3

## My Heart Leaps When I Behold

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William Wordsworth, (1770-1850) generally acclaimed as 'the high priest of Nature' was a poet blessed with an unusual sensitivity. He loved every object of nature, its beauty and quietness, with a rare intensity. He was content not merely to rejoice, he saw more deeply to find the secret springs of this joy. He was a philosopher - poet who could, with a rare blend of thought and emotion, convey the idea of the 'Being that is in the clouds and in the air' - the divine essential that permeates all objects of Nature.

'My Heart Leaps When I Behold' is a powerful expression of the poet's love and fascination for nature's myriad manifestations. He has nurtured a life long passion for the many splendoured spectacle - the rainbow. It has been the perennial fount of abundant joy since his infancy. The sight of the rainbow keeps enthraling him in his adulthood. He ardently wishes that the heart would respond to the power and glory of the rainbow with the same intensity in old age as well. In the event of the cooling off of his passion for the rainbow he would prefer to bid farewell to life. In a way his childhood fancy for the rainbow has generated his later day fascination for the rainbow. It is in this specific sense that child is father of the man, which, at first, strikes us as a paradox.

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My heart leaps when I behold  
    A rainbow in the sky :  
So was it when my life began,  
So is it now I am a man,  
So be it when I shall grow old,                      5  
    Or let me die.

The child is father of the man  
And I could wish my days to be  
Bound each to each by natural piety.                      9

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**Glossary and notes ;**

- L.1 *behold* — see (especially something unusual)
- L.6 *Or let... die* — the poet cannot imagine a life in which he is insensitive to the beauty of nature. He would rather like to die than live such a life.
- L.7 *the child-man*— impressions and habits acquired in the childhood continue to guide human personality all through the life.
- L.9 *natural piety* — the poet refers to the normal 'filial affection'. The grown-up man looks back upon his childhood with an unbroken bond of affection in the same way as the son regards his father.

**Understanding the Poem :**

1. What happens to the poet when he beholds a rainbow in the sky ?
2. How has the poet been fascinated by the rainbow through his manhood ?
3. How would the poet like to react to the beauty of a rainbow in his old age ?
4. What does the poet mean when he says : 'The child is the father of the man' ?
5. What do you learn about the poet's attitude towards nature from this small poem ?

**Related Readings :**

1. *The Daffodils* by William Wordsworth
2. *My Garden* by Thomas Edward Brown



## 4

# The Gambling Match

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The Gambling match is an episode from that great epic "The Mahabharata" that continues to be revered all over the world as a great treatise on the philosophy of life and its myriad manifestations. Every page of this great work of art carries some message- a message of universal significance and enduring value. The present extract culled out from an English version of the epic translated by Marjorie Sykes graphically depicts a scene from king Dhritrashtra's court on a day when an ambitious Duryodhana with the active connivance of his crafty and crooked uncle Sakuni, successfully, laid a wonderful trap for his cousin Yudhishtira who walked into it as naturally as a ball rolling down a sharp inclined. Highlights the fact that gambling is an evil that can lead to disastrous consequences, the extract beautifully portrays the helplessness of Yudhishtira once the game takes control of him and leads him on to his doom.

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1. YUDHISHTHIRA took from his neck a rope of lovely pearls. 'What do you stake,' he asked 'against these gems of the Southern Ocean ?' He spoke proudly, and Duryodhana answered with anger: 'We too have jewels of value'. He threw on the table a jeweled girdle of great beauty. Then Yudhishtira took the dice and threw ; they fell a five and a four. Sakuni threw, a four and a six.
2. 'The pearls are yours' said Yudhishtira angrily. 'But your wealth is no match for mine. *I stake the thousand jars of gold*<sup>1</sup> in my treasury against their weight in gold. Sakuni threw first a three and a two. 'Surely I can beat that'. Exclaimed Yudhishtira eagerly. He took the box and threw ; but *the dice were loaded*<sup>2</sup>, and they fell a three and a one.
3. 'This is trickery I am sure', said Yudhishtira and he picked up the dice and looked at them closely. He could find nothing wrong, for they were very skilfully made. 'Since you do not trust us', sneered Sakuni,' bring other dice. We shall beat you whatever you do.
4. The boastful words stung Yudhishtira into reckless anger. 'Do you dare to say that ? he cried, 'play on ; we shall see, Duryodhana smiled, a cruel smile of triumph; he and Sakuni had planned to rouse Yudhishtira's anger, because they knew that when he was angry he would grow reckless and obstinate and his ruin would then be easy. Sakuni did not smile ; he knew that he could beat Yudhishtira with his magic dice at every throw, so he answered in a cold, calm voice, in a way that made Yudhishtira still more angry. 'A truly great man, he sneered, 'does not lose his temper because he is beaten at play. Such conduct is unworthy of you, great son of Pandu.'
5. 'I will teach you manners at the proper time, cheating rogue, answered Yudhishtira furiously. 'To the play, I stake my splendid car of gold drawn by eight horses white as moonlight, swift as the wind.'
6. Once more the dice rattled and Sakuni won. Yudhishtira staked the hundred thousands singing girls of his palace, with their rich.

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1. If I lose, you'll have the jars of gold.

2. Something had been so done to the dice that they always favoured Duryodhana. The dice had been made heavier on one side or were tempered with.

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robes and jewels, Sakuni won, the king, staked his men servants, his war —elephants, his battle cars, the splendid horses which filled his stables, his disciplined, victorious army. All these he lost. Last of all he flung away the last and finest of his jewel and these too passed into the hands of the smiling, triumphant Duryodhana.

7. The excitement in the hall rose high. All other play had ceased, and the players crowded round Yudhishtira's table. When he had lost his jewels Yudhishtira sat back in his seat in silent rage, staring helplessly before him. Vidura, unable to endure the scene any longer once more approached Dhritrashtra. The blind king was peering towards the place where he knew Duryodhana stood, and grinning with satisfaction at the victory of his son.
8. 'Maharaja' said Vidura to his brother, 'I beg you to be warned. You love Duryodhana, but you know well in your heart that his wickedness and greed ate the curse of your race. Be wise in time. Give up this jackal of evil omen and win the support of the Pandavas, those tigers of men who will defend the house of Bharata against all its foes. Do you wish to die that you so provoke their anger ?'
9. The blind old king sat silent, his face hidden in his hands. Vidura turned to the gamblers. 'Hear me, princes of the *House of Bharata*'. This match is bringing ruin to some and hatred to all. Duryodhana, you are leading your father and brothers to disaster. Who will save you when the sons of Pandu seize their weapons to take revenge for their wrongs ? Maharaja, it is plain to all that Sakuni, cheats Yudhishtira. Order him to stop this dangerous game.'
10. Still Dhritrashtra sat silent, but Duryodhana retorted angrily : 'Uncle, we know that you always favour the Pandavas. In sheltering you, we have nourished a serpent. We have housed you and befriended you, yet you turn against us ; you actually advise my father to destroy his own son, Begone ; you have gone too far in your abuse'.
11. Vidura turned away from him and spoke to Dhritrashtra once more. 'Brother and King', he said, 'you have heard your son insult me, and you do not rebuke him. I wish you and your sons well. A

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3. Duryodhana and Yudhishtira, both belonged to the dynasty of Bharata.

- King's truest friend is he who tells the unwelcome truth fearlessly. Humiliation is a better medicine, but the honest man drinks it, and keeps his head clear. You are drunk with pride and greed. Beware.
12. Sakuni and his friends received this speech with shouts of anger, while the friends of the Pandavas applauded. The Pandavas themselves sat silent, and after Vidura had left the hall, no one spoke for a moment. Then Duryodhana said mockingly, 'Perhaps, King Yudhishtira, you fear now to play with those who are called cheats and jackals ? Perhaps you would prefer to go with your friend ?'
  13. 'I do not fear you or any man', furiously answered Yudhishtira. 'Play on if you please.' Once more the stakes were named. Step by step Yudhishtira lost the whole of his vast wealth and all his estates, with the cattle and sheep upon them. His brothers sat sullenly watching, but they did not dare to interfere.
  14. 'Great King', mocked Sakuni 'you have surely nothing left now. Let us play no more.'
  15. Yudhishtira sat silent for a moment, then he looked up with flashing eyes. 'If it is my fate to lose all, so be it,' he said, 'But it may be that fortune will favour me at last. I stake my kingdom against all your previous winnings.'
  16. He threw the dice-two fours. Sakuni beat him by one. Like a trapped animal he gazed wildly around. Then, his eyes rested on his brothers. 'See, rogue,' he cried, 'On the princes are jewels worth crores. All these I wager for my kingdom.' Once more Sakuni won.
  17. Vidura, hearing that Yudhishtira had staked and lost even his kingdom, came back into the hall once more and begged Dhritarashtra to stop the match. But Dhritarashtra, who was eagerly straining his ears to hear the word of the gamblers, only said impatiently, 'No more, brother, Do not interfere'.
  18. Yudhishtira turned on Sakuni like a wolf at bay. 'I still have wealth more precious than gold, he declared, 'I will pay you with my brothers. Nakula I stake for my kingdom'. Once more the dice fell against him. 'curse on you', he cried, 'Here is Sahadeva. I stake Sahadeva against Nakula and my Kingdom.' He lost again. A Murmur went round the pavilion, but no one spoke.

19. Now at last Yudhishtira's proud head dropped on his breast. He was very weary, Sakuni saw that he must be roused again to anger, and he made a cruel, cunning speech.
20. 'Nakula and Sahadeva are mine,' he said, 'But after *all they are the sons of Madri*<sup>4</sup>, not the sons of Kunti. Perhaps you dare not risk Arjun and Bhima ?' The words stung Yudhishtira like a poisoned arrow. 'You black-hearted villain ; he cried, 'how dare you seek to divide me from those I love ? I despise your tricks, I stake the hero Arjuna, to win back my brothers and my kingdom ; The dice fell and Sakuni won'. 'You have one brother left 'he said, 'will you stake the mighty Bhima ? 'I stake him', answered Yudhishtira and Sakuni won again.
21. 'You have nothing left now, great king', he said, 'Our game must end'. 'No !' shouted Yudhishtira . 'I stake myself!' Once more the dice were thrown ; a two and a three for Yudhishtira, a five and six for Sakuni. The spectators were silent, for this was tragedy. The Pandavas were slaves, but Sakuni's mean cruelty was still unsatisfied. 'You do wrong to lose yourself, O King,' he jeered, 'surely you have wealth still, greater than you have lost? Have you not a stake worthy to win back your brothers, your kingdom and all your wealth ? Have you not the peerless queen Draupadi ?' The Pandavas, who had sat motionless while their very freedom was staked and lost, stirred restlessly ; it seemed that last they must rebel against the elder brother whom they loved so well. But it was too late. 'Yes !' hissed Yudhishtira in a fierce, low voice, glaring at his tormentor, 'I stake my beloved wife,' From the hall came loud cries of 'Shame !' The wise old Bhishma hid his face in his hands ; *his fellow-counsellors*<sup>6</sup> heads were sunk in despair. But still Dhritarashtra was silent, his blind eager face? stretched forward towards the fatal table. Sakuni threw first- a three and five, Yudhishtira took up the box with trembling hands. The dice fell six and one. Draupadi was a slave.

**Marjorie Sykes - from**  
*The Story of Mahabharata*

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4. Yudhishtira's father Pandu, had two wives, Kunti and Madri. Yudhishtira, Bhim and Arjun were born of womb of Kunti while Nakul and Sahadeva were Madri's sons.  
5. Grandfather of the Prince.  
6. Advisers to the King.

**Key to Phonetic Symbols**

/g/ get	/dʒ/ jam	/θ/ thin	/ʃ/ ship	/j/ yes
/tʃ/ chain	/ŋ/ long	/ð/ then	/ʒ/ measure	
/t:/ beat	/ɑ:/ part	/u:/ boot	/et/ late	/ɔɪ/ boy
/r/ bit	/ɒ/ hot	/ʌ/ but	/əʊ/ go	/ɪə/ hear
/e/ pet	/ɔ:/ saw	/ɜ:/ bird	/aɪ/ fly	/eə/ pair
/æ/ bat	/o:/ put	/ə/ away	/aʊ/ now	/oʊ/ poor

**I Glossary :**

- |                            |               |  |
|----------------------------|---------------|--|
| <b>1. stake (v)</b>        | /steɪk/       | gamble or risk money, one's life, hopes, etc. on something       |
| <b>girdle (n)</b>          | /ˈɡɜːdl/      | cord or belt fastened round the waist                            |
| <b>2. loaded (adj.)</b>    | /ləʊdɪd/      | tempered with  |
| <b>3. trickery (n)</b>     | /ˈtrɪkəri/    | deception, cheating  |
| <b>sneer (v)</b>           | /sniə(r)/     | laugh scornfully, smile with the upper lip curled                |
| <b>4. reckless (adj.)</b>  | /ˈreklɪs/     | rash, not thinking of consequences                               |
| <b>rouse (v)</b>           | /raʊz/        | cause somebody to wake, excite, cause something to become active |
| <b>obstinate (adj.)</b>    | /ˈɒbstənət/   | stubborn, refusing to change one's course of action              |
| <b>5. furiously (adv.)</b> | /ˈfjʊərəsli/  | angrily, with violent anger.                                     |
| <b>6. stable (n)</b>       | /ˈsteɪbl/     | building where horses are kept                                   |
| <b>7. rage (n)</b>         | /reɪdʒ/       | violent anger  |
| <b>peer (v)</b>            | /pɪə(r)/      | look closely   |
| <b>grin (v)</b>            | /ɡrɪn/        | smile broadly to express foolish satisfaction                    |
| <b>8. jackal of evil</b>   | /dʒækələʊvɪv/ | a wild animal known for its treachery                            |

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<b>9. provoke</b> (v)	/prə'vəʊk/	make angry or annoyed
<b>10. retort</b> (v)	/rɪ'tɔ:t/	make a quick, witty, angry reply
<b>nourish</b> (v)	/nʌrɪʃ/	keep alive and well with food
<b>11. rebuke</b> (v)	/rɪ'bjʊ:k/	express sharp disapproval, reprove
<b>humiliation</b> (n)	/hju:mɪl'reɪʃn/	lowering of grace, insult
<b>12. applaud</b> (v)	/ə'plɔ:d/	show approval, praise
<b>mockingly</b> (adv.)	/mɒkɪŋli/	contemptuously, making fun of
<b>13. sullenly</b> (adv.)	/sələnlɪ/	silently, gloomily
<b>14. gaze</b> (v)	/geɪz/	look long and steadily
<b>wager</b> (v)	/weɪdʒə(r)/	stake money on the result of something
<b>15. a wolf at bay</b> (noun phr.)	/ə wɒlf æt beɪ/	a wolf defending itself
<b>pavilion</b> (n)	/pə'vɪlɪən/	building next to a playground, for spectators and players
<b>16. weary</b> (adj.)	/wɪəri/	very tired
<b>17. peerless</b> (adj.)	/pɪəls/	without equal, unique
<b>tormentor</b> (adj.)	/tɔ:mentə(r)/	one who causes severe suffering

**II. Pronunciation:**

The past morpheme – (e)d is pronounced in three different ways:

- (i) /-ɪd/ in words ending in /t, d/
- (ii) /t/ in words ending in /f, s, p, θ, f, tʃ, t, k/
- (iii) /d/ in all other cases.

Note how the following words are pronounced :

- (i) loaded /lɔ:ɒdɪd/
- retorted /rɪ'tɔ:rtɪd/
- (ii) asked /ɑ:skt/

(iii) answered /ɑ : nsəd/

(iv) exclaimed /ɪk' skleɪmd/

Now practice saying the following words with correct pronunciation :

- |                |             |               |
|----------------|-------------|---------------|
| (i) befriended | (ii) looked | (iii) planned |
| applauded      | staked      | warned        |
| lasted         | passed      | turned        |
| divided        | ceased      | called        |
| tormented      | approached  | cried         |

### III. Comprehension:

- (a) (i) Who were the main participants in the gambling match ?  
 (ii) How was Sakuni able to defeat Yudhishtira every time in the game of dice ?  
 (iii) How was Vidura's advice to King Dhritrashtra ?  
 (iv) How did the king react to Vidura's advice ?  
 (v) List, in order, the possession staked and lost by Yudhishtira.
- (b) (i) Why did Yudhishtira not intervene in spite of Vidura's request ?  
 (ii) Why did Yudhishtira not give up the game in spite of his repeated defeats ?  
 (iii) Why did Vidura leave the hall ?  
 (iv) How did Duryodhana treat Vidura ?  
 (v) How did Sakuni succeed in making Yudhishtira agree to stake Arjuna ?

### IV. Vocabulary:

- (a) Use the following words both as nouns and as verbs :  
 rope, stake, house, crowd, support, favour.

**Example:** rope (n) We tied his feet together with a rope,  
 rope (v) They roped him to a tree.

- (b) Form verbs from the following words and use these verbs in sentences :

Friend, humiliation, silent, speech, slave, satisfaction.

**Example:** Friend - befriend

**Sentences :** You must try to befriend him as he is a very useful man.

**V. Grammar:**

*Note :* There are two types of interrogative sentences- Wh-type and Yes-No type sentences at S.No. 1 and 3 below belong to the former type while others belong to the latter type. While changing sentences from Direct to the Indirect form of narration, no conjunction is used in the case of Wh-type sentences while the conjunction if or whether is used in the case of Yes-No type sentences.

(a) *Change the narration in the following sentences :*

1. Yudhishtira said to Duryodhana "What do you stake against these gems of the Southern Ocean ?
2. Vidur said to his brother. 'Do you wish to die that you so provoke their anger ?'
3. Vidur said to Duryodhana, "Who will save you when the sons of Pandu seize their weapons to take revenge for their wrongs ?"
4. Sakuni said to Yudhishtira, "Will you stake the mighty Bhim ?"
5. He said to Yudhishtira again, "Have you not a stake worthy to win back your brother ?"

(b) *Look at the following sentence :*

He knew that he could beat Yudhishtira with his magic dice. It can be broken up into two sentences .

- (i) He knew it.
- (ii) He could beat Yudhishtira with his magic dice.

*Now read the following sentences and break each sentence into a set of 2-sentences .*

- (i) We shall beat you whatever you do.
- (ii) You know that his wickedness and greed are the curse of your race.



- (iii) It is plain to all that Sakuni is cheating Yudhishtira.
- (iv) We know that you always favour the Pandavas.
- (v) The blind king was peering towards the place where Duryodhana stood.

**VI. Composition:**

- (a) Imagine you are Yudhishtira. Many years after the match, you have to write a short account (about 200 words) of what happened in the gambling match. Give this account, starting with the following sentences :

I started the game with a rope of lovely pearls from my neck staked against a jewelled girdle of great beauty. I threw the dice-it fell a five and a four but Sakuni won with a four and a six. I was angry but I did not give up \_\_\_\_\_.

- (b) Write a paragraph (about 150 words) on 'Gambling as a social Evil'.

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## 5

# The Quality of Mercy

(William Shakespeare)

(From *The Merchant of Venice* IV (i) (L. 184-197))

William Shakespeare (1564-1616), the doyen of English literature, has been the favourite of men and women of all times and all climes, of all tastes and tempers. He has been called "Myriad-minded", and possessor of an "experiencing" and highly imaginative mind. A poet and dramatist of a very high order, he wrote 37 plays (comedies, tragedies, historical plays) and about 156 sonnets. His plays have been translated into all the major languages of the world and staged successfully in almost all the countries. His works reveal his towering imagination, deep wisdom, rich and genial humour, the sweetness, force and flexibility of his style, and above all, his unsurpassed power of depicting human character in action.

"*The Quality of Mercy*" is an extract from Shakespeare's famous comedy, *The Merchant of Venice* (1598). Antonio and Bassanio are two close friends. In order to help Bassanio try his luck at the lottery of caskets devised, for the marriage of a beautiful and accomplished girl named Portia by her father, Antonio borrows three thousand ducats from a cruel Jew named Shylock. He is made to sign a strange bond which enjoins upon the latter to cut off a pound of flesh from any part of Antonio's body in case he fails to repay the debt by the stipulated date. Antonio suffers losses in business which render him incapable of paying the debt. Consequently he is made to appear in the court where Shylock is sharpening his knife to teach the Christian merchant the lesson of life. Bassanio has, in the meantime, won over Portia who, in disguise, plays the part of the lawyer. She accepts the Jew's right to a pound of flesh but calls upon him to show mercy. The devilish Jew asks Portia why he should show mercy to Antonio. "On what compulsion must I?" he retorts. In reply, Portia speaks out the lines that form this extract which is, at once, persuasive and evocative, in its rhetorical thrust.

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The quality of mercy is not strain' d,  
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven  
Upon the place beneath: it is twice blest:  
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes: 4

'Tis mightiest in the mightiest: it becomes  
The throned monarch better than his crown:  
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,  
The attribute to awe and majesty, 8

Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings:  
But mercy is above this sceptred sway:  
It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,  
It is an attribute to God himself;  
And earthly power doth then show likest God's  
When mercy seasons justice. 12

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**Glossary and Notes:**

- L.1 quality — attribute  
strained — constrained, forced by compulsion  
(It is the essential nature of mercy that it does not spring in the heart under any sort of compulsion)
- L.2 *It droppeth ..... heaven* - Mercy comes naturally like the rain falling from the sky. It has three qualities. It is pleasing in itself; it is beautiful in its effects; it is universal in its benefits
- L.5 *mightiest—Mightiest* - the more powerful a person is the greater are his opportunities to show mercy  
*becomes* — gives merit to, behaves
- L.7 sceptre — a rod of authority that symbolises the earthly power of kings which is the essential characteristic of their awe inspiring majesty
- L.10 *Sceptred sway* — the authority of the sceptre
- L.12 *attribute to* — special quality of
- L.14 *seasons* — moderates, qualifies, softens

**Understanding the Poem:**

1. Why does the speaker compare mercy with the gentle rain from heaven ?
2. How is mercy 'twice blest' ?
3. How is mercy, according to the speaker, above the 'sceptred sway' of kings ?
4. Why should justice be seasoned with mercy ?
3. What is the central idea contained in the extract ?



## 6

# The Fancy Dress Show

(Kamala Dass)

Kamala Dass (born 1934) who lives in Mumbai writes both in Malayalam and English. She was honoured with the Kerala Sahitya Academy prize in 1967 for her collection of short-stories entitled *Thanuppu* (The Cold). She has published three volumes of verse. She won the Poetry Award of *The Asian PEN Anthology* in 1964. Her poetry books are: *Summer in Calcutta* (1965), *The Descendants* (1967) and *The Old play-house and Other Poems*. She is acclaimed as one of the most outstanding Indian poets in English. She is aware of the world around her and she gives expression to modern Indian women's thoughts, feelings and predicaments. Her autobiography '*My Story*' brings out the persistent pre-occupations of her poetry.

*The Fancy Dress Show* (May, 1970) concerns itself mainly with the cant and sham of the conventionally virtuous. There appears to be an air of urgency and immediacy about the poem. The poetess lashes the hypocrites in society who disguise their true selves to appear noble and virtuous. The poem is an excellent satire. It tears as under the veneers of those who pass for the honest, the noble and the *virtuous* by 'window dressing' their real, hideous selves.

The thrust of the poem is in keeping with the overall ethos of Kamala Dass's work.

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Every virtue requires today A fancy dress; the cassock is The priests' main virtue, the clever Politician dons a saint's mean	4
Apparel. The holy ash is On the legitimate forehead And the holy water is in The right container. Confessions	8
Are mumbled regularly in the dark. The patriots have survived their Long fasts; the children of the pool Have not been so lucky, we hear.	12
A pity. The city morgues are Full of unclaimed cadavers, yes. God is in his heaven and all Is right with this stinking world.	16

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**Glossary and Notes:**

L.2	<i>a fancy dress</i>	—	some unusual costume (often historical or fantastic)
	<i>cassock</i>		long dress worn by certain clergymen (therefore, a mark of holiness in word, thought and deed)
L.3	<i>main virtue</i>	—	The most important quality (used ironically here. Does he have no other virtues ? Or, are other virtues of no significance ?)
L.4	<i>dons</i>	—	wears
L.5	<i>apparel</i>	—	clothing, dress
L.6	<i>legitimate</i>	—	lawful, in accordance' with the law or rules, genuine (note the use of irony again)
L.8	<i>confession</i>	—	formal admission of one's sins to a priest in a private enclosed place in a church
L.13	<i>morgue</i>	—	(mortuary) a building where dead bodies are kept until burial or cremation.
L.14	<i>cadaver</i>	—	corpse, dead body of a person
L.16	<i>stinking</i>	—	rotten, very bad, unpleasant, horrible foul smelling.

**Understanding the poem:**

1. Why does the poetess use the word 'today' in line 1 ? What does she mean ?
2. What are the various 'virtues' listed by the poetess which 'require', according to her, 'a fancy dress' ?
3. What does the poetess mean when she says: 'The children of the poor have not been so lucky, we hear' ?
4. Bring out the irony contained in the last two lines of the poem.
5. Give, in about 50 words the central idea contained in the poem.

**Related Readings :**

1. *Guru* by Nissim Ezekiel
2. *An Indian Lala* by K..R. Narayanaswami.



7

## The Eternal Why

(Mulk Raj Anand)

Mulk Raj Anand, one of the most prolific of contemporary Indo-English writers, has made a mark in the field of Indian novel and short story in English. Born in Peshawar (now in Pakistan) in 1905, educated mostly in England, he continues to write about the India that he knows intimately. All his works are steeped in his concern for Indian scene-social, cultural and political. Some of his well-known novels are : *The Untouchable* (1935), *The Village* (1939), *Across the Black Waters* (1941), *The Sword and the Sickle* (1942) etc. His short stories, more than a hundred in number, focus on the various facets of the Indian scenario and reveal a lively sense of humour, a keen eye for the foibles of the people, a deep understanding of the subtle workings of the mind and a warm sense of compassion and understanding. Over the years Mulk Raj Anand has emerged as a doyen among writers, art critics, liberal humanists and crusaders for various causes. He is looked upon as a pioneer and other figure.

'*The Eternal Why*' is one of his three 'prose poems', the other two being '*The Lost Child*' and '*The Conqueror*'. It is an interesting story that directs the readers' attention towards the presence of an eternal inquisitiveness in a child who is anxious to know the how and why of things around him. Many a time a child's innocent questions raise some really important issues that leave the elders too confounded to answer his strange queries.



1. He leaned over the edge of the boat dangling his hands to reach the water, while his mother held him fast by the end of his tunic to prevent him from falling over. It was the central boat of the static fifty-one which supported the wooden bridge that had been built over the River Lunda, because no other could stand its ferocious moods. Today, however, on a sultry afternoon in May, the stream was slow and peaceful. As the child bent over it he could see his silhouette and that of his mother reflected in the imperceptibly moving water.
2. This reflection of him sitting in the water was a curious phenomenon, something he had never seen before; it might almost have been his first awareness of life. He started hard at it, from its immediate life-size through its gradual exaggeration to where his mother's form faded in the current and his own attained maturity by being elongated into an oval. Then, suddenly, he looked away as if self-conscious at having looked too much on himself, as if afraid that if he kept on looking he would not be able to resist the fascination of his form in the water.
3. 'Why do we sit here, mother?' he asked, as he settled back into the boat for a moment.  
 'We are eating the air, child', his mother replied vaguely, as she sat melting away into her shadow in the stream.  
 'Why do we eat the air mother?' asked the child, opening his mouth wonderingly.  
 'We want to see a bit of life in the evening, my son', she replied, with a delicately evasive smile.  
 He turned away, more amazed than satisfied by her answer. His pure new consciousness was innocent of this aspect of reality the river and the reflection of his form in its water.
4. He bent his head to look at it again. The image had now crystallized into more shapely form and was not merely vague and silent in the distance.
5. 'Mind, you don't fall, looking into the river, child', warned his father from when he sat smiling benevolently on the high stern end of the boat, just as the child's gaze had drifted from his own form to the reflection of sun splintered into countless stars upon the moving water.

6. Vaguely he heard his father's voice and equally vaguely he saw the sun dancing in the rippling stream. Both the sound of his father's voice and the sight of the Sun's reflection disturbed his attention. He became busy reaching out for the little pieces of wood that came floating on the surface of the river. He would hold these bits of timber in a pile, but as they grew in number some of the pieces would drift away from the assemblage and he would extend his arm to catch them. Some of these he would arrest, others eluded his grasp. But he was not irritated if he failed to catch them and he went on collecting, re-collecting his treasure of chips from the floating blocks. Thus utterly absorbed in his game, he acquired a sort of power to concentrate on all the various moods of the current and cultivated almost the vivacity of the sunbeams that played and commingled with the waves.
7. Once, however, his hand strained to save at least one little piece of wood, when all those he had collected were let loose by the current and he nearly jumped out of his mother's lap. She suddenly pulled him back and looked, dumb with apprehension, in her husband's face. Then she turned to the child remonstratingly: 'Child, sit still and play here in the middle of the boat. Don't stray to the sides'.
8. A little shaken by his mother's sudden pull and angry remonstrance, he struggled out of her grasp and sat in safety on a plank of wood that might have served as a rower's seat before the boat was turned to use to sustain the weight of the bridge. For a moment he was quite still. But his secret springs of energy burst forth again soon. The flush of discouragement fled from his face and a naughty light charged his eyes with bright sparks of gaiety. His lips were covered with a smile. He rose and scanned the bridge which chained the boats across the river. He could see men and women walking across it, some heading straight across, others stopping to look at the river, or stepping into the boats to rest a while from the toil of the journey in the heat of the day; still others struggling to steer their herds of donkeys and goats, loaded with all kinds of goods and chattels, clear of the danger of falling into the river. These latter were big, burly men, ferocious and red, like the robbers his mother had told him about in the fairy story. They beat their beasts of burden brutally with

huge stick, to drive them fast, even though the poor animals were quaking under the weights on their backs. The child was frightened when a group of them passed, shaking the whole wooden structure with the powerful thumping of their heavy feet. It seemed as if the bridge which honest workmen had taken years to build would yield to their heavy, clumsy gait, and then everyone would go swirling fast down the stream, shouting and struggling to keep a float in utter confusion among the frothing waves. The child did not know why this should happen; nor what exact form it would take if it did happen; he was just afraid that it might happen, and in order to escape from this dreadful prospect of the future he looked away towards the hollows in the shore on both sides of the rising streams.

9. He could hear the mournful wail of water butting into the rocks and he could see shadowy forms, shapeless bodies and featureless faces appear from a little stretch of even bank and vanish into the stream. He looked more intently and could recognize a few heads floating in the water, but like the dancing shadows that projected themselves from the kikar trees into the shimmering stream like the cool evanescent breeze that arose from the dim, white mist across the water like the foam among which they moved happily to and fro, they seemed to the child perplexingly unreal and indistinct.
10. 'What is that, mother' ? he asked, bewildered.  
 'They are the holy men bathing in the river, child', his mother answered. 'They are swimming'.  
 I want to swim, too', he said, and almost made towards the water.  
 'No, no', said his mother, running after him. Bringing him near her, she began to console him : 'You are too small to swim yet. One day, when you are strong, you will swim, too, my child. Not till then, because the river is very cruel, and even very strong men are drowned in it'.
11. His gaze, retreating from the banks, began to probe each corner of the bare wooden structure of the boat. He flew and sat on a plank a yard ahead of the boat. Tempted to run farther he almost knocked his head against a high wooden wall that descended from the bridge. His mother raced after him and brought him back.

12. 'Come child, play here, near me', she remonstrated. He was a bit cross with his mother for not letting him go and play as he liked. So he ran towards his father instead of coming, back to her lap. This parent's benevolent smile consoled him, and for a little while he waited to find something which would revive his spirits. He soon discovered an interesting sensation, for as he stood near the high stem end of the boat he could hear its noise tear the water sharply. He mounted to his father's lap briskly, almost without aid, and looked towards the direction where the swelling river came. He could see its vast sheet of rippling power converge into an even smaller chasm of silver light till it lost itself in the dim vaults of steep precipices.
13. Deep, deep in him, deep in his little soul, he knew there was something beyond the river, some dark force, some mysterious source from which it came.
14. 'Where was the river born, father?' he asked therefore, almost as he might have asked for food, knowing there was such a thing to be had.
- It was born in the Himalayas, my child, from the cold, white snows on the roof of the world line.' 'Where did the snow come from on the Himalayas, father?' It was formed by the rain which the clouds poured down, child'. 'Where did the clouds come from then?' he asked, like a true little philosopher, greedy to know the cause of all things. 'They came from the sea, my child, from the boundless, infinite ocean.'
15. For a moment he was quiet and struggled to fit the mountains, the snow, the clouds, the sea into his dark pre-natal feeling for order; but failing to picture all these things either separately or together, he let his imagination 'try' to assimilate knowledge by another course of reasoning.
16. 'What is the name of the river, father?' he asked, 'urged by the unformulated theory that everything has its name original and primordial.
- 'It is called Lunda, my son'.
- That answer seemed to satisfy him- and for a moment he sat back quietly.

17. The river was now in full swing. The subtle rhythm of its earlier hissing flow had given place to the crafty play of babbling waves. A wedge of slow ripples had spread the first flaws in a crystal sheet of indomitable power. Ebbing, falling, mounting, remounting, the terrible serpent poured itself down from the plain, a mighty sweep of opulent majesty, and borrowing the lustre of magnificence from the golden sun, enthroned itself upon the earth a mirthful, usurping emperor.
18. The child trembled with fear as he contemplated the roaring hum of the demoniac rushing stream. He looked into his mother's eyes for comfort. There was a tender look of reassurance in her dusky face. So he sat safely in conviction of her supporting love, and in a while even mustered courage to stare into the stream again.
19. A whirlpool engaged his attention: first a disembodied look, then his searching watchfulness. The revolving water did not seem to move. Why did it not move ? He looked and looked, waiting for the pent-up snag to release itself. It would not flow. He stared hard at it. There was a difference but the dimple in the pool persisted, like the dimple on his mother's face. This mark on the dark, leonine, imperious stream persisted, the mystery of the river's soul, so like the mystery of woman's soul, innocent, simple yet in the end subtle, mysterious, unknowable, perhaps even capricious. He was beaten by the mystery.
20. 'Why does not water there flow, father ?'  
 'Because there is a deep, deep pit in it and the water gets lost in it.'  
 'But why does the other water flow ?'  
 'Because it avoids the deep pits and goes over even land.'
21. He watched the endless, writhing flow of the stream again. But there was still a part of his intuition to be exercised from the depths below the depths within him. He contemplated his father's answer to his last question and then fired off another.  
 'Where does the water go, father ?'  
 'It goes to the sea, my son.'  
 'But it came from the sea, did it not ?'

'Yes, my son, it came from the sea; from the boundless, infinite ocean it came, into that vast ocean will it go.'

'Where is the sea, father ?'

It is on the other side of the world, child.'

22. A smile of endless light lingered in the eyes of the day. It came upon the earth and played about the child's face, like a dim aureole as he sat now in his mother's lap in the joy of his newly gained knowledge. Through the burden some multiplicity of unending experience, he could see that the mystery of the river's origin, the secret of its journey and the riddle of its destination had some significance for him.
23. But what it was he did not know. As the golden sunlight faded and the silver moonlight fell on the limitless expanse of water power he asked one last question. If the sea is on the other side of world, father, why is the river on this side ?'
24. They are really in the same world, child. Only they appear to be separated. The river comes from the sea and goes sweeping incessantly onward to it. But I do not know child. I cannot go on answering your eternal Whys.

### Key to Phonetic Symbols

/g/ get	/dʒ/:jam	/θ/thin	/ʃ/ship	/j/yes
/tʃ/chain	/tʌ/long	/ð/then	/z/measure	
/i:/beat	/ɑ:/part	/u:/boot	/eɪ/late	/ɔɪ/boy
/ɪ/bit	/ɒ/hot	/ʌ/but	/əʊ/go	/ɪə/hear
/e/pet	/ɔ:/saw	/ɜ:/bird	/aɪ/fly	/eə/pair
/æ/bat	/ɒ/put	/ə/away	/aʊ/now	/ɒɔ/poor

### I. Glossary :

1. <b>Eternal</b> (adj.)	/ɪ'tɜ:nəl/	lasting or existing forever
<b>dangle</b> (v)	/ˈdæŋɡl/	hang or swing loosely
<b>tunic</b> (v)	/ˈtju:nɪk/	close fitting jacket

<b>static</b> (adj.)	/ˈstætɪk/	not moving or changing
<b>ferocious</b> (adj.)	/fəˈrəʊjəs/	violent or savage
<b>sultry</b> (adj.)	/ˈsʌltəri/	hot and humid (weather)
<b>silhouette</b> (n)	/ˈsɪluːet/	dark outline of somebody or something seen against a light background
<b>imperceptibly</b> (adj.)	/ɪmpəˈseptəbli/	that could not be grasped through the senses
<b>2. phenomenon</b> (n)	/fəˈnɒmɪnən/	fact or occurrence especially in nature or society, that can be perceived by the senses
<b>awareness</b> (n)	/əˈweənɪs/	having knowledge of some thing
<b>gradual</b> (adj.)	/ˈɡrædʒʊəl/	not sudden, taking place by series of small changes over a long period
<b>exaggeration</b> (n)	/ɪɡzædʒəˈreɪʃn/	action of making something larger, better, worse etc. than it is really is
<b>oval</b> (adj.)	/ˈəʊvl/	shaped like an egg
<b>fascination</b> (n)	/fæsɪˈneɪʃn/	process of attracting
<b>3. vaguely</b> (adv.)	/ˈveɪɡli/	in a way one can not specify
<b>evasive</b> (adj.)	/ɪˈveɪsɪv/	avoiding a direct confrontation
<b>5. benevolently</b> (ad.)	/bɪˈnevələntli/	wishing to be kind, friendly and helpful
<b>stern</b> (adj.)	/stɜːn/	back or rear part
<b>splinter</b> (v)	/ˈsplɪntə/	break into small sharp pieces
<b>6. assemblage</b> (n)	/əˈsembliɪdʒ/	act of bringing or coming together
<b>elude</b> (v)	/ɪˈluːd/	escape especially by a trick
<b>cultivate</b> (v)	/ˈkʌltɪveɪt/	make the mind fertile
<b>vivacity</b> (n)	/vɪˈvæsəti/	liveliness
<b>commingle</b> (v)	/kəmˈmɪŋɡəl/	mix together

THE ETERNAL WHY

7. <b>apprehension</b> (n)	/æprɪ'hensɪn/	anxiety about the future
<b>remonstrating</b>	/rɛmən'streɪtɪŋli/	protestingly
(adv.)		
8. <b>gaiety</b> (n)	/geɪəti/	merriment, cheerfulness
<b>scan</b> (v)	/skæn/	look at or study something carefully
<b>chattels</b> (n)	/tʃætəlz/	one's goods and belongings
<b>burly</b> (adj.)	/bɜ:li/	with a strong heavy body
<b>quake</b> (v)	/kweɪk/	shake
<b>frothing</b> (adj.)	/frɒθɪŋ/	full of or covered with foam
<b>prospect</b> (n)	/prɒspekt/	something one expects, chance
9. <b>shimmering</b> (adj.)	/ʃɪmərɪŋ/	shining with a soft light that seems to waver
<b>evanescent</b> (adj.)	ɪ:və'nesnt/	quickly fading, soon disappearing from memory
<b>perplexingly</b> (adv.)	/pə'pleksɪŋli/	in a confused manner
10. <b>bewildered</b> (adj.)	/bi'wɪldəd/	puzzled
11. <b>probe</b> (v)	/prəʊb/	explore or examine
12. <b>cross</b> (adj.)	/krɒs/	rather angry
<b>revive</b> (v)	/rɪ'vaɪv/	come or bring back to health
<b>chasm</b> (n)	/kæzəm/	deep opening in the ground, abyss, gorge
<b>precipice</b> (n)	/pre'sɪpɪs/	very steep or vertical face of a cliff
15. <b>pre-natal</b> (adj.)	/pri:'neɪtəl/	pertaining to a period before birth
<b>assimilate</b> (v)	/ə'sɪmɪleɪt/	become absorbed into the body
16. <b>primordial</b> (adj.)	/praɪ'mɔ:diəl/	existing at or from the beginning of the world
17. <b>subtle</b> (adj.)	/sʌtl/	not easy to describe, fine delicate
<b>indomitable</b> (adj.)	/ɪn'dɒmɪtəbl/	that cannot be defeated



<b>ebbing</b> (v)	/ 'ebɪŋ /	flowing out, receding
<b>opulent</b> (adj.)	/ 'ɒpjələnt /	having or showing signs of great abundance
<b>mirthful</b> (adj.)	/ 'mɜ:θfl /	full of happiness and merriment
<b>usurping</b> (adj.)	/ ju: 'zɜ:riŋ /	taking somebody's power might, position, wrongfully
<b>18. contemplate</b> (v)	/ 'kɒntempleɪt /	consider thoughtfully
<b>demoniac</b> (adj.)	/ dɪ'məʊniæk /	devilish
<b>dusky</b> (adj.)	/ 'dʌskɪ /	shadowy, dim
<b>muster</b> (v)	/ 'mʌstə /	to come or bring together
<b>19. disembodied</b> (adj.)	/ dɪsɪm'bɒdɪd /	separated from the body
<b>pent up</b> (adj.)	/ pent'ʌp /	not expressed, repressed
<b>snag</b> (n)	/ snæg /	some hidden difficulty or obstacle
<b>leonine</b> (adj.)	/ lɪ'ɒnɪn /	of or like lion
<b>imperious</b> (adj.)	/ ɪm'pɪəriəs /	proud and arrogant
<b>capricious</b> (adj.)	/ kə'prɪʃəs /	characterised by sudden changing in attitude or behaviour
<b>21. writhing</b> (n)	/ raɪðrɪŋ /	twisting or rolling about because of great pain
<b>exorcise</b> (v)	/ 'eksɔ:səɪz /	drive out an evil spirit by magic
<b>22. aureole</b> (n)	/ 'ɔ:riəl /	a halo, circle of light around the head of a holy person
<b>riddle</b> (n)	/ 'rɪdl /	puzzling question
<b>24. incessantly</b> (adv.)	/ ɪn'sesntli /	continuously, non-stop

**II. Pronunciation :**

It should be noted that there are many words which contain clusters of consonant sounds in the initial or final position of a syllable. Here are some examples of clusters generally mispronounced by students :

THE ETERNAL WHY

(a) *Biphonemetic clusters :*

(i) word	cluster	(ii) word	cluster
spell	sp--	milk	-lk
stand	st--	laughed	--ft
plain	pl--	pushed	--ft
break	br--	passed	--st
scale	sk--	capped	--pt
blame	bl--	watched	--tʃt

(b) *longer clusters*

(i) word	cluster	(ii) word	cluster
spray	spr--	attempt	--mpt
straight	str--	sixth	--ksθ
scrape	skr--	twelfth	-lfθ

Many speakers of English in India try to 'simplify' these clusters by either missing out a sound or inserting a small vowel sound ə/ in between the consonants. This should be carefully avoided.

*Practise saying the following words occurring in the story, taking care that you produce the consonant cluster in these words correctly :*

(i) static	stream	(ii) leaned	towards
slow	straight	fast	tempt
stop	stretch	built	distinct
step	stray	looked	drifts
froth		asked	depths

**III. Comprehension:**

- (a) (i) What did the child see in the moving water ?  
 (ii) Who were the three occupants of the boat ?  
 (iii) How did the child lay with the little pieces of wood that came floating on the surface of the water ?  
 (iv) Why was the child a bit cross with his mother for a short while ?  
 (v) What surprised the child as he looked constantly at the whirlpool ?
- (b) (i) What is the significance of the title "The Eternal Why" ?

- (ii) What kind of bridge had been built over the river Lunda?
- (iii) Why could the child not sit still in spite of his mother's remonstrance?
- (iv) Why was the child frightened as he saw some people steering their herds of donkeys and goats across the bridge?
- (v) How does the author describe the river in full swing (refer to Para 17)?

**IV. Vocabulary:**

- (a) Give the antonyms of the following words and use them in sentences of your own:

static, vaguely, satisfied, discouragement, heavy, indistinct, holy, descend, converge, deep.

**Example :** static - dynamic

The new boss has a dynamic personality ; he is sure to improve the efficiency of the office in a big way.

- (b) Find words from the passage which mean approximately the same as the following :

- (i) oppressively hot and humid
- (ii) serious and grim
- (iii) close fitting jacket
- (iv) quickly fading
- (v) pertaining to a period before the birth
- (vi) deep opening in the ground
- (vii) drive out an evil spirit by magic
- (viii) characterised by sudden changes in behaviour or attitude
- (ix) that which remains for ever

**V. Grammar:**

- (a) Change the narration of the following sentences from Direct to Indirect :

- (i) 'Why do we sit here mother ?' he asked.  
'We are eating the air child,' his mother replied.  
'Why do we eat the air, mother ?' asked the child.  
'We want to see a bit of life in the evening my son', she replied.

(ii) 'Where was the river born, father ?' he asked.  
 'It was born in the Himalayas, my child, from the cold, white snows on the roof of the world.'  
 'Where did the snow come from on the Himalayas, father ?'  
 'It was formed by the rain which the clouds poured down, my child.'

(b) Change the voice (from Active to passive and vice-versa) in the following sentences :

- (i) He heard his father's voice.
- (ii) His lips were covered with a smile.
- (iii) The child did not know this.
- (iv) He was beaten by the mystery.
- (v) He could see the vast sheet of rippling water.

**VI. Composition:**

(a) Construct an imaginary dialogue (15-20 lines) between a father and a son on the subject :

The Cycle of Water.

The dialogue should start like this :

Son : Dear father, where do we get water from ?  
 Father : Dear son, we get water from the sea, the rivers, the clouds, the springs and from under the surface of the earth.  
 Son : How does it rain ?  
 Father : .....  
 Son : Where does the rain water go ?  
 Father : .....  
 Son : How are the clouds formed ?  
 Father : .....

(b) Imagine that you are reproducing the dialogue between the father and the child in the story, 'The Eternal Why' to a friend a year after you had heard it What would you say ? (use Indirect form of narration only). (Not more than 150 words)



## 8

# What Though The Field Be Lost

(John Milton)

John Milton (1608-1674), often ranked next to Shakespeare amongst English poets, was born in London on December 9, 1608. Educated at St. Paul's School London and Cambridge University, he acquired great erudition at an early age and resolved to dedicate himself to the Muse. His best works include '*L' Allegro, Penseroso, Comus and Lycidas*. His masterpiece, however, is *Paradise Lost* which he wrote after he became completely blind at the age of 44. He is known as a Christian humanist poet whose style is grand and majestic. His themes have universal ramifications.

*Paradise Lost* is a great epic-probably the only accepted epic in English literature. It deals with a grand theme-the Fall of Man and Man's relation to God and the universe. This epic consists of twelve books. The present extract forms a part of Book I of the epic. In Book I, Milton begins with the statement of the theme. The cause of Man's fall is Satan, who, after his rebellion against God, has been expelled from Heaven and hurled into Hell. In the present extract, Satan, recovering from the initial shock and stupor of defeat, calls upon his followers to rise and try to make a heaven of hell. He valiantly encourages them to gird up their loins for another attempt. His guiding philosophy is: 'Better to reign in Hell than to serve in Heaven.'

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Farewell, happy fields,  
 Where joy for ever dwells. Hail, horrors, hail.  
 Infernal World and thou, profoundest Hell,  
 Receive thy new possessor - one who brings  
 A mind not to be changed by place or time. 5  
 The mind is its own place, and in itself  
 Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven.  
 What matters where, if I be still the same,  
 And what should be, all but less than he  
 Whom thunder hath made greater ? Here at least 10  
 We shall be free; the Almighty hath not built  
 Here for his envy, he will not drive us hence.  
 Here we may reign secure, and, in my choice,  
 To reign is worth ambition, though in Hell :  
 Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven.-  
 But wherefore let we then our faithful friends,  
 The associates and co-partners of our loss,  
 Lie thus astonished on the oblivious pool,  
 And call them not to share with us their part  
 In this unhappy mansion, or once more 20  
 With rallied arms to try what may be yet  
 Regained in Heaven, or what more lost in Hell ?

**Paradise Lost**

**(Book I Lines 249-270)**

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**Glossary and Notes:**

L.2	<i>hail</i>	—	welcome
L.3	<i>infernal</i>	—	hellish, belonging to hell
	<i>profoundest</i>	—	deepest
L.4	<i>possessor</i>		one who owns, ruler
L.6-7	<i>the mind .....heaven</i>		Most famous lines, often quoted, illustrate Satan's absolute stoicism. He claims absolute control of his soul, and perfect indifference to pain and circumstance. Hell, according to him, is a miserable state of mind, not a locality.
L.9	<i>less than he</i>	—	all but equal to or little less than, hardly less than he. It is an incoherent expression due to excitement (It may mean : all but more than he)
L.10	<i>thunder</i>	—	Satan is trying to convince his followers that God is not mightier than he, only His weapon is superior
L.12	<i>here-envy</i>	—	this place as an object of his envious desire
	<i>hence</i>	—	from here
L.13	<i>reign secure</i>	—	conduct ourselves in a way free from care or worry or fear of attack.
	<i>astonished</i>	—	stunned, astounded, struck senseless
L.18	<i>oblivious</i>	—	causing forgetfulness
L.20	<i>mansion</i>	—	place of abode
L.21	<i>rallied arms</i>	—	with re-collected weapons of fight
L.22	<i>loss in hell</i>	—	what worse can come in hell ? (than what has already happened) No loss can be greater than their recent loss.

**Understanding the Poem :**

1. Who is the speaker in the poem ?
2. Describe the state of mind of the speaker.
3. Explain lines 14—15.
4. What are the future plans of the speaker ?
5. What is the idea contained in the poem ?

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## 9

# The Song of India

(V.K. Gokak)

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Vinayak Krishan Gokak (1909) is a doyen in the field of English language and literature. He is an educationist with a vision and has been playing an important role in guiding the cause of the new priorities and strategies in the academic planning of the country. He is a versatile genius, a poet who writes with felicity and facility both in Kannada and English. He was awarded the Padmashri by the President of India for his valuable contribution in the field of education. Born at Savanur, Dharwar, Gokak received his higher education at Oxford. He has been Professor of English at the Fergusson College, Poona, Principal of Willingdon College, Sangli (Maharashtra), Professor of English at the Osmania University, Hyderabad, Director, Indian Institute of Advanced Study at Shimla, Vice-Chancellor of Bangalore University and Vice President of the Sahitya Academy. Two of his famous poetical creations are: *Songs of Life and Other Poems* and *In Life's Temple*. He also won the Sahitya Academy Award for his *Dyava Prithvi*, a lyric sequence in Kannada. His critical work *An Integral view of poetry—An Indian perspective* and his novel *Narahari* have won wide acclaim. In his poetry, he is generally preoccupied with the problem of cultural patterns of thought and behaviour.

*The Song of India* bursts forth as a cry of agony from the soul of a noble son of Mother India who sings a song of sympathy for the beggars, lepers, the toiling millions, the ignorant masses and children of the country.

Despite an undercurrent of pessimism, the poem draws sustenance from the optimism that Bharat Mata is destined to achieve its true glory and come out of the quagmire she is stuck in at present. The night, no doubt, is dark but the dawn is not far behind.

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'What song shall I sing of you, my Mother ?'

I asked

Shall I sing

Of the Himalayas with their snow-born peaks, 4

Of the three seas that wash your palm ?

Shall I sing

Of your clear dawn with its pure gold-streaks ?

Said the Mother imperturbable, calm :

'Sing of the beggar and the leper

That swarm my streets.

Sing of the filth and the dirt

That foul my sylvan retreats.' 12

'What song shall I sing of you, my Mother ?'

I asked.

'Shall I sing

Of your rock-cut temples, epics in stone, 16

Of your children that died to call you their own,

Their very own ?

Of the seers and prophets that hewed the straight path

For the man that pilgrims alone ?' 20

Said the Mother in indignant words

That beat into my ears like gong,

That flew about me, a pitiful thing.

Like great white birds :

'Sing of the millions that toil,

Sing of the wrinkled face

Indexing ignorance.

Sing of the helpless child 28

Born in a bleak, dark home.  
 Nervous, I yet would ask,  
 Deeming it my task :  
 'What song shall I sing of you, my Mother ?  
 What song ?  
 Shall I sing of the dam and the lake ?  
 Of steel mills, the ship-building yard ?  
 Of the men that work hard.

36

To technologise, to put you on the page  
 Of the Atomic Age ?'  
 Said the Mother : 'Of these you may sing.  
 But sing also of the strikes, early and late,

40

Of iron men that come in their wake,  
 Of class-war and its correlate.'  
 Querulous, I said:  
 Is there no song that I can sing of you,  
 Heart-whole, unalloyed ?  
 A song bathed in the stainless blue  
 Unvapouring in the void ?'  
 At that the Mother rose, draped in blue sky.

48

Milk-white oceans heaved round her. Their waves  
 Were the entrancing and enthroning light  
 On which she sat and wrote the Book of the Morrow.  
 Her forehead opened like earth's destiny.

52

Yielding the sun-god, cancelling all sorrow.  
 It was clear dawn. Like a nightmare fled the night  
 And the sun-beam was as the Hand that saves.

**Glossary and Notes:**

- L.1 *Mother* — Mother India, Bharat Mata (whom the poet addresses)
- L.5 *three seas* — the Indian Ocean, the Bay of Bengal, the Arabian Sea (these seas offer obeisance to Mother India, conceptualised as a goddess)
- L.8 *imperturbable* — one that cannot be disturbed or excited, calm, serene
- L.10 *swarm* — to be present in large numbers
- L.12 *sylvan retreats* — places of shelter in the forests, lovely natural shelters in the woods far from the madding crowds.
- L.19 *hewed* — cut, prepared, designed
- L.20 *that pilgrims alone* — he who chooses a lonely path or journey on a holy mission
- L.22 *gong* — a small bell, a metal disc that gives a resonant note when struck with a stick
- L.27 *indexing ignorance* — manifesting total lack of knowledge or education.
- L.34 *the dam and the lake* — here refers to the industrial and agricultural prosperity, and the environmental improvement through artificial means
- L.38 *atomic age* — the modern age of science and technology
- L.42 *class-war and its correlates* — the struggle between haves and have nots and the problems arising out of it
- L.43 *querulous* — complaining, irritable
- L.45 *heart - whole, unalloyed* — with all my heart a song full of only hope, joy and the glory of Mother India
- L.52 *Her forehead opened-etc.* — The lines 52-56 contain a vision of India's glorious future, the period of the Golden Age when India would be the real *Jagat Guru* as prophesied by her saints and seers. It would be a country where every hand would be busy, every head would be high and every heart would be happy.

**Understanding the Poem:**

1. What does the poet want to sing of as a tribute to his motherland ?
2. How does the Mother remind the poet that the darker side of life needs his greater attention and concern ?
3. What, according to the Mother, are the accompaniments of technological progress ?
4. What is the type of the tribute that the poet wants to pay to his motherland ?
5. What 'heart-whole, unalloyed' picture of Mother India is presented in the concluding lines of the poem ?

**Related Readings:**

1. *Where the Mind is Without Fear* by R.N. Tagore
2. *Bharat Mala - A' Prayer Song* by Arvind Mehrotra

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## 10

# After Twenty Years

(O Henry)

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Henry is the pen-name of one of the most popular short-story writers of America. This versatile genius, William Sydney Porter (1862-1910) has more than six hundred stories to his credit. His short story collections include *Cabbage and Kings*, *The Four Million* and *Hearts of the West*. His stories have excellent plots and interesting situations with 'surprise endings'. 'The Gift of the Magi', 'The Last Leaf' and 'Jimmy Valentine' are some of the best known of his short-stories.

*After Twenty Years* is one of O Henry's very gripping stories which is full of suspense and interest. It is a story of a promised rendezvous when two old friends meet after a lapse of twenty years. The circumstances have so changed during this long period that a happy re-union turns out to be a strange misadventure resulting in the arrest of one of the friends by the other.

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1. The policeman on the beat moved up the quiet road smartly. His smartness was habitual and not for show, for spectators were few. The time was only 10.0' clock at night. But the locality was one that kept early hours, and chilly winds and a drizzle had almost depeopled the streets.
  
2. Examining closed doors as he went, making various interesting and playful movements with his small stick, the officer, with his stalwart figure and smart movements, made a fine picture of the guardian of the law. He could see a few lights coming from a cigar store, an all- night hotel, and one or two tailoring shops completing the day's work. The majority of the houses were business places that had long since been closed. Now and then he would suddenly turn about, and cast his watchful eye along the peaceful road. He was thinking of what his boss had said in the morning: "pale face, square jaws, deep and dark eyes, and a little scar near the right eyebrow". As a part of the police organization, he felt a little ashamed that the name of this notorious criminal was still unknown, and that he was still at large. Printing counterfeit notes was a serious affair, he knew and the criminal must be caught. He took out his pocket-book under a lamp-post, and looked at the five-dollar note and the *reconstructed photograph*<sup>1</sup>. He became thoughtful : "Chicago-a thousand miles away. What chance ?" Then he said to himself aloud, 'Never mind, my boy, you have been a dutiful one these last eighteen years, and luck owes you a debt.'
  
3. He was in the habit of talking to himself, sometimes, when nobody was by. And he liked to refer to himself as a boy, though he was forty.
  
4. There was another thing on his mind. He looked at his watch, —a quarter past ten: fifteen minutes more. It was a long road; but "there was enough time. After a minute he descried about five hundred metres ahead the outline of a man near the doorway of a darkened hardware store. He quickened his steps. The place was slightly dark, lying exactly midway between two lamp-posts. He was about to address the man, but changed his mind and allowed the man to begin. The man realised that the way he was

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1. Police officials get a photograph of wanted criminal made on the basis of the description given to them by various people.

standing there must look suspicious to one who didn't know his story. So he said, as the policeman walked up to him: It's all right, officer; I am just waiting for a friend. It is an appointment made twenty years ago. It sounds a little funny to you, doesn't it? Well, I'll explain so as to remove all suspicion from your mind. About twenty years ago there used to be a restaurant where this store stands - "Brady's Restaurant"

5. 'Until five years ago', said the officer. It was torn down then'. He was about to take the hand of the stranger, but checked himself.
6. The man in the doorway struck a match and lit his cigar. The policeman had a chance to look at the face of the man.
7. 'Twenty years ago tonight,' said the man, I dined here at Brady's with Jimmy Wells, my best chum, and the finest chap in the world. We were both born and brought up here in New York, just like two brothers. I was eighteen and Jimmy was twenty. The next morning I was to start for the West to make my fortune. Jimmy was a *homing bird*<sup>2</sup>. You couldn't have dragged Jimmy out of New York; he thought it was the only place on earth. Well, we agreed that night that we would meet here again exactly twenty years from that date and time, no matter what our conditions might be or from what distance we might have to come. We felt that in twenty years each of us would have had his career made, and got what life had to give.'
8. 'It sounds pretty interesting,' said the policeman. 'Rather a long time between meets, it seems to me. Haven't you heard from your friend since you left.'
9. 'Well, yes, for a time we corresponded,' said the other. "But after a year or two we lost track of each other. Though Chicago was, what you call, my headquarters, I kept moving around a lot. But I know Jimmy will meet me here if he's alive, for he always was the truest, 'staunchest' old chap in the world. He'll never forget. I came a thousand miles to stand at this door tonight, and it's worth it if my old partner turns up.'
10. The waiting man pulled out a handsome watch, the lid of it set with small diamonds.

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2. One who kept confined to his home only and did not like to move out.

'Ten twenty-five', he said. 'It was exactly half past ten when we parted here at the restaurant door.'

'Made lots of money out in the West, didn't you?' asked the policeman.

11. 'Well, it wasn't bad, I must admit. I hope Jimmy has done half so well. He was somewhat slow in the brain, though he was a good fellow, I've had to compete with some of the sharpest wits in the world to earn my dollars. A man gets into the rut in New York. The West requires fighting and teaches it.'

12. The policeman took a step or two. 'I hope your friend comes around all right,' he said. 'Are you going to wait for some time in case he doesn't turn up at the appointed time?' he asked.

13. 'I'll give him half an hour,' said the other. 'If Jimmy is alive on earth he'll be here by that time. So long, officer.'

'Goodnight, Sir', said the policeman, passing on along his beat, examining doors as he went.

14. The wind was growing more chilly, and the drizzle was thickening. The few people who were out quickened their steps, their coat collars turned up and hands pocketed. And near the door of the hardware store the man who had come a thousand miles to fill an appointment with the friend of his youth, smoked his cigar and waited.

15. About twenty minutes he waited, and then a tall man in a long overcoat, with collar turned up to his ears, hurried across from the opposite side of the street. He went directly to the waiting man. 'Is that you, Bob?' he asked doubtfully.

'Is that you, Jimmy Wells?'; cried the man near the door.

16. 'Bless my heart!' exclaimed the new arrival grasping both other's hands with his own. 'It's Bob, sure as fate. I was certain I'd find you here if you were still in existence. Well, well, well, twenty years is a long time. The old restaurant is gone, Bob; I wish it had lasted, so that we could have had another dinner there. How has the West treated you, old man?'

'Nothing to complain of; it has given me everything I asked for.'



You have changed a lot, Jimmy. You look taller by eight or ten centimetres than when we met last.

'Doing well in New York, Jimmy?'

'Not so bad. I work in a departmental store as assistant manager. Good pay and other benefits. Come on Bob; we'll go round to a place I know of, and have a good long talk about old times.'

17. The two men started up the street, arm in arm. The man from the West, somewhat puffed up<sup>3</sup> by success, was talking of his possessions and of his important friends in Chicago and elsewhere. The other, covered with his overcoat, was listening with rapt attention. They had not yet taken a good look at each other's face.

18. They neared a medicine store lit brilliantly with electric lights. There each of them turned simultaneously to gaze at the other's face.

19. The man from the West stopped suddenly and let go the other's arm.

'You're not Jimmy Wells', he faltered. 'Twenty years is a long time, but not long enough to change a man's sharp nose to a flat one.'

20. 'It sometimes changes a good man into a bad one,' said the tall man. 'You've been under arrest for ten minutes, Bob, or whatever your name is. The Commissioner of Police, Chicago, longs to have a chat with you in connection with some bundles of five-dollar notes which have come his way. Come quietly, please, and no tricks. Before we go to the station, here's a note I was asked to give you. It's from the Assistant Sub-Inspector Jimmy Wells.'

21. The man from the West unfolded the little piece of paper handed to him. His hand was steady when he began to read, but it trembled a little by the time he had finished. The note was rather short.

22. 'Bob : I was at the appointed place on time. When you struck the match to light your cigar, I saw it was the face of the man wanted in Chicago. Somehow I couldn't do it myself, so I went around and got a plain-clothes policeman to do the job.'

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3. in a state of proud satisfaction

4. Police station

**Key to Phonetic Symbols**

/g/ get	/dʒ/ jam	/θ/ thin	/ʃ/ ship	/j/ yes
/tʃ/ chain	/ŋ/ long	/ð/ then	/z/ measure	
/i:/ beat	/ɑ:/ part	/u:/ boot	/ei/ late	/ɔɪ/ boy
/t/ bit	/ɒ/ hot	/ʌ/ but	/ɔ:/ go	/tə/ hear
/e/ pet	/ɔ:/ saw	/ɜ:/ bird	/aɪ/ fly	/eə/ pair
/æ/ bat	/oʊ/ put	/ə/ away	/aʊ/ now	/oʊ/ poor

**I. Glossary :**

- |                           |                |  |
|---------------------------|----------------|--|
| <b>1. on the beat</b>     | /ɒnðəbrɪt/     | On patrol duty in a fixed area                             |
| <b>spectators (n)</b>     | /spek'tetəz/   | persons who came to watch an event                         |
| <b>2. stalwart</b>        | /stɔ:lwɜ:t/    | strong and sturdy  |
| <b>at large (adj.)</b>    | /æt lɑ:dʒ/     | free, not confined, not under arrest                       |
| <b>counterfeit (adj.)</b> | /kauntə'fɪt/   | fake, made exactly similar in a bid to deceive             |
| <b>4. descried (v)</b>    | /dɪ'skrɪdɪd/   | saw a long way   |
| <b>quicken (v)</b>        | /'kwɪkən/      | increase the speed of                                      |
| <b>7. chum (n)</b>        | /tʃʌm/         | close friend   |
| <b>9. staunch (adj.)</b>  | /stɔ:ntʃ/      | firm, loyal and dependable                                 |
| <b>turn up (v)</b>        | /tɜ:n ʌp/      | appear as per appointment                                  |
| <b>11. get into rut</b>   |                | get used to a set routine of life                          |
| <b>13. so long</b>        | /səʊ lɒŋ/      | good bye   |
| <b>16. in existence</b>   | /ɪnɪg'zɪstəns/ | alive  |
| <b>18. gaze</b>           | /geɪz/         | look long and steadily in surprise or admiration           |
| <b>19. let go</b>         | /let ɡəʊ/      | leave, lose hold of  |
| <b>falter</b>             | /fɔ:l'tɜ:/     | move, walk or act hesitantly because of fear or indecision |

**II. Pronunciation:**

Here are a few guidelines that would help you in pronouncing some sets of words correctly :

(i) In words where d and j occur together, d is silent, e.g.

adjust		/ə'dʒʌst/
adjudge		/ə'dʒʌdʒ/
adjective		/ədʒɪktɪv/
adjunct		/ədʒʌŋkt/

(ii) b in the sequence bt and mb is generally silent, e.g.,

debt	/det /	lamb	/læm/
doubt	/daʊt/	comb	/kəʊm/
subtle	/sʌtl/	thumb	/θʌmf

(Note : b is not silent before t Where it occurs in the prefix sub as in subtend etc. Also, it is not silent in words like number, tumble, humble, etc.)

(iii) k before n in kn (initial position) is silent, e.g.,

knack	/n æ k/
knead	/ni:d/
knee	/ni:/
knob	/nɒb/

Now, pronounce and practise saying the following words :

Adjourn	kneel	womb
Adjoin	knife	limb
Adjacent	knigh	crumb
Adjudicate	knit	climb
Adjourn	knuckle	dumb

**III. Comprehension:**

- (a) (i) Why did the streets wear a deserted look ?
- (ii) What was the policeman thinking of ?
- (iii) How did the man from Chicago explain his presence on the road ?
- (iv) What did he think of his friend Jimmy ?
- (v) Why was he arrested ?

- (b) (i) Why were the police looking for the man from Chicago ?
- (ii) What had been the activities of two friends during the twenty years interval between their meetings ?
- (iii) Why did Jimmy Wells not personally arrest Bob ?
- (iv) How did Jimmy Wells recognize Bob ?
- (v) What transpired during the short meeting, between Jimmy Wells and Bob ?

**IV. Vocabulary:**

- (a) Form verbs from the following and use the verbs in sentences of your own :

People, examination, quick, suspicion, dinner, correspondence, thick, attention, loss, admission.

- (b) Use the following words as suggested :

- fine* as a *noun*, as a *verb* and as an *adjective*,
- picture* as a *noun* and as a *verb*
- long* as a *verb* and as an *adjective*
- square* as a *verb* and as an *adjective*
- face* as a *noun*, a *verb* and as an *adjective*
- round* as a *noun*, a *verb* and as an *adjective*
- near* as a *preposition* and as a *verb*
- arrest* as a *noun* and as a *verb*
- light* as a *verb*, as an *adjective* and as a *noun*
- step* as a *noun* and as a *verb*.

**V. Grammar:**

- (a) A complex sentence consists of a principal clause and one or more subordinate clause(s). A subordinate clause may be a Noun clause, an Adjective clause or an Adverb clause. Given below are few complex sentences.

Identify the principal clause and the subordinate clause in each of the sentences : (The name of the subordinate clause is given in brackets).

1. The majority of the houses were business places that had long since been closed. (Adjective clause)

2. It is an appointment that was made twenty years ago (Adjective clause).
3. We felt that in twenty years each of us would have had his career made. (Noun clause)
4. Jimmy will meet me here if he is alive. (Adverb clause)
5. His hand was steady when he began to read the note. (Adverb clause)

(b) Look at the following sentence :

Jimmy will meet me here if he is alive.

This pattern is :

Future tense - if - Present tense.

*Form as many sentences as possible from the tables given below :*

1.

Rita	will take the test will play the match	if	she is well. it suits her. she reaches here by morning.
------	---	----	--

If	I go to Mumbai I meet him	I shall convey your message. I shall have a talk with him.
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**VI. Composition:**

- (a) Imagine that you went to the house of a friend to borrow a book. On reaching there you found that his house was on fire. Describe, in about 150 words, what you saw there and what you did.
- (b) Write a paragraph (150 words) on :  
Waiting for an Old Friend.

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## 11

# The Tree Fell Down

(P.V. Dhamija)

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Dr. P.V. Dhamija teaches in the Department of Phonetics and Spoken English, Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages Hyderabad. He holds doctoral degrees both in English Language and English Literature. He is deeply engaged in creative writing in English, Hindi and Urdu. He takes particularly keen interest in poetry, and composes poetry in Urdu as well as in English.

He has published a novel *Love and Lust*, a collection of poems *Cracks in the Wall* apart from several professional books and papers.

'*The Tree Fell Down*' is a poem imbued with a deep meaning. It is a pungent satire on the culture of procrastination that is eating into the vitals of our society. The imagery is graphic and evocative, the similes and metaphors are apt and revealing. Moreover, the tree has been personified with a view to dramatising its fall, the resultant blockade and the traffic jam. The passing of time is highlighted in order to focus on the national pastime of putting off things till the catastrophe stares us in the face and clamours for attention.

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- The tree fell down  
 Across the busy road,  
 And blocked the traffic in a big way;  
 It was so tall and old. 4
- That it could have been an oak ;  
 Its skin was like a crocodile's,  
 And leaves, pale and crisp like wafers.  
 It lay sprawled on the road now  
 Like a crowd of rasta-roko hirelings. 8
- For years it had stood leaning above the road.  
 None bothered about its bristly warnings,  
 Which often well so feeble and gentle  
 That they must have been taken as playful pokings. 12
- It lost its natural poise,  
 Precariously balanced now,  
 It brushed against and bruised  
 Numerous vehicles running past it. 16
- Time passed, month after month,  
 It could no longer support itself  
 On its shaking tubercular stem.  
 And came crashing down. 20
- Like a skyscraper in an earthquake !  
 They've been gone now for hours  
 To fetch their massive cranes  
 To remove the monster from the way  
 The traffic can wait, patiently. 24

**Glossary and Notes:**

L.7	<i>wafers</i>	—	very thin, sweet biscuits
L.8	<i>sprawled</i>	—	lying across the road with branches spread out on right and left
L.11	<i>bristly</i>	—	prickly, rough, full of bristles
L.12	<i>feeble</i>	—	weak, dim, soft
L.13	<i>poking</i>	—	a push with a stick or a finger, a nudge
L.14	<i>poise</i>	—	balance, graceful position
L.15	<i>precariously</i>	—	unsteadily, unsafely
L.24	<i>crane</i>	—	machine for lifting heavy loads

**Understanding the Poem:**

1. Can you think of the tree as a symbol ? What does it symbolise ?
2. Why did none bother about the tree's bristly warnings ?
3. How did the tree convey its 'warnings' ?
4. What led to the crashing down of the tree ?
5. Who have been gone 'for hours' ? When are they expected to come back ?
6. What is the sting in the last line of the poem ?

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12

## The World Today is Wild With the Delirium of Hatred

(Rabindra Nath Tagore)

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Rabindra Nath Tagore (1861-1941), the author of *Gitanjali* that won him the Nobel Prize and made him famous all over the world overnight, was a versatile genius. He was a gifted musician and composer, a painter, an actor, a dramatist, a powerful speaker, a novelist, a short-story writer, a philosopher, a social reformer - all rolled into one. His poems and short stories have been translated into several languages of the world. His contribution to Indian culture and his influence on Indian thought and Indian poetry have been remarkable. He is the author of India's national anthem 'Jan-Gan-Man' and a very popular anthology piece : '*Where the Mind is without Fear*'.

In '*The World Today is Wild With the Delirium of Hatred*', Tagore appears as a thorough humanist who raises his voice of protest against the atmosphere of distrust and hatred prevailing in the contemporary world. This poem appears in the form of a song sung by some Buddhist Bhikshus in the play *Natir Puja* written by the poet.

Against a background of the clouds of war hovering in the sky and power bleeks being crazy in their preparations for war, the agonised soul of the poet finds no hope except in a prayer to the Almighty to 'Wipe away all dark stains from the heart of this earth'. He prays for a utopia of his own a world totally free from evil, hatred and war.

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THE world today is wild with the delirium of hatred,  
the conflicts are cruel and unceasing in anguish,  
crooked are its paths, tangled its bonds of greed. 4  
All creatures are crying for a new birth of thine.  
O Thou of boundless life,  
save them, raise thine eternal voice of hope,  
Let Love's lotus with its inexhaustible  
treasure of honey open its petals in the light.  
O Serene, O free, 8  
in thine immeasurable mercy and goodness  
wipe away all dark stains from the heart of this earth. 12  
Thou giver of immortal gifts  
give us the power of renunciation  
and claim from us our pride.  
In the splendour of a new sunrise of wisdom  
let the blind gain their sight  
and let life come to the souls that are dead. 16  
O Serene, O Free,  
in thine immeasurable mercy and goodness  
wipe away all dark stains from the heart of this earth. 20  
Man's heart is anguished with the fever of unrest,  
With the poison of self-seeking,  
With a thirst that knows no end.  
Countries far and wide flaunt on their foreheads 24  
the blood-red mark of hatred.  
Touch them with thy right hand,  
make them one in spirit,  
bring harmony into their life, 28  
bring rhythm of beauty.  
O Serene, O Free,  
in thine immeasurable mercy and goodness  
wipe away all dark stains from the heart of this earth. 32

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**Glossary and Notes:**

L.1	<i>wild</i>	— mad, crazy, uncivilized, untamed, savage, out of control etc.
	<i>delirium</i>	— restlessness, mental upheaval or disturbance
L.3	<i>crooked</i>	— not straight, dishonest, illegal
	<i>tangled</i>	— badly intervened
L.4	<i>new birth of thine</i>	— the poet is referring to Lord Krishna's promise to Arjuna (in the Bhagavad Geeta), the Pandav Prince that he would take birth in this world whenever he found evil prospering and virtue suffering a decline.
L.5	<i>of boundless life</i>	— immortal, having neither a beginning nor an end.
L.6	<i>them</i>	— mankind crying for help
L.7	<i>let Love's lotus-light</i>	— The poet calls upon God almighty to inspire people to love one another and spread sweetness all around.
L.13	<i>renunciation</i>	— self-denial, habit of giving up things without any attachment to them
L.21	<i>anguish</i>	— feeling or expressing severe physical or mental pain
L.24	<i>flaunt</i>	— make a show of something (usually used in derogatory sense)

**Understanding the Poem:**

1. What is the situation of the world as depicted by the poet ? (60 words)
2. What is the poet's prayer and to whom ?
3. What does the blood red mark of hatred signify ?
4. What type of a world would the poet like to live in ?
5. What is the central idea conveyed in the poem ?

**Related Reading:**

1. *No Men Are Foreign* by James Kirkup
2. *Lead Kindly Light* by Cardinal Newman



## 13

# Attacked by Pit Bulls

(Allan Rankin)

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*'Attacked by Pit Bulls'* is a very inspiring but hair-raising account of a daring fight put up by Johnny Ford, the charismatic mayor of Tuskegee (Alabama) when he is attacked by two ferocious dogs. He is all alone with no weapons on his body. But for sheer courage and the valiant advice of his father *'You gotta keep trying to do more than you thought you ever could'*, he would have lost his wits and his life.

The graphic account given below appeared only a few years ago in the popular monthly magazine *The Reader's Digest* under the caption *Drama in Real Life*. The third person narration makes a gripping reading.

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1. In a tangle of brush<sup>1</sup> near the crest of the hill, the two wild dogs lay sleeping. All at once, four small ears came erect at the sound of approaching feet. The dogs had been hungry a long time. They were pit bulls<sup>2</sup>, trained to kill by a drug dealer who had used them to guard his property. On their own for two months since escaping their keeper, they were mangy, starving and ready to assault anything.
2. They had the equipment : cold almond-shaped eyes; wedge-shaped heads; massive, V-shaped jaws that were capable of snapping shut with terrible force.
3. Only a few days before, neighbourhood residents had complained that wild dogs were killing pets and occasionally threatening people. Now, as the foot steps grew closer, the dogs sprang to ravenous attention on short, powerful legs. Lifting up their small black noses, they sniffed and tested the wind.
4. As the sun rose on that golden summer-like morning of October 19, 1988, Johnny Ford, the charismatic mayor of Tuskegee, Alabama, was already out jogging. Tall, athletic attired in blue sweat-suit, Ford, 46, bounded along with gusto, deeply inhaling the fresh air. He treasured these brief, solitary runs. He could think, plan, pray a little and fortify himself to face the welter of problems that always awaited him at the office.
5. On this morning, Ford headed for the hill that towered above the eastern edge of his fashionable Lake Tuskegee neighbourhood. As he started up the steep logging road, shadowy woods closed in on each side.
6. Less than half-way up, Ford wished he had settled for an easier route. But he had been taught to push himself. His papa's favourite saying was, "*Son, if a thing ever appears difficult, you ain't tryin' hard enough.*"  
 "Papa" was really his Uncle Charlie and "Mama" his Aunt Tennessee. They had adopted him as their only child when he was an infant. Charlie was a hospital orderly. Tennessee, a maid and cook.

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1. Land covered by small trees and undergrowth.

2. Very ferocious wild dogs with wedge-shaped heads and v-shaped jaws.

7. Uneducated, and as humble as their little two-room house, they had given him chances they'd never had. They saw to it that he was the first kid on the block to learn his ABCs, the boy with the shiniest shoes and sharpest-pressed pants, the one who joined the Boy Scouts, Bible classes, summer camps. Johnny was 13 when he saw the word mayor on the bronze monument in Tuskegee's public park. He and other black children were not allowed in the park then. "A mayor must be a very important person," he had figured, "if he can keep all our people out of this park. I think when I grow up, I'll be a mayor so that I can let everybody in." So the dream had begun. And Papa and Mama had pushed him to *try ever harder*.

Extra effort had made him the first black mayor of this thriving town of 15,000, home of Tuskegee University, which for generations had been a hub of progress for his race. "Trying hard enough," he had become *founding president*<sup>3</sup> of the World Conference of Mayors, an organization of 1,100 mayors from 33 countries.

8. Breathing heavily, Ford reached the crest of the hill. At precisely that moment, the dogs came crashing out of the underbrush at his right.
9. Pit bulls! There was time only to glimpse two sinewy bodies, one brown, one grey, streaking at him, snarling. The 18-kilo dogs sprang like panthers, nearly bowling him over, but he sidestepped, evading the main force.
10. Instantly, the dogs sprang again. Ford met them with feet spread in the fighting stance he had learnt in karate. Sidestepping, he thrust at the brown dog's head as it leapt at him, then kicked the grey dog as it jumped, knocking it aside.
11. The dogs lunged again and again, trying to get at his throat. Ford's blows made no impression.

*They're like robots, without feeling.*

**Pit bulls, he'd heard, 'had been known to fight for hours, without a whimper of pain even after they had broken and mangled each other beyond recognition.**

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3. The first president of an organization set up by his own efforts.

4. in a way that they lost their original shape and were difficult to be identified easily.

12. Less than a minute had passed. As he'd strike at one dog, the other would leap and slash, gnashing teeth finding their mark. Blood seeped through his sweat pants, and the taste made the dogs crazy for more. They pounded at him with increasing fury, their cold, glassy black eyes boring into his with a mindless *fixity of purpose*<sup>5</sup>. Ford was looking into the eyes of death.
13. It's hopeless, he thought. But filtering into the nightmare came the long-ago voice of his papa : "Son, to survive in this world, you *gotta keep trying to do more than you thought you ever could.*"
14. Wobbling on weakened legs, Ford fended off another mad rush of the dogs. He raced for the nearest tree, six metres away-but he was too slow. The dogs overtook him, snapping at his heels. In desperation he leapt into a spindly dead pine and scrambled upwards. The tree broke, throwing him into another skinny pine. Slowly it began bending towards the waiting dogs.
15. This can't be happening, he thought. It's a scene out of a horror movie.
16. The tree kept on bending, until his feet dangled about two metres from the ground. The brown dog jumped and bit deep into his right leg, near the knee. Ford gasped as blood spouted from the wound.
17. Only then did he fully comprehend : *these things really mean to destroy me.* The realization filled him with a towering rage, and fired his body with *adrenalin*<sup>6</sup>. He dropped to the ground and, growling and bellowing like the dogs themselves kicked and flailed at them, "If you're going to kill me," he screamed, "I am going to die fighting!"
18. The thick undergrowth made it hard for the dogs to get at him. Frustrated at being held off so long, they *went at*<sup>7</sup> each other. This time, Ford made it to a large pine. Crippled as he was, he tried to climb up its broad trunk, but springing from behind, the grey dog seized his right ankle. Teeth locked on the bone. The dog hung on, spinning and jerking in the air, trying to tear the foot off. The pain was excruciating.

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5. determination.

6. hormone produced by the adrenal gland that increases the heart rate and stimulates the nervous system

7. attacked

19. Ford struggled to shake the dog loose. Finally, thanks to Ford's heavy wool socks, the beast tumbled free. Ford managed to reach a limb<sup>8</sup> a couple of metres from the ground, and there, exhausted, he crumpled against the trunk. Still, the dogs came on. Clambering on to a bushy little persimmon tree next to the pine, they jumped and slashed repeatedly, nearly reaching him again.
20. After what seemed an age, Ford recovered enough to get to the next branch, out of the dog's range. His pursuers grew quiet, but took up a determined vigil below. He was lightheaded from loss of blood. His sweat pants were soaked red, and he was still bleeding. 'I can't just sit here till I faint and fall, he thought. I've got to do something.'
21. "Help!" Painstakingly, he climbed nearly to the top of the rotten old pine and began to shout, "Help! Help! Wild dogs!" First he yelled towards his home and his wife, Tas, about 1.5 kilometres away, then towards Marable East End Subdivision, 400 metres distant, downwind.
22. A new fear suddenly gripped him. *What if someone, is attacked trying to rescue me? He glanced at his watch : 9.10. What if I'm still here at three when school is out and kids come up to play? Suppose Tas or my own children learn I haven't reached the office and come looking for me.* He shuddered. Johnny, Jr, 17, and Christopher, 12, were brave but gentle boys; Tiffany, his daughter was only six.
23. For the time being, he decided it was better to keep yelling for help and to continue fighting the dogs. May be he could wear them down.
24. He inched back down the tree, broke off a limb and, leaning from a low branch, began swinging at the dogs, punching and gouging whenever they leapt at him. After nearly every punch, powerful jaws would lock on to the stick and have to be shaken loose. Several times, he was almost yanked from the tree.
25. At about 10.15 Nathaniel Long, a semi-retired farmer of 69, arrived at the home of Judy Crayton in Marable subdivision to return a garden hose. The two were chatting when, on the wind blowing from the hill behind the house. Long heard a faint cry for help.

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8. main branch of a tree



26. "Somebody's in trouble" Long said. He ran to his car. He drove it, bumping and wallowing, out into the scrubby field and uphill into the woods.
27. Ford had been warring with his captors for two and a half hours and was totally exhausted. He had beaten the dogs badly around the head and shoulders, yet they hardly seemed fazed. They stood with their eyes fixed on him, ready to dismember him or any other living thing that happened along.
28. Suddenly, Ford saw a blue car bouncing over the field towards him. It stopped 70 metres away and a man got out and waved. "Wild dogs !" Ford yelled "Get back in your car. Do you have a gun ?"  
"Yes, I've got a gun," the man hollered back.
29. To keep the dogs distracted Ford launched his hardest offensive yet. He climbed down from the tree. Immediately, they started leaping and snapping at him.
30. The car lumbered closer. Long took his gun from under his seat, leaned out of the window and fired several shots. The brown dog fell dead. The grey one, wounded, was about to escape into the bushes.
31. "No you don't," Ford muttered. He was afraid the wounded beast might later attack someone else. He asked Lone for the gun and staggered into the underbush after the still-dangerous animal. He finished it off with a final shot.
32. Ford sagged against a bush and gulped air. "I'll never be able to thank you enough, Im lucky to be alive", he said to Long.
33. However, Ford knew it was more than luck. Others might have surrendered to fear and simply given up. Papa was right, he thought *Keep trying harder, and you'll do better than you ever thought you could.*

**Key to Phonetic Symbols**

/g/ get	/dʒ/ jam	/θ/ thin	/ʃ/ ship	/j/ yes
/tʃ/ chain	/ŋ/ long	/ð/ then	/z/ measure	
/i:/ beat	/ɑ:/ part	/u:/ boot	/eɪ/ late	/ɔɪ/ boy
/ɪ/ bit	/ɒ/ hot	/ʌ/ but	/əʊ/ go	/ɪə/ hear
/e/ pet	/ɔ:/ saw	/ɜ:/ bird	/aɪ/ fly	/eə/ pair
/æ/ bat	/ɒ/ put	/ə/ away	/aʊ/ now	/uə/ poor

**I. Glossary :**

1. **tangle** (n) /tæŋɡl/ confused mass of branches, hair etc.
- crest** (n) /krest/ top of a floor or hill
- mangy** (adj.) /meɪndʒɪ/ shabby looking, suffering from a skin disease.
- assault** (v) /ə'sɔ:lt/ sudden violent attack
2. **snap shut** /snæpʃʌt/ close with a sudden, jerky movement.
3. **ravenous** (adj.) /rævənəs/ very hungry
- sniff** (v) /snɪf/ draw air in through the nose, discover a smell
4. **charismatic** (adj.) /kærɪz'mætɪk/ having power to inspire devotion and enthusiasm, gifted
- attired** (v) /e'taɪəd/ clothed, dressed
- gusto** (n) /gastəʊ/ enthusiastic vigour in doing something
- inhale** (v) /ɪn'heɪl/ breathe something in
- fortify** (v) /fɔ:tɪfaɪ/ strengthen
- welter** (n) /welteɪ/ disorderly mixture of things
5. **logging** (adj.) /lɒɡɪŋ/ cleared of forests etc.
7. **thriving** (adj.) /θraɪvɪŋ/ prospering, fast developing
- hub** (n) /hʌb/ central point of activity
8. **precisely** (adv.) /prɪ'saɪslɪ/ exactly, just
9. **sinewy** (adj.) /sɪnju:ɪ/ saving tough muscles
- snarl** (v) /sna:ɪ/ show the teeth and growl angrily
- evade** (v) /t'veɪd/ keep out of the way, avoid

10. stance (n)	/stæns/	position, way of standing
11. lunge (v)	/lʌndʒ/	make a sudden attack or thrust
robot (v)	/rəʊbɒt/	machine that can perform the functions of a person, operated automatically or by remote control.
whimper (v)	/wɪmpə(r)/	a soft cry
mangle (v)	/mæŋɡl/	damage something greatly
12. gnash (v)	/næʃ/	grind (one's teeth) together
crazy (adj.)	/kreɪz/	mad
13. nightmare (n)	/naɪtmɛə(r)/	frightening dream
14. wobble (v)	/wɒbl/	move unsteadily from side to side
fend off (v)	/fend ɒf/	defend oneself from
desperation (n)	/dɛspə'reɪʃn/	state of being desperate
spindly (adj.)	/spɪndli/	very long or tall and thin
scramble (v)	/skræmbl/	climb or crawl quickly
skinny (adj.)	/skɪni/	very thin
17. comprehend (v)	/kɒmprihend/	understand something fully
bellow (v)	/bɛləʊ/	make a deep loud noise like a bull
flail (v)	/fleɪl/	swing about wildly
18. excruciating (adj)	/ɪk'skru:ʃɪeɪɪŋ/	intense pain (physical or mental)
19. persimmon (n)	/pə'sɪmən/	a tree with large orange-red plum-like edible fruit.
20. vigil (n)	/vɪdʒɪl/	action of staying awake to keep watch
lightheaded (adj.)	/laɪtheadɪd/	feeling slightly faint or dizzy
21. yell (v)	/jel/	utter a loud, sharp cry
23. wear (somebody down) (v)	/weə/	weaken somebody by constant attacks
24. gouge (v)	/gu:ɔʒ/	make a destructive hit to create a hole

ATTACKED BY PIT BULLS

<b>punch</b> (n)	/pʌntʃ/	blow given with the fist
<b>yank</b> (v)	/jæŋk/	pull something with a sudden sharp tug
<b>25. hose</b> (v)	/həʊz/	stockings
<b>26. wallow</b> (v)	/wɒləʊ/	lie or roll about in mud
<b>scrubby</b> (adj.)	/skrʌbɪ/	covered with scrub
<b>27. captor</b> (n)	/kæptə(r)/	a person who captures a person
<b>fazed</b> (adj.)	/feɪzd/	flustered, confused, upset
<b>28. holler</b> (v)	/hɒlə(r)/	shout or yell
<b>29. distracted</b> (adj.)	/dɪ'stræktɪd/	disturbed, unable to concentrate properly
<b>offensive</b> (n)	/ə'fensɪv/	aggressive action
<b>31. stagger</b> (v)	/stæɡə(r)/	walk or move unsteadily
<b>32. gulped air</b> (v)	/ɡʌlpt eə/	breathed in air with an effort to recover from partial suffocation

II. Pronunciation :

The plural morpheme-(e)s (or third person singular tense form) is pronounced in the following three ways :

	/s/	after /P, θ, f, t, k/
-c(s)	/ɪz/	after /ʃ, s, ʒ, z, tʃ, dʒ/
	/z/	after all other sounds

Example :

(i)	cap + s	/k æ ps/
	laugh + s	/lɑ : fs/
	cat + s	/k æ ts/
	book + s	/bʊks/
	month + s	/mʌnθs/

**Note :** /θ/ + /s/ generally becomes /ðz/ in words like baths / bɑ : ðz / paths / pɑ : ðz / etc.

(ii)	push + es	/pʊʃɪz/
	ass + es	/æsɪz/
	watch + es	/wɒtʃɪz etc./
(iii)	boy + s	/bɔɪz/
	pray + s	/preɪz/
	bag + s	/bægz/ etc, etc.

*Now pronounce the following words correctly :*

mouths	noses	ears
pets	chances	dogs
pants	bushes	jaws
robots	branches	runs
sticks	badges	shoes

### III. Comprehension:

- (a) (i) Why were the pit-bulls in a mood to attack ?  
 (ii) Why did Johnny Ford treasure his morning walk ?  
 (iii) What was Ford's favourite saying ?  
 (iv) What was Ford's father's role in developing the personality of his son ?  
 (v) How was Johnny Ford finally saved ?
- (b) (i) How did the pit-bulls look like ? Describe their appearance in 30-35 words.  
 (ii) Write a pen-portrait of Johnny Ford in about 75 words.  
 (iii) How did his father's advice help Ford in his hour of difficulty ?  
 (iv) Describe Johnny Ford's fight with the pit-bulls in about 100 words.  
 (v) Johnny Ford came out of the struggle a more confident person. How ?

**IV. Vocabulary:**

(a) Match the words under A with their meanings under B :

A	B
attired	having tough muscles
precisely	understand fully
mangy	sudden violent attack
skinny	exactly
evade	very thin
snarl	shabby looking
thriving	dressed
comprehend	prospering
sinewy	avoid
assault	show teeth and growl angrily

(b) Give the antonyms of the following words and use these antonyms in sentences of your own :-

crest, inhale, lucky, attack, alive, fresh, quiet, humble, nearest, loose.

**V. Grammar:**

(a) Fill up the blanks with suitable prepositions :-

1. Ford headed \_\_\_\_\_ the hill that towered above the lake.
2. The dogs sprang \_\_\_\_\_ attention.
3. Ford wished he had settled \_\_\_\_\_ an easier route.
4. The dogs nearly bowled him \_\_\_\_\_ but he evaded the main force.
5. The dog leapt \_\_\_\_\_ him.
6. They were trying to get \_\_\_\_\_ his throat.
7. He had been known to fight \_\_\_\_\_ hours.
8. They pounded \_\_\_\_\_ him \_\_\_\_\_ increasing fury.
9. Blood spouted \_\_\_\_\_ the wound.
10. He thought he could wear the dogs \_\_\_\_\_.

(b) *Do as directed :*

(i) Four small ears became alert at the sound of approaching feet.

(Rewrite as \_\_\_\_\_ when they heard \_\_\_\_\_)

(ii) The neighbourhood residents had lodged a complaint.

(Rewrite the sentence using the word 'reside')

(iii) He treasured these solitary runs.

(Rewrite the sentence using the word 'treasure' as a noun)

(iv) Ford's blows made no impression.

(Use the verb form of 'impression')

(v) To survive in this world, you have to keep trying hard.

(Use the noun form of 'survive')

(vi) He began to shout, "Help. Help ! Wild dogs."

(Change the form of narration)

(vii) Powerful jaws had to be shaken loose.

(Change voice)

(viii) He heard a faint cry for help.

(Change voice)

(ix) "Wild dogs," Ford yelled. "Get back in your car. Do you have a gun ?"

(Change into Indirect form of narration)

(x) I am lucky to be alive.

(Rewrite as a complex sentence)

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## 14

# Slave ? No, Master

(Barda ki malik)

(Dr. Bhai Vir Singh)

(Translated by Prof. Gurbachan Singh Talib)

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Dr. Bhai Vir Singh (1872-1957) is popularly known as the father of modern poetry in Punjab. His creative genius produced not only poems of high merit but also plays and novels that have won wide acclaim in the field of literature. His poetical collections are: *Rana Surat Singh*, *Lakha de Haar*, *Matak Hularey* etc. Amongst his popular novels, *Sundari*, *Swatantar Kaur* etc. are well known. Most of his writings are being translated into other languages because of their literary excellence, mystical outpourings, religious persuasion and philosophical insights. Bhai Vir Singh has admirably imbibed the vision and ripeness of the Sikh Gurus.

'*Slave? No, Master*' is an exquisite little poem with a big idea in it. Humility is one of the greatest virtues in life. It is mightiest in the mightiest. The humbler a person is, the more powerful he becomes. God, who is the real master of us all, is never arrogant or proud. All are equal in His eyes and He blesses all alike.

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There was a man entered the market-place,

These words were hung about his neck :

*I am a slave ; who'll bid for me ?*

"Do you not spy his secret ?" someone said;

4

"He surely is no slave whose soul submits

To such humility.

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In truth, this slave is master of us all.”

**Glossary and Notes :**

- L.3 *bid for me* — order me to work for him, give me a command  
(To offer a certain price at an auction)
- L.4 *spy* — see through, understand

**Understanding the Poem :**

1. What is the central idea contained in the poem ?
2. Explain the symbolic significance of the poem (50-60 words).
3. What is the secret of the man referred to in line 4 ?
4. Who is the 'someone' referred to in line 4 ?

**Related Readings :**

1. *Leave This Chanting* by R.N. Tagore
2. *On His Blindness* by John Milton
3. *The Quality of Mercy* by William Shakespeare (From 'The Merchant of Venice')



## 15

# The Unrest of Desire

(Keki N Daruwala)

Keki Nasserwanji Daruwala, a recipient of the Sahitya Academy Award (1984) for his contribution to literature, was born in Lahore in 1937. He was educated at Government College, Ludhiana where he distinguished himself as a versatile genius. A very senior IPS Officer, he currently lives in New Delhi. His works include *Under Orion* (1970), *The Keeper of the Dead*, *Apparition in April* (1971), *Crossing of Rivers* (1976) and *Sword and Abyss* (1979), a collection of short stories. *Landscapes* won him the Commonwealth Poetry Award, Asia Region, in 1987. He has also edited anthology of Indian Poetry in English entitled '*Two Decades of Indian Poetry-1960-80*'. Mr Daruwala, popularly known as Keki, is a born poet. 'Writing a poem', says he, 'is like a clot going out of the blood.' This is true of all his poems which carry an intensity of their own, a down-to-earth realism, a penchant for vivid detail and precise phraseology and vibrant imagery. He occupies a place of pride in the galaxy of the Indian poets in English.

*The Unrest of Desire* is an excellent poem in which the poet conveys the idea that suppression of one's instincts (*i.e.* love, hatred, hunger etc.) is neither possible nor desirable. Social compulsions and ingrained reflexes may force a person to 'mask a slap on' his face or to 'bury the shadow in the heart' but he can never achieve more than a very temporary or transient success; 'the unrest of desire' is too strong to be suppressed. It must break free from the sides and reveal itself in true colours in one form or the other. The matrix of the poem is obviously fertilized by the Freudian concepts of libido, the unconscious and repression.

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The unrest of desire is lit up with eyes,  
whatever the mask you slap upon your face,  
however you tear at the soft throat of life  
and probe the salt-blood with your insistent tongue.  
The unrest of desire is revealed by eyes. 5

However you bury the shadow in the heart,  
under slabs of concrete and a coil of bone,  
however you wall the cave-impulse at the mouth,  
It will hammer at the sides and break free-  
however you bury the shadow in the heart. 10

You may etch the shadow on the cavern-wall  
and turn the drives into aborigine art,  
bison and stag loping in charcoal lines,  
You can't erase the burn. It will char your dreams,  
however you bury the shadow in the heart. 15

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**Glossary and Notes:**

L.4	<i>probe</i>	—	study, examine, look into, search
	<i>insistent</i>	—	not allowing denial or opposition, forceful, persistent
L.8	<i>cave impulse</i>	—	an impulse to be free and uncontrolled in one's activities and desires, animal instinct, primordial compulsions
L.11	<i>etch</i>	—	make a picture or a line with a needle like object
L.12	<i>Aborigine</i>	—	belonging to a very early period, primitive
L.13	<i>bison</i>	—	American buffalo, European wild ox
	<i>loping</i>	—	jumping, moving about at a fast pace
L.14	<i>erase</i>	—	remove by rubbing or scratching

**Understanding the Poem :**

1. What does the poet mean by 'The Unrest of Desire' ?
2. Where does the unrest of desire usually show itself ?
3. What, according to the poet, are the different ways in which people try to suppress or hide the unrest of desire ?
4. Why does a man, 'etch the shadow on the cavern wall' or 'turn the drives into aborigine art' ?
5. What is the central idea of the poem ? (50 words)

**Related Reading :**

1. *Sea Fever* by John Masfield



## 16

# The Boy Who Broke the Bank

(Ruskin Bond)

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Ruskin Bond, a famous Indian writer in English, was born in 1934 at Kasauli in Himachal Pradesh. He had his early education at Bishop Cotton School, Shimla. He took to writing at an early age and chose it as full time occupation at the age of twenty. Well-known amongst his publications are his novels : *The Room on the Roof* (1956) and *The Last Tiger* (1968). One of his stories *Flight of Pigeons*, has been reworked into a Hindi film entitled '*Janoon*' (Obsession). His important collections of short stories are *The Neighbourer's Wife*, *My First Love*, *The Maneater of Manjari*, etc. His *Room on the Roof* won for him Llewellyn Rhys Memorial Prize.

*The Boy Who Broke the Bank* is an interesting story that gives a glimpse into the working of the psychology of the people who get swayed by the first 'news' they hear without verifying its veracity. It shows how an innocent remark can sometimes lead to a catastrophe undreamt of by the person who makes the remark.

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1. NATHU grumbled to himself as he swept, the steps of the Pipalnagar Bank, *owned for the most part by Seth Govind Ram*, whose haphazard business dealings had often brought him to the verge of ruin. Nathu used the small broom hurriedly and carelessly; and the dust, after rising in a cloud above his head, settled down again on the steps. Soon Sitaram, the washerman's son, passed by, a bundle of pressed clothes balanced on his head. "Don't raise so much dust !" he called out to Nathu. "Are they still refusing to pay you another five rupees a month ?"
2. "I haven't even received my regular pay," complained the sweeper-boy, and it's the end of the month. Who would think a bank would hold up a poor man's salary ? As soon as I get my money, I'am off ! I won't work another week in the place," Nathu banged his pan against the dustbin two or three times, just to emphasize his point and give himself confidence.
3. "Well, I wish you luck," said Sitaram. And he plodded barefoot along the road. As he was delivering the washing, Sitaram overheard a woman saying how difficult it was to get someone to sweep the courtyard. "I know a sweeper-boy who might be able to work for you next month", Sitaram said. "He's with Seth Govind Ram's bank just now, but they are not giving him his pay, and he wants to leave."  
"Oh, and why aren't they paying him ?" asked Mrs. Prakash.  
"They must be short of money," replied Sitaram with a shrug.  
"Well, tell him to come and see me when he's free."  
Mrs. Prakash had to do some shopping, and she set out for the bazaar. A large shady tamarind tree grew near the clock tower, and it was here that Mrs. Prakash found her friend Mrs. Bhushan sheltering from the heat. Mrs. Prakash said, "Do you know, my dear, Seth Govind Ram's bank can't even pay its employees. Only this morning I heard their sweeper-boy hasn't been paid for two months!"
4. "If they can't pay their sweeper, they must be in a bad way!" exclaimed Mrs. Bhushan. "None of the others could be getting paid either."

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1. The story belongs to the days when banks were owned and run by Private enterprises.

5. News Spread. She left Mrs. Prakash at the tamarind tree and went in search of her husband, who was sitting under the fan in Jugal Kishore's electrical goods shop, playing cards with the owner.

"So there you are !" cried Mrs. Bhushan. "I don't know what's happening to this town. Even the bank is going bankrupt."

"What did you say ?" asked Mr. Kishore, sitting up suddenly. "Which bank ?"

"Why, Seth Govind Ram's bank, of course, I hear they've stopped paying their employees - no salary for over three months ! Don't tell me you have an account with them, Mr. Kishore ?"

"No, but my neighbour has !" he said, and called to the keeper of the barber-shop next door : "Faiz Hussain, have you heard the latest ? Seth Govind Ram's bank is about to collapse !"

7. Faiz Hussain, who was cutting the hair of an elderly gentleman, was so startled that he nicked his customer's ear. The customer yelped with pain and distress : pain, because of the cut, and distress, because of the awful news he had just heard. With one side of his neck still unshaved, he leapt out of his chair and sped across the road to a general merchant's store, where there was a telephone, he dialled Seth, Govind Ram's number. The Seth was not at home. Where was he, then Holidaying in Kashmir, 800 kilometres away ? Oh, was'that so ? He hurried hack to the barber-shop and told Faiz Hussain. "The bird has flown ! Definitely, it means a collapse". And he dashed out of the shop and made a beeline for his office and cheque-book.
8. The news spread through the bazaar like a forest fire. From the general merchant's it travelled to the tea-shop, circulated amongst the customers, and then spread with them in various directions, to the pan-seller the tailor, the fruit-vendor, the jeweller, the beggar sitting on the pavement.
9. Old Ganpat, the beggar, had a crooked leg and had been squatting on the pavement for years, calling for alms. In the evening someone would come with a barrow and take him away.



He had never been known to walk. But now, on learning that the bank was about to collapse, Ganpat astonished everyone by leaping to his feet and actually running towards the bank. It soon, became known that he had well over a thousand rupees in savings.

10. Chaotic situation. Men stood in groups at street corners, discussing the situation. Some speculated on the reasons for the crash, putting it all down to Seth Govind Ram's pleasure loving ways. The Seth had fled the state, said one. He had fled the country, said another. Others insisted that he was hiding somewhere in the town. And there was a rumour that he had hanged himself from the tamarind tree.
11. Someone with a relative Working' as a clerk in the bank decided to phone him. "I don't know anything about it," said the clerk, "except that half the town' is here, trying to take out their money. Everyone seems to have gone mad !"
12. By the afternoon the Bank had done through all its *ready money*, and the harassed manager was helpless. Emergency funds could only be obtained from one of the government banks, any how it was nearly closing time. The clerks shut down their counters. But the people outside were shouting, "We want our money. Give it to us today, or we'll break in." "Fetch Seth Govind Ram; we know he's hiding in the vaults."
13. The manager came to the door and declared that the bank had plenty of money, that they could withdraw all they wanted the following morning.  
"We want it now" chanted the people. "Now, now, now !"
14. A few stones were thrown, and the manager retreated indoors, closing the iron grille-gate. A brick hurtled through the air and smashed into the plate-glass window advertising the bank's assets.
15. Then the police arrived They climbed the steps of the bank, and using their lathis, pushed the crowd back. Gradually, everyone dispersed, shouting that they would be back in the morning.

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1. Cash kept as reserve for day to day transactions.

16. Nathu arrived early the next day to sweep the steps of the bank. He saw the refuse and the broken glass and the stones cluttering up the steps. Raising his hands in horror, he cried, "Goondas ! May they suffer from a thousand ills ! It was bad enough being paid irregularly, now I must suffer an increase of work." He smote the steps with his brooms, scattering the refuse.
17. "Good morning, Nathu," said Sitaram, getting down from his bicycle; "You'll have to take up a new job I suppose, now that the bank is closing."  
"What did you say ?" asked Nathu.  
"Haven't you heard ? The bank's gone bankrupt You'd better hang around until the others arrive and then demand your money too. But you'll be lucky if you get it!" He waved cheerfully, and pedalled away.
18. When Nathu finished sweeping the steps, he sat down to await the arrival of the manager. He was determined to get his pay. Who would have thought the bank would collapse ? he asked himself, looking thoughtfully across the street. I wonder how it could have happened.....



Key to Phonetic Symbols

/g/ get	/dʒ/ jam	/θ/ thin	/ʃ/ ship	/j/ yes
/tʃ/ chain	/ŋ/ long	/ð/ then	/z/ measure	
/t:/ beat	/ɑ:/ part	/u:/ boot	/eɪ/ late	/ɔɪ/ boy
/t/ bit	/n/ hot	/ʌ/ but	/əʊ/ go	/ɪə/ hear
/e/ pet	/ɔ:/ saw	/ɜ:/ bird	/aɪ/ fly	/eə/ pair
/æ/ bat	/ɒ/ put	/ə/ away	/aʊ/ now	/ʊə/ poor

I. Glossary:

1. **grumble** (v) /ˈɡrʌmbəl/ complain or protest in an ill tempered way
- haphazard** (adj.) /ˈhæpˌhæzəd/ without order or plan
- verge** (n) /vɜːdʒ/ edge, close to a point where something new begins
3. **plod** (v) /plɒd/ walk with difficulty, trudge
- shrug** (n) /ʃrʌɡ/ movement of shoulder raising to express indifference
5. **bankrupt** (adj.) /ˈbæŋkrʌpt/ person judged by a law court to be unable to pay his debt
7. **was startled** (v) /w əz ˈstɑːtld/ got a sudden shock or surprise
- nick** (v)-- /nɪk/ make a small cut
- yelp** (v) /jelp/ give out a short sharp cry
- awful** (adj.) /ɔːfl/ terrible
- make a beeline for** (v) /meɪk ə ˈbiːlɪnfa/ go directly towards
9. **squat** (v) /skwɒt/ sit on one's heels with knees drawn up under the body
- alms** (n) /ɑːmz/ money, clothes, food given to the poor people
- barrow** /ˈbærəʊ/ small cart with two wheels
10. **chaotic** (adj.) /keɪˈɒtɪk/ in a disorganised state
- speculate** (v) /spekjuleɪt/ guess, form an opinion without definite evidence
- rumour** (n) /ˈruːmə/ information spread about by being talked about

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11. harassed (adj.)	/hæ'rɒst/	troubled and annoyed
12. vault (n)	/vɔ:lt/	cellar or underground room used for storing things
13. chant (v)	/tʃɑ:nt/	sing
14. retreat (v)	/rɪ'tri:t/	withdraw when faced with danger or difficulty
grille (n)	/grɪl/	protective screen of metal bars
hurtle (v)	/'hɜ:tl/	move violently in a specific direction
asset	/æset/	valuable or useful quality or skill
refuse (n)	/refju:s/	rubbish, waste or worthless material
clutter (v)	/'klʌtə/	fill or cover something in an untidy way
17. hang around	/'hæŋ ə'raʊnd/	keep standing or moving about doing nothing.

II. Pronunciation :

There are three vowel sounds that generally confuse those speakers of English in India who are using English as a second language.

These sounds are

/ ə / as in about, away, mother etc.

/ ʌ / as in but some, just, mother etc.

/ ɜ: / as in bird, heard, err, earn etc.

It is so in the case of Indian speakers of English because in most Indian languages there is only one sound corresponding to these three sounds.

Here is an exercise for drill by students :

/ ʌ /	/ ɜ: /
bud	bird
shut	shirt
gull	girl
luck	lurk

study  
cut  
hut  
bust  
/ə/  
again  
ahead  
beggar  
alike  
summer  
tower

sturdy  
curd  
hurt  
burst

Now find words in the story having any one or more of the sound (s)

/ ə, ʌ, ɜ: / and Fill up the blanks below

/ə/

/ʌ/

/ɜ:/

for

some

verge

sweeper

grumble

work

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**III. Comprehension :**

- (a) (i) What was Seth Govind Ram's reputation as a business man ?
- (ii) What was Nathu Ram's problem ?
- (iii) How did Faiz Hussain, the keeper of the barber shop, take the news of the bank's collapse ?
- (iv) How did people disperse in the evening ?
- (v) What was Nathu Ram's reaction as he saw the bank steps full of stones ?
- (b) (i) How did Sita Ram start the rumour regarding the bankruptcy of the bank ?
- (ii) What role did Mrs. Prakash play in spreading the news ?
- (iii) How and why did the elderly gentleman in the barber's chair react on hearing the news of the bank's threatened collapse ?
- (iv) How did Ganpat astonish everyone ?

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- (v) Explain, in 5-6 sentences only, the chaotic situation arising out of the news of the collapse of the bank.

**IV. Vocabulary:**

(a) There are a large number of such verbs as can be conjugated by adding -(e)d only but there are several verbs that have irregular forms. Some such verbs (belonging to the second group) appearing in the story, are given below :

Fill in the blanks :

Verb	Past Tense form	Past Participle form
sweep	swept	swept
_____	brought	brought
rise	_____	_____
think	_____	_____
hold	_____	_____
leave	_____	_____
_____	grew	_____
_____	knew	_____
_____	leapt	_____
_____	fled	_____
_____	smote	_____

- (b) Use the following words as nouns and as verbs :  
 bundle, refuse, clock, shelter, account, chair, tailor, bank, rumour, increase, brick.  
 Example: bundle  
 Noun : She is carrying a big bundle of books on her head.  
 Verb : The entire team was bundled out in just two hours.

**V. Grammar:**

Simple declarative sentences can be classified into five main patterns:

- Pattern I : NP + Verbal Group  
 The silly old man / passed away.
- Pattern II: NP + VG + complement  
 The soldier / looked / tired.  
 Ram / was / very happy.

The story / appears / interesting.

**Pattern III:** NP + VG + Object

Ram / wrote / a letter.

The peon / rang / the bell.

The principal / issued / the orders.

**Pattern IV:** NP + VG + Indirect object + Direct object

Radha / teaches / us / English.

She / gave / me / a pen.

The President / awarded / her / a good medal

**Pattern V:** NP + VG + Object (Subject complement)

(Object complement)

They / made / him / a king. (object complement)

She / left / him / a broken woman. (subject-complement)

He / proved / her / a good husband. (subject complement)

He / proved / her / innocent. (object complement)

Now, here are some sentences from the story. Analyse the sentences and identify the pattern.

(i) Nathu swept the steps of the bank.

(ii) The dust settled down.

(iii) I know a sweeper-boy.

(iv) They are not giving him his pay.

(v) Mrs. Prakash found her friend Mrs. Bhushan

(vi) I must suffer an increase of work.

**Example :**

Nathu / swept / the steps of the bank.

NP      VG

object

Pattern III

## VI. Composition :

(a) Imagine you are Nathu. Describe, in your own words, what you saw as you went to the bank in the morning next day. (Not more than 100 words).

(b) Write a pen-portrait of Nathu, the innocent sweeper boy. (150 words)

(c) Write a paragraph on : An Indian Beggar.

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## 17

### Still Life

(A.K. Ramanujan)

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Attipat Krishnaswami Ramanujan was born in Mysore in 1929. Educated at Maharaja's College, Mysore, he was Fulbright Scholar at Indiana University in 1960-62. He was a lecturer in English Literature in Quilon, Belgaum and Baroda for eight years. For the last 25 years or so, he is in America where he has been working as Professor of Dravidian Studies and Linguistics. His works include *Fifteen Tamil Poems*, *The Strikers*, *The interior Landscape*, *No Lotus in the Navel*, *Relations*, *Speaking of Siva* and *Selected Poems*.

Although Ramanujan has lived in the West for a long time, his poetry is rooted largely in his Indian origin and experience. His poems are analytical and objective, his language has an air of clinical efficiency about it, and his images are hard, vivid and precise. He has made his mark as linguist, translator and folklorist.

In *Still Life*, the poet delineates the contours of longing, created by separation in a very subtle, dramatic and impassioned vein. The lover in the poem accepts the facts of loneliness and craves for another meeting with his beloved. Thus *Still Life* is not so still: the lover has a lingering look, at the traces of his beloved's bite on sandwich, bread and other eatables. It is a picture of a basically sensual love without any spiritualization in it. A non-event has artistically been made into an event by the poet in this lovely poem.

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When she left me  
*after* lunch, I read  
for a while.  
But I suddenly wanted 4  
to look again  
and I saw the half-eaten  
sandwich,  
bread, 8  
lettuce and salami  
all carrying, the shape  
of her bite.

---

**Glossary and Notes:**

- |     |                     |   |   |
|-----|---------------------|---|---|
| L.2 | <i>I read-while</i> | — | was he really reading ? could he concentrate ?                |
| L.9 | <i>lettuce</i>      | — | green leaves used as salad or food                            |
|     | <i>Salami</i>       | — | sausage salted and flavoured with spices, usually eaten cold. |

**Understanding the Poem:**

1. Who is 'she' in the poem ? Where did she meet the speaker ?
2. Why did the lover suddenly want 'to look again' ?
3. What did he see when he looked again ?
4. What thoughts passed the lover's mind as he looked at 'the shape of her bite' ?
5. What is the central idea contained in the poem ?

**Related Readings:**

1. *Virginal* by Nissim Ezekiel
2. *Love Song* by Nissim Ezekiel
3. *No More My Dear* by Sir Philip Sydney
4. *The Last Ride Together* by Robert Browning
5. *When I Have Fears* by John Keats.

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## 18

# Is This The End ?

(Aurobindo Ghose)

Sri Aurobindo (1872 - 1950), a great poet, philosopher, spiritualist and our national seer was born on 15th August, 1872 at Konnagar in West Bengal. His father was a rich and influential person who sent him for education first to Loretto Convent, Darjeeling and then to England at the age of seven. In England, Sri Aurobindo displayed his keen interest in and understanding of literature and philosophy and mastered Greek, Latin and English languages. He returned to India in 1893 and joined Baroda State Service.

In India he came into contact with the revolutionaries of Bengal and took an active part in National Movement for Freedom. He edited several journals and organised groups of dedicated youth to work for the freedom of India. He was involved in the famous Alipore Bomb Case, but was acquitted of the charge.

In April 1910 Sri Aurobindo shifted to Pondicherry where he devoted all his life in spiritual pursuits. There he wrote several plays, poems and books on philosophy. *Life Divine*, an excellent philosophical work, is his magnum opus. An Ashram after his name came up at Pondicherry and he was joined by many devotees besides Ms Mira, a French lady, whom people called 'Mother'. He breathed his last on December 5, 1950. Sri Aurobindo's importance as a philosopher lies in his effort at synthesizing the various forms of philosophies and then taking them to a spiritual culmination. He believes that the process of Salvation is not to stop at intellectual level. It has to continue further till it reaches the stage of supramental consciousness a state of divine bliss - param ananda. This philosophy is beautifully expressed in the poem '*Is This The End ?*' where the poet inspires the reader to venture forth into the unknown realms of spirituality much above the intellectual or physical bliss.

Is this the end of all that we have been,  
 And all we did or dreamed,  
 A name unremembered and a form undone,  
 Is this the end ?

4

A body rotting under a slab of stone  
 Or turned to ash in fire,  
 A mind dissolved, lost its forgotten thoughts,  
 Is this the end ?

8

Our little hours that were and are no more,  
 Our passions once so high  
 Being mocked by the still earth and calm sunshine,  
 Is this the end ?

12

Our yearnings for the human Godward climb  
 Passing to other hearts  
 Deceived, while smiles towards death and hell the world,  
 is this the end ?

16

Fallen is the harp, shattered it lies and mute;  
 Is the unseen player dead ?  
 Because the tree is felled where the bird sang,  
 Must the song too hush ?

20

One in the mind who planned and willed and thought,  
 Worked to reshape earth's fate,  
 One in the heart who loved and yearned and hoped.  
 Does he too end ?

24

The immortal in the mortal is his Name;  
An artist Godhead here  
Ever remoulds in dimmer shapes,  
Unwilling to ease 28

Till all is done for which the stars were made,  
Till the heart discovers God  
And the soul knows itself. And even then  
There is no end. 32

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**Glossary and Notes:**

L.3	<i>A name-undone</i>	—	A man is forgotten soon after his death and his body mingles with the dust. Should this be the end of life ?
L.9	<i>little hours</i>	—	short-lived, transient lives.
L.13	<i>Our yearnings</i> <i>.....deceived</i>	—	The spirit desired to attain godhood, become one with divinity but the failure of our spiritual longings deceived us and kept us trapped in the trivialities of life.
L.17	<i>harp</i>	—	here figuratively compared to the human body.
L.18	<i>Unseen player</i>	—	Spirit, the divine spirit which is at the heart of all creation
L.19	<i>tree</i>	—	human body.
	<i>bird</i>	—	spirit
L.20	<i>hush</i>	—	stop
L.23	<i>one</i>	—	the divine spark in man
L.26	<i>artist Godhead</i>	—	God who is an artist
L.27	<i>Ever - shapes</i>	—	God constantly takes new shapes and forms having all divine qualities in miniature forms.
L. 29	<i>Till - made</i>	—	till the spirit has realised its true self,, its divinity.

**Understanding the Poem:**

1. The poet presents a view of life in this poem. What is it ?
2. What is normally the end of life ?
3. Why is the poet not prepared to accept that physical death is the end of life ?
4. What do the 'harp' and the 'tree' symbolise ? Explain in about 60 words.
5. What is the central idea contained in the poem ? (60 words)

**Related Readings:**

1. *Ode to Intimations of Immortality* by William Wordsworth.
2. *A Dialogue Between the Body and the Soul* by Andrew Marvell.
3. *The Song of Myself* by Walt Whitman.



## 19

# The Conjuror's Revenge

(Stephen Leacock)

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Stephen Butler Leacock (1869-1944) was a political economist from Canada. He is better known, however, for his forty odd internationally known popular publications full of light-hearted comicality. His literary works include his collection of essays and farcical sketches *Literary Lapses* and *Winnowed Wisdom*. His collection of short-stories *Nonsense Novels* is also a very popular book. The incongruity of human conduct, arising from social frailties and maladjustments, forms the subject of his lively humour. His humour is often satirical and has, at times, serious undertones.

*The Conjuror's Revenge* is one of Leacock's typical interesting stories with their stings in the tail. A conjuror who earns his living by showing some tricks is badly humiliated when one of the spectators, who poses to be a rather sharp-witted fellow, belittles all his tricks and ridicules him with his 'he-had-it-up-his-sleeve' remarks. Growing desperate, the conjuror decides to hit back. He finally succeeds in having the last laugh and revenging himself full on the 'Quick Man'.

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1. 'Now ladies and gentlemen', said the conjuror, 'having shown you that the cloth is absolutely empty, I will proceed to take from it a bowl of goldfish. *Presto!*'
2. All around the hall people were saying, 'Oh, how wonderful ! How does he do it ?'
3. But the *Quick Man*<sup>2</sup> on the front seat said in a big whisper to the people near him, 'He-had-it-up —his-sleeve.'
4. Then the people nodded brightly at the Quick Man and said, 'Oh of course', and everybody whispered round the hall, 'he-had-it-up-his-sleeve.'
5. 'My next trick', said the conjuror, 'is the famous Hindostance rings. You will notice that the rings are apparently separate; at a blow they join (clang, clang, clang) — presto !'
6. There was a general buzz of *stupefaction* till the Quick Man was heard to whisper, 'He-must-have-had-another-lot-up-his-sleeve.'
7. Again everybody nodded and whispered, 'The-rings-were-up-his-sleeve.'

The brow of the conjuror was clouded with a gathering frown.

8. 'I will now', he continued, 'show you most amusing trick by which I am enabled to take any number of eggs from a hat. Will some gentleman kindly lend me his hat? Ah, thank you Presto !'
9. He extracted seventeen eggs, and for thirty-five seconds the audience began to think that he was wonderful.
10. Then the Quick Man whispered along the front bench, 'He-has-a-hen-up-his-sleeve,' and all the people whispered in on, 'He-has-a-lot-of-hens-up-sleeve.'

The egg trick was ruined.

11. It went on like that all through. It transpired from the whispers of the Quick Man that the conjuror must have concealed up his

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1. The word mean 'quick'. But here the conjuror uses it everytime he performs the trick. The moment he says 'Presto', the desired result is produced.

2. A rather smart man who claims that he knows the secret of all the tricks shown by the conjuror.



sleeve, in addition to the rings, hens, and fish, several packs of cards, a loaf of bread, a doll's cradle, a live guinea-pig, a fiftycent piece, and a rocking-chair.

12. The reputation of the conjuror was rapidly sinking below zero. At the close of the evening he rallied for a final effort 'Ladies and gentlemen, he said, 'I will present to you, in conclusion, the most famous Japanese trick recently invented by the natives of Tipperary. Will you, sir,' he continued, turning towards the Quick Man, 'will you kindly hand me your gold watch?'

It was passed to him.

13. 'Have I your permission to put it into this mortar and pound it to pieces?' he asked savagely.

The Quick Man nodded and smiled.

14. The conjuror threw the watch into the mortar and grasped a sledge hammer from the table. There was a sound of violent smashing. 'He-'s-slipped-it-up-his-sleeve', whispered the Quick Man.

15. 'Now, sir', continued the conjuror. 'will you allow me to take your handkerchief and punch holes in it? Thank you. You see, ladies and gentlemen, there is no deception; the holes are visible to the eye.'

16. The face of the Quick Man beamed. This time the real mystery of the thing fascinated him.

'And now, sir, will you kindly pass me your silk hat and allow me to dance on it? Thank you.'

17. The conjuror made a few rapid passes with his feet and exhibited the hat crushed beyond recognition.

18. 'And will you now, sir, take off your celluloid collar and permit me to burn it in the candle? Thank you, sir. And will you allow me to smash your spectacles for you with my hammer? Thank you.'

19. By this time the features of the Quick Man were assuming a puzzled expression. 'This thing beats me', he whispered. 'I don't see through it a bit.'

20. There was a great hush upon the audience. Then the conjuror drew himself up to his full height and, with a withering look at the Quick Man, he concluded:
21. 'Ladies and gentlemen, you will observe that I have, with this gentleman's permission, broken his watch, burnt his collar, smashed his spectacles, and danced on his hat. If he will give me the further permission to paint green stripes on his overcoat, or, to tie his suspenders in a knot, I Shall be delighted to entertain you. If not, the performance is at an end'.
22. And amid a glorious burst of music from the orchestra the curtain fell, and the audience dispersed, convinced that there are some tricks, at any rate, that are not done up the conjuror's sleeve.



**Key to Phonetic Symbols**

/g/ get	/dʒ/ jam	/θ/ thin	/ʃ/ ship	/j/ yes
/tʃ/ chain	/lɔ̃/ long	/ð/ then	/z/ measure	
/i:/ beat	/ɑ:/ part	/u:/ boot	/eɪ/ late	/ɔɪ/ boy
/t/ bit	/ɒ/ hot	/ʌ/ but	/əʊ/ go	/tə/ hear
/e/ pet	/ɔ:/ saw	/ɜ:/ bird	/aɪ/ fly	/eə/ pair
/æ/ bat	/ɒ/ put	/ə/ away	/əʊ/ now	/pə/ poor

**1. Glossary :**

- |                            |                 |  |
|----------------------------|-----------------|--|
| <b>1. conjuror (n)</b>     | /kʌndʒərə/      | person who performs conjuring tricks.  |
| <b>4. nod (v)</b>          | /nɒd/           | to make a sign by shaking one's head as if in affirmation.   |
| <b>He had...sleeve</b>     |                 |  |
|                            |                 | The Quick Man tried to belittle the importance of every trick saying that the conjuror was hiding things up his sleeve and was only taking them out cleverly and was thus fooling the people around. |
| <b>5. Clang (n)</b>        | /klæŋ/          | sound produced by the rings striking against one another.  |
| <b>6. stupefaction (n)</b> | /stju:pr'fækʃn/ | extreme surprise that numbs the senses.  |
| <b>11. transpire (v)</b>   | /træns'paɪə/    | happen   |
| <b>conceal (v)</b>         | /kən'si:l/      | hide, keep from being seen a country in Ireland  |
| <b>13. mortar (n)</b>      | /mɔ:tə/         | strong bowl in which substances are crushed and ground.  |
| <b>14. sledge-hammer</b>   | /sledʒ hæmə/    | a heavy hammer   |
| <b>15. deception</b>       | /dr'sepʃn/      | deceit, act of deceiving   |
| <b>18. collar (n)</b>      | /kɒlə/          | part of garment that fits round the neck   |

**20. a withering look**

a look full of extreme contempt, a look aiming at belittling and cutting down the Quick Man—to make him feel belittled.

**21. suspenders (n)** /sə'spendəz/

pair of braces, i.e. straps coming round the shoulders to support trousers

**II. Pronunciation:**

Indian speakers of English are found to generally confuse the two sounds / v / as in *vine* and / w / as in *wine*. In place of two distinct sounds / v / and / w /, they generally produce one sound common to both. Thus they lose a very important distinction between pairs of words like *vie-why*, *vile-while* etc. The students should carefully note the distinction between the sounds / v / and / w /.

/ v / is a *labio-dental* sound in the production of which the upper-teeth nearly touch the lower lip in such manner that air escapes with a friction. / v / is thus a fricative sound.

/ w / is a *labio-velar* sound in order produce / w /, you may keep your lips in position for producing the / v / sound as the middle sound in *good* and then add the / ə / sound as in the beginning of the word away.

*Practise saying the following words:*

vest	west
vale	wail
vide	wide
vet	wet
vent	went
veil	whale
veal	wheel, we'll
verse	worse
vend	wend
vim	whim
vie	y

**III. Comprehension:**

- (a) 1. How did the Quick Man spoil the goldfish tricks?
2. How did the conjuror show in the famous Hindostanee rings tricks?

3. How did the audience take the eggs tricks? How did the Quick Man explain it?
  4. What did the conjuror do with the Quick Man's watch and hat?
  5. When did the Quick Man start feeling 'beaten'?
- (b)
1. What was the Quick Man trying to prove?
  2. What impact did the Quick Man have on the audience?
  3. Why Did the Quick Man Agree to part with his gold watch, hat and other things?
  4. Who had the last laugh and how?
  5. Bring out the humour in the story.

**IV. Vocabulary:**

(a) Give one word for each of the following expressions:

- (i) an assembly of hearers
- (ii) a state of extreme surprise that numbs the senses
- (iii) a person who performs clever tricks that seem magical
- (iv) something that can be seen
- (v) a group of people playing on various musical instruments together.

(b) Match the words under A with their synonyms under B:

A	B
hush	break
transpire	destroy
smash	completely
ruin	silence
absolutely	happen

**V. Grammar:**

(a) Join the following pairs of sentences into a single sentence each :

1. I have shown you that the cloth is empty.  
I will now proceed to take from it a bowl of goldfish.

2. You will notice this.  
The rings are apparently separate.
3. The audience began to think this.  
He was a wonderful man.
4. Will you allow me this ?  
I want to smash your spectacles with my hammer.
5. I will present to you this.  
It is a very simple tricks.

(b) *Change the narration in the following sentences:*

1. "Have I your permission to put it into this mortar and pound it to pieces?" he asked savagely.
2. "Will you kindly pass me your silk hat and allow me to dance on it? Thank you," said the conjuror.
3. "This thing surprises me," he whispered, "I don't see through it a bit"
4. "Ladies and gentleman: I will show you a trick now," said he.
5. Everybody was saying : "Oh. how wonderful! How does he do it?"

### VI. Composition:

- (a) Imagine yourself as the Quick Man in the story '*The Conjuror's Revenge*'. Relate, in about 150 words, your experience at the conjuror's show.
- (b) Write a paragraph (150 words only) on any one of the following:
  - (i) A Conjuror's Show
  - (ii) A Juggler's Show

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**Glossary and Notes:**

L.3	<i>spectacular</i>	—	(attracting attention because) extraordinary.
L.10	<i>creed</i>	—	system of beliefs, opinions (especially religious),
L.13	<i>obstinate</i>	—	stubborn, refusing to change one's opinion or chosen course of action
L.17	<i>condescending</i>	—	behaving in a manner that is undignified or below one's level of importance, behaving in a way that displays a sense of superiority.
L.19.	<i>over-scrupulous</i>	—	paying exaggeratedly great attention to details, extremely careful and thorough.
L.21.	<i>He...fat</i>	—	a reference to the Guru's indiscretion in the matter of food habits, his fondness for rich foods.

**Understanding the Poem:**

1. Write a brief (100 words) character-sketch of the pseudo-guru referred to in the poem.
2. What has been the past of 'the saint'?
3. What type of life is he living now?
4. Why does the poet say: 'We no longer smile' in line 23?
5. What makes the poet conclude that there is no hope for us?
6. Give, in brief, the idea contained in the poem.

**Related Readings :**

1. *An Indian Lala* by K.R. Narayanswami
2. *The Fancy Dress Show* by Kamala Dass

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## 21

# A River Tern on the Ganga

(Man Mohan Singh)

Man Mohan Singh (born 1937) is a member of the Indian Administrative Service. Having passed his M.A. in English from Government College, Ludhiana, he started his career as Lecturer in English Literature. He joined the IAS in 1962 and has held a large number of important assignments. During his post-graduate studies at the Cambridge University he was a member of the Poetry Club of the University and his work was included in the quarterly issue of *Fresca*. His interest covers many diverse fields ranging from western and Indian Classical Music to Ornithology (scientific study of birds). He has done a special study of the birds of northern India. *Village Poems* and *Bird Poems* are two of his well known books. His book '*Many splendoured Dome*' gives an authentic expression to the beauty and power of his evocative prose.

*A River Tern on the Ganga*, taken from *Bird Poems*, is a beautiful poem in which the poet highlights the impact of industrial pollution on a river like the Ganges, a river supposed to carry a life-giving nectar full of medicinal powers. In the fast increasing industrialization of the country, one cannot perhaps do much about it except beating one's angry head against the wall. The poem, however, succeeds in arousing the conscience of the people and in making them aware of the colossal harm they are doing to the clean environment around them by not heeding the writing on the wall.



The river tern skims over the bend  
 where Ganga says her goodbye to boulders  
 leaving behind the sights of windswept pines.  
 The tern loses her flying silhouette 4  
 in the floating blisters of progress.

The troubled glide of the tern  
 on the insectless surface  
 silences the petition 8

of the gasping fish.  
 In the plains the holy  
 and the profane meet  
 on the bank of the sandy bulges of sin. 12

The groans of the dying river  
 wreath the creaseless waves.  
 The holy river yet carries  
 its weight of memories 16

of trouts and mahseers.  
 The sullen sea cannot now push  
 the river back to the mountains  
 with a slap of its angry tide. 20

**Glossary and Notes:**

- |     |                             |   |   |
|-----|-----------------------------|---|---|
| L.1 | <i>tern</i>                 | — | a water bird  |
|     | <i>skim</i>                 | — | move lightly over the surface touching it only occasionally.  |
| L.2 | <i>boulder</i>              | — | large rocks worn and shaped by water.   |
| L.4 | <i>loses....silhouette</i>  | — | since the water becomes polluted by industrial wastes, the outline image of the bird in water is not visible. |
| L.5 | <i>blisters of progress</i> | — | bubbles of dirt produced by industrial and chemical wastes on the surface of water.                           |

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L.7	<i>insectless surface</i>	—	the surface of water that has no insects on it as these have been destroyed by chemical pollutants.
L.9	<i>gasping fish</i>	—	the fish that feels suffocated for breath.
L.11	<i>profane</i>	—	not sacred, unholy.
L.14	<i>creaseless waves</i>	—	waves that have lost their crease because of their failing capacity and speed.
L.16	<i>weight of memories</i>	—	racial memories (myths, tales and songs) intertwined around the flowing-waters of the Ganga.
L.17	<i>trout</i>	—	fresh-water fish often found in the hilly part of the river.
	<i>Mahseers</i>	—	big sages lost in meditation on the river bank in the hills.
L.18	<i>sullen</i>	—	silent, gloomy and dark.
L.20	<i>angry tide</i>	—	why is the sea angry ? May be, it is helplessly protesting against the human act of defiling the pure waters of the river.

**Understanding the Poem:**

1. Why does the bird lose her flying silhouette ?
2. What do the 'blisters of progress' signify ?
3. How do the tern and the fish suffer because of the impact of industrialization ?
4. What are the 'memories' carried by the holy river ?
5. Why is the sea angry and helpless ?
6. What is the message conveyed by the poet through this poem ?

**Related Readings:**

1. *The Invading Spring* by Phoebe Hesketh.
2. *The World is Too Much With Us* by William Wordsworth.

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## 22

# The Ant and the Grasshopper

(W.S. Maugham)

William Somerset Maugham (1874-1965), one of the greatest masters of the short-story form, was also one of the distinguished novelists and playwrights of England. He started his career as a student of medicine before he turned to literature. Amongst his popular works of fiction are *Cakes and Ale*, a story based on Thomas Hardy's life. *The Razor's Edge*, the story of Larry Darrel's search for truth, and *of Human Bondage*, a story which is partly autobiographical. Besides novels, Maugham also wrote a number of successful plays which were popular with the lovers of the stage. He proved his best mettle in the field of short-stories. More than two hundred of his stories have been translated into several languages of the world. His style is direct, straight forward, elegant and eminently readable. His characters that step-out of everybody life are realistic and human, varied and interesting, living and dynamic.

*The Ant and the Grasshopper*, like many of his stories, is a bold and realistic portrayal of life. In life, the dice generally appears to be loaded against those who are good, noble and hardworking. In this story Maugham shows that idleness and extravagance do not always end up in poverty, misery or bankruptcy. On the contrary, honest, painstaking and disciplined people are sometimes less fortunate than those who choose to idly enjoy life or to eat, drink and make merry like the proverbial grasshopper. The principle of poetic justice is, more than often, flouted by life.

1. When I was a very small boy I was made to learn by heart certain of the fables of La Fontaine, and the moral of each was carefully explained to me. Among those I learnt was The Ant and the Grasshopper which is devised to bring home to the young the useful lesson that in an imperfect world industry is rewarded and giddiness punished. In this admirable fable (I apologise for telling something which everyone is politely, but in exactly, supposed to know) the ant spends a laborious summer gathering its winter store, while the grasshopper sits on a blade of grass singing to the sun. Winter comes and the ant is comfortably provided for, but the grasshopper has an empty larder : he goes to the ant and begs for a little food. Then the ant gives him her classic answer :

'What were you doing in the summer time ?'

'I sang, I sang all day, all night'.

'You sang. Why, then go and dance.'

2. I do not ascribe it to perversity on my part, but rather to the inconsequence of childhood, which is deficient in moral sense, that I could never quite reconcile myself to the lesson. My sympathies were with the grasshopper and for some time I never saw an ant without putting my foot on it. In this summary (and as I have discovered since, entirely human) fashion I sought to express my disapproval of prudence and common sense.

3. I could not help thinking of this fable when the other day I saw George Ramsay lunching by himself in a restaurant. I never saw anyone wear an expression of such deep gloom. He was staring into space. He looked as though the burden of the whole world sat on his shoulders. I was sorry for him. I suspected at once that his fortunate brother had been causing trouble again. I went up to him and held out my hand.

'How are you ?' I asked.

'I'm not in hilarious spirits,' he answered.

'Is it Tom again ?'

He sighed.

'Yes, it's Tom again.'

'Why don't you chuck him ? You've done everything in the world for him. You must know by now that he's quite hopeless.'

4. I suppose every family has a black sheep. Tom had been a sore trial to him for twenty years. He had begun life decently enough : he went into business, married and had two children. The Ramsays were perfectly respectable people and there was every reason to suppose that Tom Ramsay would have a useful and honourable career. But one day, without warning, he announced that he didn't like work and that he wasn't suited for marriage. He wanted to enjoy himself. He would listen to no expostulations. He left his wife and his office. He had a little money and he spent two happy years in the various capitals of Europe.
5. Rumours of his doings reached his relations from time to time and they were profoundly shocked. He certainly had a very good time. They shook their heads and asked what would happen when his money was spent. They soon found out; he borrowed. He was charming and unscrupulous, I have never met anyone to whom it was more difficult to refuse a loan. He made a steady income from his friends and he made friends easily. But he always said that the money you spent on necessities was boring; the money that was amusing to spend was the money you spent in luxuries. For this he depended on his brother George. He did not waste his charm on him. George was a serious man and insensible to such enticements. George was respectable. Once or twice he fell to Tom's promises of amendment and gave him considerable sums in order that he might make a fresh start. On these Tom bought a motor-car and some very nice jewelry. But when circumstances forced George to realise that his brother would never settle down he washed his hands of him. Tom, without a qualm, began to blackmail him. It was not very nice for a respectable lawyer to find his brother shaking cocktails behind the bar of his favourite restaurant or to see him waiting on the box-seat of a taxi outside his club. Tom said that to serve in a bar or to drive a taxi was a perfectly decent occupation, but if George could oblige him with a couple of hundred pounds he didn't mind for the honour of the family giving it up. George paid.
6. Once Tom nearly went to prison. George was terribly upset. He went into the whole discreditable affair. Really Tom had gone too far. He had been wild, thoughtless and selfish but he had never

before done anything dishonest, by which George meant illegal; and if he were prosecuted he would assuredly be convicted. But you cannot allow your only brother to go to gaol. The man Tom had cheated, a man called Cronshaw, was vindictive. He was determined to take the matter into court; he said Tom was a scoundrel and should be punished. It cost George an infinite deal of trouble and five hundred pounds to settle the affair. I have never seen him in such a rage as when he heard that Tom and Cronshaw had gone off together to Monte Carlo<sup>2</sup> the moment they cashed the cheque. They spent a happy month there.

7. For twenty years Tom raced and gambled philandered with the prettiest girls, danced, ate in the most expensive restaurants, and dressed beautifully. He always looked as if he had just stepped out of a handbox. Though he was forty-six you would never have taken him for more than thirty-five. He was a most amusing companion and though you knew he was perfectly worthless you could not but enjoy his society. He had high spirits, an unflinching gaiety and incredible charm. I never grudged the contributions he regularly levied on me for the necessities of his existence. I never lent him fifty pounds without feeling that I was in his debt. Tom Ramsay knew everyone and everyone knew Tom Ramsay. You could not approve of him, but you could not help liking him.
8. Poor George, only a year older than his scapegrace brother, looked sixty. He had never taken more than a fortnight's holiday in the year for a quarter of a century. He was in his office every morning at nine-thirty and never left it till six. He was honest, industrious and worthy. He had a good wife, to whom he had never been unfaithful even in thought, and four daughters to whom he was the best of fathers. He made a point of saving a third of his income and his plan was to retire at fifty-five to a little house in the country where he proposed to cultivate his garden and play golf. His life was blameless. He was glad that he was growing old because Tom was growing old too. He rubbed his hands and said :

'It was all very well when Tom was young and good-looking, but he's only a year younger than I am. In four years he'll be fifty. He won't find life too easy then. I shall have thirty thousand pounds by the time I'm fifty. For twenty-five years I've said that Tom would end in the gutter. And we shall see how he likes that. We shall see if it really pays best to work or be idle'.

2. a coastal town in the principality of Monaco, east of Nice. It is an international centre for gambling.

9. Poor George ! I sympathised with him. I wondered now as I sat down beside him to hear what infamous thing Tom had done. George was evidently very much upset.

'Do you know what's happened now ?' he asked me.

I was prepared for the worst. I wondered if Tom had got into the hands of the police at last. George could hardly bring himself to speak.

'You're not going to deny that all my life I've been hard-working, decent, respectable and straightforward. After a life of industry and thrift I can look forward to retiring on a small income in *gilt* edged securities<sup>3</sup>. I've always done my duty in that state of life in which it has pleased providence to place me.'

'True'.

'And you can't deny that Tom has been an idle, worthless, dissolute and dishonourable rogue. If there were any justice he'd be in the workhouse.'

'True'.

George grew red in the face.

'A few weeks ago he became engaged to a woman old enough to be his mother. And now she's died and left him everything she had. Half a million pounds, yacht, a house in London and a house in the country.'

George Ramsay beat his clenched Fist on the table.

'It' is not fair. I tell you, it's not fair. Damn it, it's not fair.'

10. I could not help it. I burst into a shout of laughter as I looked at George's wrathful face. I rolled in my chair, I very nearly fell on the floor. George never forgave me. But Tom often asks me to excellent dinners in his charming house in May-fair<sup>4</sup> and if he occasionally borrows a trifle from me that is merely force of habit. It is never more than a sovereign.

3. Investments that are considered safe and sure to produce interest.

4. A fashionable area in London, so called from annual fair held there in May from Stuart times until end of 18th century.

**Key to Phonetic Symbols**

/g/ get	/dʒ/ jam	/θ/ thin	/ʃ/ ship	/j/ yes
/tʃ/ chain	/ɪ/ long	/ð/ then	/z/ measure	
/i:/ beat	/ɑ:/ part	/u:/ boot	/eɪ/ late	/ɔɪ/ boy
/ɪ/ bit	/ɒ/ hot	/ʌ/ but	/ɔ:/ go	/ɪɔ:/ hear
/e/ pet	/ɔ:/ saw	/ɜ:/ bird	/aɪ/ fly	/eə/ pair
/æ/ bat	/ʊ/ put	/ə/ away	/aʊ/ now	/oʊ/ poor

**I. Glossary :**

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <p>1. <b>fable</b> (n)</p> <p><b>giddiness</b> (n)</p><br><p><b>admirable</b></p> <p><b>larder</b> (n)</p> <p><b>classic</b> (adj.)</p> <p>2. <b>ascribe</b> (v)</p> <p><b>perversity</b></p><br><p><b>deficient</b> (adj.)</p> <p><b>reconcile</b> (v)</p><br><p><b>summary</b> (adj.)</p> <p><b>prudence</b> (n)</p><br><p>3. <b>gloom</b> (n)</p> <p><b>hilarious</b> (adj.)</p> <p><b>chuck</b> (v)</p><br><p>4. <b>black sheep</b> (adj.)</p><br><p><b>sore trial</b> (adj.)</p> <p><b>expostulation</b> (n)</p> | <p>/ˈfeɪbl/</p> <p>/ˈɡɪdɪnəs/</p><br><p>/ˈædmərəəbl/</p> <p>/ˈlɑːdə/</p> <p>/ˈklæsɪk/</p> <p>/əˈskraɪb/</p> <p>/pəˈvɜːsɪtɪ/</p><br><p>/deˈfɪʃnt/</p> <p>/ˈrekənsaɪl/</p><br><p>/sʌməri/</p> <p>/ˈpruːdns/</p><br><p>/ɡluːm/</p> <p>/hɪˈleəriəs/</p> <p>/tʃʌk/</p><br><p>/blækʃiːp/</p><br><p>/sɔː traɪəl/</p> <p>/ɪksˈpɒst[ə]leɪʃn/</p> | <p>short tale, myth, legend</p> <p>frivolity, idleness, thoughtlessness</p> <p>deserving admiration, excellent</p> <p>store for food</p> <p>very typical</p> <p>consider to be the cause</p> <p>being perverse, being stubbornly unreasonable in attitude</p> <p>not having enough of</p> <p>settle, arrange, bring into harmony with</p> <p>done without attention to details or formal procedure</p> <p>quality of being careful, forethought, wisdom</p> <p>sorrow, sadness, depression</p> <p>noisily merry</p> <p>abandon, give somebody up, end one's relationship with somebody</p> <p>person regarded a disgrace or failure by other members of his group or family</p> <p>something or somebody that causes much distress</p> <p>friendly protest</p> |
|---|---|--|



5. **profoundly** (adv.) /prə'faʊndli/ deeply  
**unscrupulous** (adj.) /ʌn'skrju:pjələs/ not guided by conscience  
**enticement** (n) /ɪn'taɪsmənt/ being tempted or persuaded by something pleasant  
**amendment** (n) /ə'mendmənt/ reform  
**wash one's hands of somebody :**  
**qualm** (n) /kwɑ:m/ refuse to be responsible for somebody  
 feeling of doubt about whether one is doing the right thing or not, misgiving  
**cocktail** (n) /'kɒkteɪl/ mixed alcoholic drink
6. **prosecute** (v) /'prɒsɪkjʊ:t/ bring a criminal charge against somebody in a court  
**convict** (v) /kɒn'vɪkt/ hold guilty, declare legally that somebody has done wrong.  
**vindictive** (adj.) /vɪn'dɪktɪv/ unforgiving, having a wrong desire for revenge.  
**scoundrel** (adj.) /'skaʊndrəl/ wicked person with no principles  
**rage** (n) /reɪdʒ/ anger
7. **philander** (n) /'fɪləndər/ amuse oneself by flirting with women  
**bandbox** (n) /'bændbɒks/ light, clean cardboard box for holding articles of dress  
**levy** (v) /'levɪ/ impose
8. **scapegrace** (adj.) /'skeɪpɡreɪs/ one without any grace  
**gutter** (n) /'gʌtə(r)/ channel or trough to carry-sway rain water  
**thrift** (n) /θrɪft/ care, economy
9. **providence** (n) /'prɒvɪdəns/ way in which God cares for all  
**dissolute** (adj.) /'dɪsələʃu:t/ given up to immoral conduct  
**yacht** (n) /jɒt/ small sailing boat  
**wrathful** (adj.) /'rɒθfl/ full of anger and indignation  
**trifle** (n) /'traɪfl/ thing or event of little value or importance  
**sovereign** (n) /'sɒvərɪn/ former British gold coin, originally worth a pound

**II. Comprehension:**

- (a)
1. What was the lesson learnt by the author from 'La Fontaine's fable' The Ant and the Grasshopper ?
  2. What made George Ramsay gloomy as he was sitting in the restaurant ?
  3. Why was Tom a problem person?
  4. How did Tom manage a happy and comfortable living ?
  5. How did Tom blackmail George into helping him (Tom) with money ?
  6. How did George save Tom from conviction ?
- (b)
1. Relate, in your words, the ancient fable of 'The Ant and the Grasshopper'. (50-60 words)
  2. Why could the author not reconcile to the lesson contained in the fable 'The Ant and Grasshopper' when he was a child ?
  3. How was the life of George Ramsay different from that of Tom?
  4. How did Tom become a rich man ?
  5. How did George take Tom's becoming rich through a stroke of luck ?
  6. Write in brief, the idea conveyed in the story.  
(50-60 words)

**III. Vocabulary:**

- (a) Find from the text, words which approximate in meaning to the following expressions :-  
(You can look for the desired word in the para number given in brackets)
- (i) a story with a moral (1)
  - (ii) person regarded as a disgrace by other members of his group (4)
  - (iii) not guided by conscience (5)
  - (iv) reform (5)
  - (v) feeling of doubt regarding the aptness or otherwise of an action (5)

- (vi) having a desire for revenge (6)
- (vii) anger (6)
- (viii) *small* sailing boat meant for racing (9)
- (ix) full of anger (9)
- (x) given up to immoral conduct (9)

- (b) Use the following words / expressions in sentences of your own :
- Wash one's hands of somebody, profoundly, black sheep, by heart, to bring home, to be provided for, to be deficient in, express disapproval of, a sore trial, to go too far.

#### IV. Pronunciation:

Almost all the double letters of the alphabet (excluding a,e,i,o,u), wherever they appear in spellings of words, are pronounced as single consonant sounds e.g.,

*Summer* is pronounced as /<sup>1</sup>sʌmə/

*butter* is pronounced as /<sup>1</sup>bʌtə/

In the case of double *c*, the situation is a little different. In some words, double *c*, is pronounced as /k/ while it is pronounced as /ks/ in some other words. Example :

accord /aˈkɔ:d/

success /sʌksɪs/

Say the following words correctly :

- |     |             |           |     |            |            |
|-----|-------------|-----------|-----|------------|------------|
| (a) | rubber      | borrow    | (b) | occupation | accede     |
|     | grasshopper | difficult |     | occasional | accent     |
|     | lesson      | settle    |     | occur      | access     |
|     | classic     | off       |     | occupy     | eccentric  |
|     | putting     | happy     |     | acclaim    | accident   |
|     | summary     | pretty    |     | occupation | accession  |
|     | disapprove  | gutter    |     | account    | accessory  |
|     | expression  | little    |     | accomplish | accelerate |
|     | suppose     | rubbed    |     | accost     | accept     |
|     | business    | dissolute |     |            |            |

#### V. Grammar:

(a) Do as directed :

1. I was made to learn some fables (*Change voice*)

2. The moral of each fable was explained to me. (*Change voice*)
3. I apologise for doing so. (*Rewrite using the noun form of apologise*)
4. That ant says to the grasshopper, 'What were you doing in summer ?' (*Change narration*)
5. I never saw an ant without putting my foot on it. (*Rewrite as : As soon as I saw an.....* )
6. I sought to express my disapproval of prudence and common sense. (*Rewrite using the verb form of 'disapproval'*)
7. I could not help thinking of this fable. (*Rewrite without the word 'help'*)
8. I saw George lurching in a restaurant. (*Rewrite as a complex sentence*)
9. It was not very nice for a respectable lawyer to see all that. (*Rewrite as a complex sentence*)
10. I sympathised with him. (*Rewrite using the noun form of 'sympathise'*)

(b) *Change the narration*

- (i) "How are you ?" I asked.  
 "I m not in hilarious spirit," he answered.  
 "Is it Tom, again ?"  
 "Yes, it's Tom again."
- (ii) "Do you know what's happened now ?" he asked me.  
 I was prepared for the worst.  
 He continued, "You're not going to deny that all my life.  
 I've been hardworking, decent and straight- forward,"  
 "True," I said.

**VI. Composition:**

- (a) Imagine you are Tom Ramsay leading a retired life full of luxury and joy at the age of seventy. Relate, in about 150 words, the story of your life to a stranger who appears to be curious to know about your past.
- (b) Write a short paragraph (about 150 words) on : 'What is this life if full of care ?'



## 23

# A Psalm of Life

(H.W. Longfellow)

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882), an American poet, was known for his hard work and conscientiousness even when he was a student. He devoted himself to literary pursuits at an early age. At the age of 28, he was appointed Professor of Modern Languages and Literature at Harvard University. He wrote a number of poems that are didactic in nature. *Voices of the Night* is one of his famous collections of poems.

'*A Psalm of Life*' is a poem with a message. It exhorts man to work hard and fight the battle of life with courage and faith. Life is short-lived. Man has a lot to do as he is here to make this world a better place to live in. He must, therefore, act without loss of time and achieve greatness. Life is a challenge that one must accept like a true hero. It is no use brooding over the past failures or dreaming about future expectations. One must act in the living present without worrying about the results.

The poet wrote this poem in response to the existential problem of sorrow and depression afflicting mankind. About this poem, he wrote: "I kept this poem sometime in manuscript unwilling to show it to any one, it being the voice from my inmost heart and expressing my feeling at a time when I was rallying from the depression of disappointment". The poet, thus appears to have unlocked his heart in this poem in a spirit of faith and confidence. It is a spirited celebration of life a manifesto of the philosophy, action and the creed of optimism.

A PSALM OF LIFE

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Tell me not, in mournful numbers  
 Life is but an empty dream :  
 For the soul is dead that slumbers  
 And things are not what they seem. 4

Life is real ; Life is earnest;  
 And the grave is not its goal ;  
 Dust thou art, to dust returneth,  
 Was not spoken of the soul. 8

Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,  
 Is our destined end or way ;  
 But to act, that each tomorrow  
 Find us farther than today. 12

Art is long, and time is fleeting,  
 And our hearts, though stout and brave.  
 Still, like muffled drums, are beating  
 Funeral marches to the grave. 16

In the world's broad field of battle,  
 In the bivouac of life,  
 Be not like dumb, driven cattle :  
 Be a hero in the strife : 20

Trust no Future howe'er pleasant :  
 Let the dead past bury its dead :  
 Act, act in the living present :  
 Heart within, and God o' erhead : 24

Lives of great men all remind us :  
 We can make out lives sublime,

And, departing, leave behind us  
Footprints on the sands of time. 28

Footprints, that perhaps another  
Sailing o'er Life's solemn main,  
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother  
Seeing, shall take heart again. 32

Let us then, be up and doing,  
With a heart for any fate ;  
Still achieving, still pursuing,  
Learn to labour and to wait. 36

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**Glossary and Notes:**

	<i>psalm</i> : / sa : m /	a sacred song, a holy song, a hymn
L.2	<i>slumbers</i>	sleeps
L.4	<i>things....seem</i>	Many a time one's fears may not be true and things may not turn out to be as bad as believed to be.
L.7	<i>Dust returneth</i>	refers to the physical body that becomes a part of the earth after one dies and is buried or cremated.
L.10	<i>destined end</i>	aim of life as destined by God. Man is supposed to have been sent into this world on a divine mission; he must realise his true self and leave the world better than what he found it.
L.13	<i>Art</i>	the work to be done, the job assigned to man by God
	<i>Fleeting</i>	short-lived, fast running out
L.15	<i>like muffled drums</i>	like drums covered with a black cloth so that they produce low, suppressed sounds as they lead the marchers in a funeral procession (Every beat of the heart is taking us one step nearer to death.)
L.17	<i>bivouac</i>	temporary encampment, because life is short and transient- a striking image
L.20	<i>strife</i>	the struggle of life
L.24	<i>heart within</i>	with a sense of confidence and courage
L.25	<i>Sublime</i>	great, holy
L.30	<i>solemn main</i>	sea of life full of troubles and trials
L.31	<i>shipwrecked brother</i>	a fellow human being who has lost all hope
L.34	<i>a heart for any fate</i>	a heart prepared to do or die, for any consequences, doing its duty unmindful of the results



**Understanding the Poem:**

1. What does the poet mean when he says that life is not an empty dream ?
2. What, according to the poet, is the goal of life ?
3. Why should one be 'a hero in the strife' ?
4. How do the lives of great men inspire us ?
5. What is the lesson conveyed by the poem ?

**Related Readings:**

1. *Excelsior* by H.W. Longfellow
2. *Say Not The Struggle Nought Availeth* by Arthur Hugh Clough

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## 24

# Hymn of Swaraaj

(Suresh Chandra Vatsyayan)

Suresh Chandra Vatsyayan, an illustrious product of Government College Ludhiana and worked as Principal, Lajpat Rai Government College, Dhudike, represents a voice, at once ancient and new in contemporary Hindi poetry. He has been hailed as the pioneer of *Mantra* (the tradition of the ancient vedic form) in the realm of modern Hindi poetry. He has also successfully experimented with the sonnet form, the Hiku, the ghazal and the mini epic as a new dimension of modern progressive Hindi poetry.

Mr. Vatsyayan has gleaned a rich harvest of national awards and honours for his celebrated creations like *Ankur*, *Pravaal*, *Mukul Shailani* and *Mukul: Ghazal-Ghazal*. Moreover, he has won acclaim as an exponent of Punjab's contribution to Hindi literature and promotor of the cause of the national language at many levels. His translation of vedic hymns in Punjabi and English had been enthusiastically received. Besides being a creative writer and translator, he has also made a mark in the domain of research.

Suresh Chandra Vatsyayan's *Hymn of Swaraaj* has been adopted by the Navodaya Samiti of Government of India as a morning prayer at the Navodaya Schools throughout the country. It speaks volumes for the significance and relevance of this poem. The Hymn is an invocation to a full-fledged swaraaj, touching upon all aspects of national life. It is steeped in the consciousness of India's age-old heritage which is to be harnessed to the ushering in of a new age. The poet has himself rendered the poem from Hindi into English. This poem appears in *Harbingers: one*, a collection of English poems composed by the poet.

May we be  
 the muse of a prayer new  
 the herald of an age new  
 a new sun, a new moon 4  
 and of the Hymn of Swaraaj a rhythm new !

Our God knows no barriers of caste, colour and class  
 Children of earth, we are the lotuses in bloom  
 Worthy of being offered at the shrine 8  
 Which is our earth.

Of a spring of Sarvodaya  
 May we be the promise new !  
 We are the beings of nature's shine and shower 12  
 through us let the culture of India flow and flower.  
 We are the snowclad peaks Himalayan  
 the rushing rivers, the tidal waves of ocean. 16

May we be  
 the spark new  
 Of a life pledged to the common good  
 Partakers of the revolutions green and white  
 we pray for a feast of the labour, of love and peace. 20

Bhagiraths of faith we are  
 the valiant sentinels of mother earth !  
 The seers and sport on earth and heaven  
 of the true, the good and the beautiful  
 may we be  
 the probing vehicles of a lore new !

**Glossary and Notes:**

- L.2 *muse* — spirit that inspires a creative artist
- L.3 *herald* — person or thing that announces something important that is coming
- L.5 *Swaraaj* — A Sanskrit word of Vedic origin. It means self-rule or self-government. The leaders of Indian renaissance and freedom movement adopted this word to stand for India's full freedom from the British, French and Portuguese rule.
- rhythm* — Pattern produced by emphasis and duration of notes in music and by stressed and unstressed syllables in words
- L.7 *lotus* — a type of tropical water-lily that grows in still, marshy water but remains free from the dirt etc. in the pool. Adopted as the National flower in India, it symbolises purity unaffected by any surrounding evil influences.
- L.10 *Sarvodaya* — Movement launched by Gandhiji and Acharya Vinoba Bhave as part of India's struggle for freedom from economic, social and cultural backwardness and exploitation.
- L.21 *Bhagirath* — Great grandson of Sagar and an ancient king of Surya dynasty. His most austere penance is believed to have brought down the celestial river Ganges from heaven to earth. Since then his name is used figuratively to denote the potential of making a fruitful Herculean effort.
- L.22 *sentinel* — One who guards or protects something with all the alertness at one's command
- L.23-24 *Seers and sport and earth and heaven of the true, the good and the beautiful.*

(i) To uncover and embrace the visible and invisible reality is to know and practise the *true*.

- (ii) To be just and fair to one and all and to fight for, safeguarding the truth to ensure general welfare is to be *good*.
- (iii) To be attractive, lovable enchanting in body, mind and spirit is to be *beautiful*.
- (iv) To have a vision of the true, the good and the beautiful is to be a *seer*.
- (v) The functional wonder of this trio right from the unfathomable depths and unsealed heights of matter and spirit is the *sport* of man in nature and nature in man. The seers and saints of India perceived and conceived this trio as Satyam-Shivam-Sundaram. There is a film song starting with these three words. The Doordarshan has adopted the three words in its emblem.

L.26. *probing vehicles* — vehicles (like the spaceship etc.)  
that try to explore and uncover the  
mysteries of space

*Lore* — knowledge

#### Understanding the Poem :

1. What functions are the children expected to perform as muses or heralds ?
2. Why are they worthy of being offered at the shrine ?
3. How do the singers of the Hymn hope to be the 'sparks new' of 'a life pledged to the common good' ?
4. Do the lines 19-20 convey some idea of the picture of free, resurgent India ?
5. What function would the singers perform as 'probing vehicles of a lore new' ?

#### Related Reading :

*Where the Mind is Without Fear* by R.N. Tagore.

