



6. KABĪR (1440–1518): Dohā

Kabīr is an iconic poet of the Bhakti movement and along with Tulsidās, he is a poet of the masses. His poetry is held in the mind and is widely recited by people across the various strata of the Indian society. His poetry is a poetry of mysticism — but one that makes sense in day-to-day life. It has, at the same time, a quality of simplicity that appeals to both, to the peasant and the philosopher. More importantly, Kabīr, through his poetry, was a great reformer, and his poetry was an argument against inequality and injustice.



Kabīr's Dohās (couplets)

1. *Caltī cakkī dekh kar, diyā Kabīrā roye*
Dui pātan ke bīca mein, sabut bacā nā koye
 Looking at the grinding stones, Kabīr laments
 In the duel of wheels, nothing stays intact.

Indian Literatures – Part – 2



2. *Burā jo dekhān main calā, burā nā milyā koye*
Jo mun khojā apnā, to mujhse burā nā koye
I searched for the crooked man, met not a single one
Then searched myself, 'I' found the crooked one
3. *Kāl kare so āj kar, āj kare so ab*
Pal mein pralaya hoyegī, bahuri karoge kab
Tomorrow's work do today, today's work now
If the moment is lost, how will this be done?
4. *Aisī vānī boliye, mana ka āpā khoye*
Apnā tan śītal kare, auran ko sukh hoye
Speak such words, sans ego's ploy
Body remains composed, giving the listener joy
5. *Dhīre dhīre re mana, dhīre sab kutch hoye*
Mālī sīnce so ghara, ritu āye phal hoye
Slowly slowly O mind, everything in its own pace happens
The gardener may water with a hundred buckets, fruit arrives only in its season
6. *Sāyīn itnā dījiye, jā mein kuṭumb samāye*
Main bhī bhūkhā nā rahūn, sādhu nā bhūkhā jāye
Give so much, O God, suffice to envelop my clan
I should not suffer cravings, nor the visitor go unfed
7. *Badā huā to kyā huā, jaise ped khajūr*
Panthī ko chāyā nahīn, phal lāge ati dūr



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In vain is the eminence, just like a date tree
No shade for travellers, fruit is hard to reach

Comprehension

1. What does Kabīr suggest by the image of something getting crushed between two grinding stones?
2. What value is Kabīr teaching in his second couplet?
3. What virtue is he teaching in the fifth couplet?

Enrichment activities

- Sit in small groups. Each group may select one of Kabīr's couplets. Examine the couplet given to you and explore its meaning.
- Research the library and the Internet to find out where Kabīr was born and where he gave up his life. You may use the following links for your understanding:
www.rajasthankabiriyatra.org
<http://www.facebook.com/events/143127122461717/>
www.kabirproject.org
- Form a group and discuss your response to Kabīr's poetry, its content and relevance today.
- Imagine you are Kabīr. Write a few couplets about your response to what you see of the world today.

Kabīr's poetry prospers in a stunning diversity of musical styles, languages and sociocultural landscapes in the Indian subcontinent. In central India, we encounter

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Kabīr in the folk music style of Malwa and Madhya Pradesh. In the desert stretches of western India, we discover him in Marwari folk songs of the Mirrsi and Meghval communities. When we cross the border over to Karachi and Sindh in Pakistan, we find him in the robust Sufi qawwali form. In Punjab he is sung as *gurbani* and in urban cities in the form of Indian classical *bhajan*. A few titles of books and music CDs show the diversity of languages and styles in which Kabīr still lives. Here are a few examples with his music and books.



Ajab Shahar

www.kabirproject.org/music%20with%20books/ajab%20shahar



Ghat Ghat Kabīr

www.kabirproject.org/music%20with%20books/ghat%20ghat%20kabir



Malwa Mein Kabīr

www.kabirproject.org/music%20with%20books/malwa%20mein%20kabir



Pakistan Mein Kabīr

www.kabirproject.org/music%20with%20books/pakistan%20mein%20kabir



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Rajasthan Mein Kabir

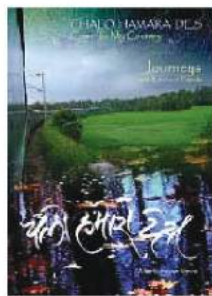
www.kabirproject.org/music%20with%20books/rajasthan%20mein%20kabir



Thumri Mein Kabir

www.kabirproject.org/music%20with%20books/thumri%20mein%20kabir

➤ A few films to watch:



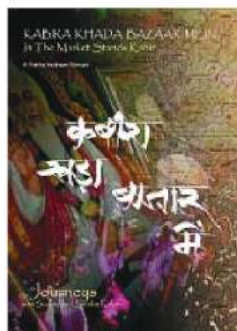
Chalo Hamara Des

www.kabirproject.org/the%20films/chalo%20hamara%20des



Had Anhad

www.kabirproject.org/the%20films/had%20anhad



Kabira Khada Bazaar Mein

www.kabirproject.org/the%20films/kabira%20khada%20bazaar%20mein



Koi Sunta Hai

www.kabirproject.org/the%20films/koi%20sunta%20hai





7. Kālidāsa: Meghadūta

Indian lyrical love poetry

In India's lyric and epic themes, love is, and has been, pervasive. Love chastened by suffering was held up even by poets and dramatists as capable of effecting a lasting spiritual union. Some of the best poetry in Sanskrit reflects this spirit and attitude towards love. The longing of the hearts in love was taken as the most effective image to depict the yearning of the devotee for God or the seeking by the individual soul of the Supreme Soul, a symbolism which is at the base of a greater part of both the erotic and the religious art in India. *Rati* or love, says Bhoja (11th century CE), a poetician, is the root emotional state, *mahārasa*, the grand essence of life on account of its intensity, universality, familiarity and reiteration in common human life. Perhaps that is why the verse and prose narratives of love and death are preferred forms and abound in the folk traditions of almost all Indian languages.

Sanskrit literature has abundance of lyrical love poetry. **Kālidāsa** may have lived anytime between 2nd century BCE and 3rd century CE and his work has come down intact. He stands high in the realm of Sanskrit lyrical love poetry and his *Meghadūta* is the finest flower of this poetry. A Yakṣa (nature spirit) separated from his wife, at the advent of the rainy season, wanting to send a message to her, notices a cloud hugging the top of a nearby hill. He welcomes the cloud and gives him the location of his wife's





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city, Alka. He describes his home and the plight of his beloved and gives the cloud a message to deliver. (The poem won admiration from the German scholar Schiller who composed *Maria Stuart* in which the captive queen bids the clouds greet the land of France where she spent her youth. It also inspired the great German poet, Goethe.)

Four months of curse are still left and the Yaksha expects the Cloud to see his beloved, beautiful but sorrow-laden and languishing and quite in keeping with the sublime conception of love laced with the sorrow of separation. The words are among the most poignant and beautiful in literature. The last few cantos (106 onwards), the final words of the cloud messenger, represent the stage of intense experience and contain some of the finest wisdom about human life.

Meghadūtam

There you will see her, in the springtime of youth, slender,
her teeth jasmine-buds ... (81)

With the passing of these long days, racked
by intense longing, the young girl
would appear so changed I think,
like a lotus-stalk struck by the chilling hoar-frost. ... (82)

Striving hard I find you in a waking dream,
I stretch my arms out into the empty air
to fold you in a passionate embrace.
Those large pearl-drops clustering on tender leaf-shoots



are surely—are they not—the tears
the tree-goddesses shed watching my grief? (106)

Sudden, Himalayan breezes split open
the tightly-shut leaf-buds on deodars,
and redolent of their oozing resin
blow south; I embrace those breezes
fondly imagining they have of late
touched your limbs, O perfect one! (107)

If only the long-drawn-out night
could be squeezed into a single moment,
if only the hot summer's day
would glow at all times with a gentle warmth;
my heart, breathing these unattainable prayers
is left a defenceless prey,
O lady with bright-glancing eyes!
To the fierce pangs of separation from you. (108)

But no more of me; reflecting deeply,
I bear up, drawing on my own inner strength;
you too, lady most blessed,
should resist falling into utter dejection.
Whom does happiness always attend
or misery always befall?
Man's state on earth like the rim of a wheel
goes down and comes up again. (109)

With Viṣṇu risen from His serpent couch



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my curse shall be ended; closing your eyes
make the four remaining months go by;
then on autumnal nights bright with moonlight
we two shall taste together every desire
eagerly imagined when we were apart. (110)

And further he said this : once in bed
asleep, still clinging to my neck
you woke up on a sudden, weeping a little,
and when I asked why again and again,
laughing to yourself you said,
— ah, you cheat, I saw you in my dream
playing with another woman. (111)

By this token of recognition
know that I am well; and do not doubt me
O dark-eyed one, believing idle reports
that say for no good reason
that absence destroys the affections.
Ah no! The lack of pleasure makes
the craving intense for what is desired,
piling it up into love's great hoard. (112)

I trust, noble friend [the cloud], you are resolved
to do this kindly service for me?
I cannot think your grave look forebodes refusal;
without a sound you offer *cātakas*
the water they crave; the answer
noble ones make is to do the thing wished for. (113)



Having granted this wish so dear to my heart,
strange as it may seem,
for friendship's sake or out of pity for me, desolated,
wander, O Cloud, in all the lands you choose,
gathering greater glory in the rains;
may you never be parted from the lightning
even for an instant. (114)

[From *The Complete Works of Kalidasa*, vol. 1, *Poems*
Chandra Rajan (tr.), Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1997, pp. 112-113]

Comprehension

1. Identify the figures of speech in this poem — similes and metaphors.
2. The poem is a form of address. To whom is the poem addressed?
3. It is also called 'a messenger (*dūta*) poem'.
 - i. Who is the messenger?
 - ii. For whom is the message intended?
 - iii. Who is sending the message?
 - iv. What is the subject-matter of the message.
 - v. The poem argues against something.
 - a. Against what does it argue?
 - b. What is the argument based on?
4. What is the meaning of the common Indian word *cātaka*?



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Activities

- Discuss in groups the answers to the questions asked above. Arrive at the best possible answer to each.
- Go to some other poems of Kālidāsa. Identify his poems.
- Has Kālidāsa written some plays (dramas) also? If yes, find out their titles. (Clue: see the **Theatre and Drama in India** module.)
- Are there other Sanskrit poets who wrote excellent love poetry? Find their names. See at least one poem of one of them.

Internet resources (all URLs accessed July 2012)

- Sanskrit text of *Meghadūtam*:
http://fiindolo.sub.uni-goettingen.de/gretil/1_sanskr/5_poetry/2_kavya/meghdk_u.htm
- An illustrated English rendering of *Meghadūtam* by Jaffor Ullah & Joanna Kirkpatrick:
<http://web.archive.org/web/20040904201814/www.geocities.com/jaffor/purva/index.html>
- Translation of Kālidāsa's *Abhijñānśākuntalam* (*Śakuntalā*) by M. Monier-Williams (1855): www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/12169/pg12169.html
- Translation of Kālidāsa's *Kumāra Sambhava* ('Birth of the War-God') by R.T.H. Griffith (1879): www.gutenberg.org/files/31968/31968-h/31968-h.htm
- Translations of several works of Kālidāsa by Arthur W. Ryder (1914):
www.sacred-texts.com/hin/sha/index.htm and
www.gutenberg.org/files/16659/16659-h/16659-h.htm
- Various videos of adaptations of Kālidāsa's plays and poems:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=tA_N0t8A_-Q&feature=related (*Bharat Ek Khoj*, episode 18, pt. 1)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=TIYRM8FT_XQ, www.youtube.com/watch?v=RmNyxKuElto
www.youtube.com/watch?v=HFzA7OYq1jw&feature=related
- A rendering of *Meghadūtam* in Western classical music:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=cW7GarxiaL0&feature=related





8. KṢETRAYYA (1600–1680): *Padas*

Kṣetrayya was a prolific Telugu poet and composer. He lived in the area of Andhra Pradesh in South India. He is said to have composed songs of *Madura Bhakti* (*padas* / *padamas** and *kīrtanas*), which were the popular forms of devotional writing of his times. He is credited with more than 4,000 compositions, although only handfuls have survived.

He was invited to several courts of kings in his days. He composed many songs on King Tirumalenra of Madhura (now Madurai), innumerable songs on King Vijayaraghava Nayaka of Tanjavaru (Thanjavur) and several songs on the Muslim ruler of Golkonda.



During his tours, he visited several temples, worshipped the presiding deities and composed songs on them. He composed his songs in Telugu on his favourite deity Kṛṣṇa ('Gopāla' or 'Muvva Gopāla'). Kṣetrayya's *padamas* have had a great impact on the dance forms of South India. In the past, Devadasis (dancers in the service of God) used to sing and perform these songs in temples, but now *padamas* have become an integral part of classical dance performances on stage, especially to show the artist's talent in *abhinaya* ('expression', see module on **Theatre and Drama in India**).

* Those songs are called *padas* in Sanskrit and *padamas* in Telugu.



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Kṣetrayya's Song

Don't prattle. Get away! How does He come?
Tell Him not to come.
That was a yuga [era] by itself. It is a different life now.
We have fallen apart, O my friend!
I spent very many moonlit nights, hoping for His arrival every day or at least today. Why say more?

Thinking that the lover would step in soon,
I was looking towards the path and became fatigued (or troubled).
Having counted the months [since He left me] I became very tired.
My love for Him was uncontrollable. Yet, I conducted myself quietly.
You [the poet addresses himself] spent the months of the spring season
abounding in the mellifluous voices of the cuckoo.
Why should there be pleasant talks anymore?

O maiden! I consulted fortune-tellers hoping that Gopala would come to me. Having seen my [female] friends who meet their lovers, I lost my heart and felt grief.

May Rāma forbid! Is it necessary for me yet to see His face with this physical body [i.e. in this life]?
The first union itself was enough for this life.

Comprehension

1. To whom are the songs of Kṣetrayya addressed?
2. Who popularized these songs (*padas* / *padamas*)?



3. Name any dance form of which *padama* are an integral part and in which the prowess of a dancer is judged by their *abhinaya*?

Enrichment activities

- Research and read more on the role of Nāyakis (heroines) in Kṣetrayya's *padamas* and on a dancer's interpretation of their classicism, uniqueness and range through *abhinaya*.
- *Mahākavi Kṣetrayya* is a Telugu film. Watch snippets of the movie to understand the *padamas*. You may refer to the following links:
www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=XeyeEddsxXo
www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=-cf3BbxEULQ
- To listen to a *padama* you may listen to this rendition by T. Brinda:
www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=pZ7ZqIwEULk
- Compare and contrast the life and works Iṅgō Aḍigaḷ's *Cilappatikāram* and Kṣetrayya's *Padama*. Notice their style, melody and beat, emotions and expressions in their poetry/songs. Make a presentation about the same in your class.





9. MĪRABAI (1498–1547): *Bhajans*



Mīrabai was born in Merta about 1498. The family worshipped Viṣṇu as their primary deity. Her mother died when Mīrabai was about four, and Mīrabai was raised and educated by her grandparents. Music was a part of her education. At an early age, Mīrabai became attached to an idol of Kṛṣṇa, given to her (legend says) by a travelling beggar. At age 13 or 18 (sources vary), Mīrabai was married to the prince of Mewar. Her husband died just a few years later. Instead of following the traditional norms of a widowed Rajput princess, Mīrabai took up worship of Kṛṣṇa.

She identified herself as the spouse of Krishna. Like many in the Bhakti movement, she ignored gender, class, caste, and religious boundaries, and spent time caring for the poor.

Mīrabai's songs express her love and devotion to Kṛṣṇa. The songs speak of both the joy and the pain of love. Metaphorically, Mīrabai points to the longing of the personal self, *ātmān*, to be one with the universal self, or *paramātmā*, which is a poet's representation of Kṛṣṇa. Mīrabai wrote her songs in Rajasthani and Braj Bhāṣā languages, and they were translated into Hindi and Gujarati.

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Mīra is an icon for Indian women, an example of full expression of her identity and uninhibited expression of her creativity. She is remembered in association with the other major Bhakti poets and sages of the time like, Kabīr, Surdās and Swami Haridās.

Mīra the Lotus

My Lord, the love that binds us cannot be broken.
It is hard as the diamond that shatters
the hammer that strikes it.
As polish goes into the gold, my heart has gone into you.
As a lotus lives in its water, I am rooted in you.
Like the bird that gazes all night at the passing moon.
I have blinded myself in giving my eyes to your beauty.
She who offers herself completely asks only this:
That her Lord love Mīra as fully as he is loved.

(from *Mīrabai: Ecstatic Poems*
by Robert Bly & Jane Hirshfield,
Beacon Press, Boston, 2004)

Nothing is really mine

Nothing is really mine except Krishna.
O my parents, I have searched the world
And found nothing worthy of love.
Hence I am a stranger amidst my kinfolk
And an exile from their company,
Since I seek the companionship of holy men;
There alone do I feel happy,
In the world I only weep.



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I planted the creeper of love
And silently watered it with my tears;
Now it has grown and overspread my dwelling.
You offered me a cup of poison
Which I drank with joy.
Mīra is absorbed in contemplation of Krishna,
She is with God and all is well!

Comprehension

1. What do the poems of Mīrabai describe?
2. In which metrical form of poetry does Mīrabai sing her verses?
3. What consequences might Mīrabai have faced when she chose to marry herself to God rather than to a human being?

Projects

1. Make a comparative study of any **two** women Bhakti poets. Write it out and make a presentation before the class. In reading the poetry from the female bhaktas, focus on the imagery utilized by them. Is it 'otherworldly' or 'this-worldly', focussed on everyday realities?
2. Watch the movie *Mīrabai*, with M.S. Subbulakshmi as Mīra and English subtitles. You may refer to the links below:
www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=9w18YoWqnQI
www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=JTH7o772XDw
Now write a review on it. Add it to your portfolio. You may add a few pictures and couplets / extracts of the poetry, to add to the impact.



3. Collect as much information as you can on the theme 'Status of Women in Ancient India and Now' and make a speech.

Enrichment activities

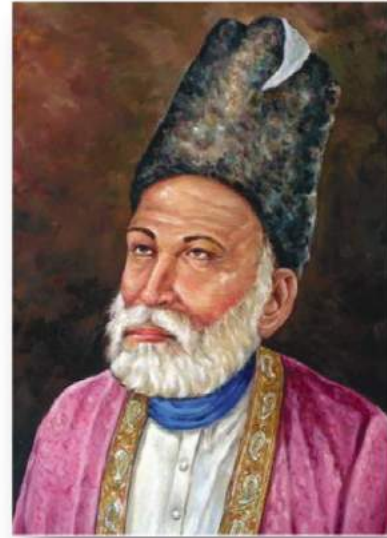
1. Group activity: role play. Put Āṇḍāl and Mīrabai on the 'hot seat' and let others in the group frame questions related to: their life / their poetry / the period they lived in / their feelings and their experiences.
2. The power of the poems of Bhakti movement comes from the images evoked by the choice of words. Let us try to analyze these images and relate them to the sensory experience with relation to any one of the poems of the Bhakti poets.
3. Make a project on the different metrical forms of poetry used by the Bhakti poets and differentiate among *dohās*, *padamas*, *caupāyī*, *sakhi* and *śabad*.
4. 'The Bhakti movement still exists in some form or the other around us.' Have a group discussion on this theme.
5. The Bhakti movement started in the 6th century and continued till the 19th century. Choose any two Bhakti poets, compare and contrast the social conditions of the periods the poets lived in.
6. There is a great deal of diversity within the poetry and the actual experiences of women *bhaktas* in terms of the extent that they challenged the patriarchal system surrounding them. Discuss.
7. Compare and contrast a poem from the Bhakti tradition with that of another devotional or mystical tradition.





10. MIRZĀ GHĀLIB (1797–1869): *ye nā thī hamārī qismat*

Asadullāh Baig Khān, later known as **Mirzā Ghālib**, is an outstanding 19th-century poet. 'Dīwān-e-Ghālib' is a collection of his poems. Along with Urdu, Ghālib also wrote in Persian. In him, Urdu poetry reached its peak. His poetry is distinguished by a deep lyricism, lexical sophistication and intensity of thought and feeling that goes beyond the apparent. In that sense, Mirzā Ghālib's poetry is rich in suggestion and as such is classed as the highest kind of poetry. One of the most popular forms of Indian poetry, the *ghazal*, is associated with Mirzā Ghālib. Ghālib's appeal transcends language and region and his admirers abound all over India. The poet exercised a lasting influence on Indian poetry in general and on Urdu poetry in particular. Some of his contemporary poets were Zauk, Dāg, Hāli and Bahadur Shāh Zafar.



1. *ye na thī hamārī qismat ke wisāl-e-yār hotā*
agar aur jīte rehte yahī intezār hotā
 [wisāl-e-yār = meeting with lover]
2. *tere wāde par jiye ham to ye jān jhooṭh jānā*
ke khuśī se mar nā jāte agar 'eitabār hotā
 ['eitabār = trust/confidence]

A *sher* is a poem of two lines. Every *sher* is a poem in itself. A *sher* does not need anything around it to convey the message. All the stanzas given here are independent *shers*.

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3. *terī nāzukī se jānā ki bandha tha 'ehed_būda*
kabhī tū nā toḍ saktā agar ūstuwār hotā
['ehed = oath, ūstuwār = firm/determined]
4. *koī mere dil se pūhe tere tīr-e-nīmkaś ko*
ye khaliś kahān se hoteī jo jigar ke pār hotā
[tīr-e-nīmkaś = half-drawn arrow, khaliś = pain]
5. *ye kahān kī dostī hai ke bane haiñ dost nāsīh*
koī cārasāz hotā, koī ḡhamgusār hotā
[nāsīh = counsellor, cārasāz = healer, ḡhamgusār = sympathizer]
6. *rag-e-saṅg se tapaktā wo lahū ki fir nā thamtā*
jise ḡham samajh rahe ho, ye agar śarār hotā
[rag = nerve, saṅg = stone, śarār = flash/gleam]
7. *ḡham agarce jāñ -gulis hai, pe kahān bachaiñ ke dil hai*
ḡham-e-iśq gar na hota, ḡham-e-rozgār hotā
[jāñ -gulis = life-threatening]
8. *kahūñ kis se maiñ ke kyā hai, śab-e-ḡham burī balā hai*
mujhe kyā burā thā marnā? agar ek bār hotā
9. *hue mar ke ham jo ruswā, hue kyon nā ḡharq-e-dariyā*
nā kabhī janāza uṭhata, nā kahīñ mazār hotā
[ḡharq = drown/sink]



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10. *use kaun dekh saktā ki yagāna hai wo yaktā*

jo dūī kī bū bhī hotī to kahīn do cār hotā

[yagāna = kinsman, yaktā = matchless/incomparable, dūī = duality]

11. *ye masāil-e-tasawwuf, ye terā bayān ‘Ghalib’!*

tujhe ham waīe samajhate, jo nā bāda-khwār hotā

[masāil = topics, tasawwuf = mysticism, walī = prince/friend, bāda-khwār = boozier]

Comprehension

1. Using the word meanings given above in the couplets, make an attempt to translate the poetry into English.
2. Examine the poem and list some of the striking images used. Pick out a few that you like. Give reasons for your choices.
3. A *ghazal* is a form of Urdu/Hindi poetry set to classical music. The word originates from Arabic, meaning, a way or manner of talking to or talking about love and the beloved. Briefly stated a *ghazal* is a collection of *shers* that has a unity of mood, tone or theme. (For more on *ghazals*, please refer to the module **Music in India**.)

koī ummīd bar nahīn ātī

koī sūrat nazar nahīn ātī.

I see no hope being realised

I see no solution being found

āge ātī thī hāle dil par hañsī

ab kisi bāt par nahīn ātī

Indian Literatures – Part – 2



I used to laugh at my misery
but now I do not laugh at all

*hum wahāñ haiñ, jahāñ se humko bhī
kuch hamārī khabar nahīñ ātī*

I am there from where,
Even to me no news reaches about myself

*kābā kis muñh se jāoge 'Ghālib'
śarm tumko magar nahīñ ātī*

With what face will you go for a pilgrimage, Ghālib,
But even then you have no remorse

Enrichment activities

- Read some more of Ghālib's writings. Research the Internet and the library, and prepare a presentation on 'Ghālib: His Life and Times'. You may use the following URLs to help you:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=d4yhYW6KvhU

www.delhimetrowalks.com/home.htm

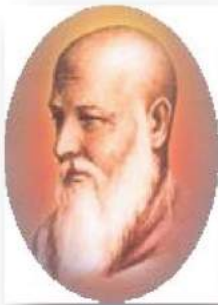
www.youtube.com/watch?v=OW4okDn7plA

- Now compose a *sher*, *ghazal* or a poem ending with ... '*yehī intezār hotā*'. Once you have finished composing, organize a *mushairā*.





11. SHAH HUSSAIN (1538–1599): *Kāfī*



Shah Hussain was a Punjabi Sufi poet who is regarded as a saint. He was the son of Sheikh Usman, a weaver, and belonged to the Dhudha clan of Rajputs. He was born in Lahore. He is considered a pioneer of the *kāfī* form of Punjabi poetry.

Hussain's poetry consists entirely of short poems known as *kāfīs*. A typical Hussain *kāfī* contains a refrain and some rhymed lines. The number of rhymed lines is usually between four and ten. Many of Hussain's *kāfīs* have been set to music and form an integral part of Punjabi folk culture and of the traditional *qawwalis*. (A *qawwali* is a collective mode of singing Urdu devotional or love lyrics accompanied by rhythmic clapping and drum-music.) His poems have been performed by leading singers such as Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, Abida Parveen and Noor Jehan, among others.

His poetry is distinguished by excellence of lexical choice and depth of feeling. He is also considered a mystic poet because even when he is talking of his lover or beloved, his utterances border on divinity. Shah Hussain was one such great religious personality who created new values in the society and challenged the older ones.

*Mai ne main kinoñ ākhāñ,
Dard vicore dā hāl nī*

O mother O mother, who do I tell,
this pain of separation

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*Dhūān dhukhay mairay murshid wālā,
Jān phoulān tān lāl ni*

My Master's fire smoulders,
If I poke, it is red hot

*Sūlān mar dīwānī kīti,
Birhouñ peyā sādāy khayālī*

Driven mad with spikes,
My thoughts are filled with the pain of separation

*Dukhān dī rotī, sūlān dā sālān,
Āheñ dā bālān bāl*

Bread of sadness, sauce of spikes,
Make a fire of laments

*Jungle bailay phirāñ
Dhoudaindī ajay nā pāyo lāl*

I wandered through jungles and deserts
But found not the ruby.

Comprehension

1. What is the theme of the poem?
2. In what ways is the theme similar to that of the other *Bhakti* poets that you have been reading about in this unit?
3. What figures of speech has the poet used in the fourth couplet? How does it embellish/enrich the poem?
4. Pick out the lines that you think best express the poet's yearning.



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Enrichment Activities

Here are some more of Shah Hussain's *kāfis*.

*Ni māi menūn kheḍeyān di gal nā ākh
Rāñjhā merā, main Rāñjhān dī,
Kheḍeyān nūn kūdī jhak
Lok jāney Hīr kamlī hoi,
Hīray dā var cak*

Do not talk of the Kheḍas to me, mother.
I belong to Ranjha and he belongs to me.
And the Kheḍas dream idle dreams.
Let the people say, 'Heer is crazy;
she has given herself to a cowherd.'

*Sajjan bin rātān hoīyān whadiyān
Rāñjhā jogī, main jogiānī, kamlī kar kar sadiyān
Mās jhurey jhur pinjer hoyā, kadken lagiyān haddiyān
Main ayani niyoonh ki janan, birhon tannawan gadiyān
Kahe Husain faqīr sain da, larr tere main lagiyān*

The nights are long without my beloved.
Since Ranjha became a jogi, I have scarcely been my old self; people
everywhere call me crazy.
My young flesh is all wrinkled; my bones are a creaking skeleton.
I was too young to understand love; and now as the nights swell and merge
into each other,
says Shah Hussain the worshipper, I am inextricably attached to you my
beloved.

*Main vi jānān jhok Rāñjhā dī, nāl mere koi challey
Pairān paindī, mintān kardi, jānān tan peya ukkaley
Nīn vi dhūngi, tilla purānā, shīhan ney pattan malley*

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Rāñjhā yār tabīb sadhendha, main tan dard awalley

Kahe Hussain faqīr namana, sain sunedha ghalley

I have to go to Rāñjhā's hut, will someone go with me?

I have begged many to accompany me, but I had to set out alone.

The river is deep, and the shaky bridge creaks.

I am tortured by my wounds, but Rāñjhā my beloved is the doctor who can cure them.

Only my beloved can bring me comfort.

- Make a collection of the various renditions of this poem as well as others. You will be able to access them from the Internet. Share your findings with your group and class. You may listen to Pathany Khan here:
www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=UA7wu3nfvxo
- Which famous love story from folklore does Shah Hussain use in these *kāfīs* to express his yearning for the beloved?
- 'In this age of conflicts and contradictions, of clashes between the civilizations, the world is in a great need of people who can remove the differences and teach love and unity to mankind. Shāh Hussain was a great exponent of unity and love. His poetry and teachings can act as a remedy to the ailments of this divided world.' Have a panel discussion on the above theme and share your views on it using examples from the different *bhaktas* you have read about.





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12. VEDA VYĀSA: Mahābhārata, Vana Parva

The Mahābhārata is a composition that originated in the oral-folk tradition not later than the first millennium BCE; it was enlarged and evolved in three phases as *Jaya*, *Bhārata* and *Mahābhārata*. It is the longest epic poem of the world, containing over 200,000 ślokas. It literally means ‘the great war of the Bharatas’. It is said to have been composed in its present form by Veda Vyāsa. It deals with the vast history of the life and culture of Bhārata through the narratives of the Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas, siblings or cousins. It is divided into 18 *parvas*, divisions, beginning with *Ādi Parva*, which deals with the origin of different dynasties in Bhārata, and ending with *Swargārohaṇa Parva*, which describes the ascendance of the Pāṇḍavas to heaven. The epic contains many narratives, like the stories of Śakuntalā and Nala–Damayantī, and philosophical discourses like the Gītā.

Look at the visuals given below. Who are the characters in the visuals **A** and **B**? What event does the visual in **C** project? Share any information about them with your partner.

A



B





C



Vana Parva (tr. adapted from K.M. Ganguli)

Section XXX

Draupadī said [addressing Yudhiṣṭhira, the eldest Pāṇḍava], ‘I bow down unto Dhātri and Vidhātri who have thus clouded your sense! Regarding the burden (you are to bear) you think differently from the ways of your fathers and grandfathers! Influenced by acts men are placed in different situations of life. Acts, therefore, produce consequences that are inevitable; emancipation is desired from mere folly. It seems that man can never attain prosperity in this world by virtue, gentleness, forgiveness, straightforwardness and fear of censure! If this were not so, O Bharata, this insufferable calamity would never have overtaken you who are so undeserving of it, and these your brothers of great energy! Neither in those days of prosperity nor in these days of your



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adversity, you, O Bharata, have ever known anything so dear to you as *dharma*, which you have even regarded as dearer to you than life! That your kingdom is for *dharma* alone, that your life also is for *dharma* alone. ... Even in this great forest, so solitary and haunted by robbers, living in exile, divested of your kingdom, your *dharma* has sustained no diminution! ... O king, and my heart is overwhelmed with grief, beholding this distress, and this calamity! An old history is cited as an illustration for the truth that men are subjects to the will of God and never to their own wishes! ... O Bharata, like space that covers every object, God, pervading every creature, ordains its weal or woe. Like a bird tied with a string, every creature is dependent on God. Everyone is subject to God and none else. No one can be his own ordainer. Like a pearl on its string, or a bull held fast by the cord passing through its nose, or a tree fallen from the bank into the middle of the stream, every creature follows the command of the Creator. ... O king, it does seem to me that God behaves towards his creatures ... like a vicious person, He seems to bear himself towards them in anger! Beholding superior and well-behaved and modest persons persecuted, while the sinful are happy, I am sorely troubled. Beholding this your distress and the prosperity of Duryodhana [the leader of the Kauravas], I do not speak highly of the Great Ordainer who suffers such inequality! Then certainly it is God himself who is stained with the sin of every act. ...

Section XXXI

Yudhiṣṭhira said, 'Your speech, O Yajñasenī, is delightful, smooth and full of excellent phrases. We have listened to it (carefully). You speak, however, the language of atheism. O princess, I never act, solicitous of the fruits of my actions. I give away, because it is my duty to give; I sacrifice because it is my



duty to sacrifice! O Kṛṣṇā [another name of Draupadī], I accomplish to the best of my power whatever a person living in domesticity should do, regardless of the fact whether those acts have fruits or not. ... I act virtuously, not from the desire of reaping the fruits of *dharma*, but of not transgressing the ordinances of the Veda, and beholding also the conduct of the good and wise! My heart, O Kṛṣṇā, is naturally attracted towards *dharma*. The man who wishes to reap the fruits of *dharma* is a trader in *dharma*. His nature is mean and he should never be counted amongst the virtuous. Nor does he ever obtain the fruits of his *dharma*! Nor does he of sinful heart, who having accomplished a virtuous act [has] doubts in his mind, obtain the fruits of his act, in consequence of that scepticism of his! ... Vyāsa, and Vasiṣṭha and Maitreya, and Nārada and Lomaśa, and Śuka, and other ṛṣis have all, by *dharma* alone, become of pure soul! ... O sinless one, these all, equal to the celestials themselves, ... describe *dharma* as the foremost duty! The fool that doubts religion and disregards *dharma*, proud of the proof derived from his own reasoning, regards not other proofs ... The fool regards only the external world capable of gratifying his senses, and is blind to everything else. ... Doubt not, O Kṛṣṇā, the ancient religion that is practised by the good and framed by ṛṣis of universal knowledge and capable of seeing all things!... O You faultless one, if the virtues that are practised by the virtuous had no fruits, this universe then would be enveloped in infamous darkness. ... If asceticism, the austerities of celibate life, sacrifices, study of the Vedas, charity, honesty, if these all were fruitless, men would not have practised *dharma* generation after generation. ... When the fruits of both knowledge and asceticism are seen, *dharma* and vice cannot be fruitless. ... Acts in this world have their fruits, and *dharma* also is eternal... And, O Kṛṣṇā, never disregard that Supreme Being through whose grace mortal man, by piety, acquires immortality!



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Comprehension

1. What is the argument put forward by Draupadī. How does Yudhiṣṭhira counter her argument? Discuss.
2. Whose argument do you find more convincing? Give reasons for your opinion. Once you have adapted the script, enact the scene for your group. Later, after taking feedback from your group, refine it further for the final presentation in front of the whole class.
3. Now that you have begun to delve in the great epic find out more about it. Find out the names of other books which have explored the theme further.

Enrichment activities

Some topics for an Inter-class or Inter-school declamation can be as follows.

- Why be good? The difficulty of being good in today's world.
- Dharma is obsolete in today's society.
- Women's Bills? Draupadī; but we are different now — or are we?
- Greed / consumerism is synonymous with modernity.

Internet resources (all URLs accessed July 2012)

- Full text of the Mahābhārata in Sanskrit:
<http://bombay.indology.info/mahabharata/statement.html>
- Full text of the Mahābhārata in English translation:
www.sacred-texts.com/hin/maha/index.htm or www.mahabharataonline.com/translation





13. VIṢṆU ŚARMĀ / NĀRĀYAṆA: *Pañcatantra* / *Hitopadeśa*

The ***Pañcatantra*** is an ancient Indian collection of fables; its author, Viṣṇu Śarmā, composed or compiled it probably in the first centuries CE. It is said that *Pañcatantra* influenced the composition of the *Fables* of Aesop, a Greek fabulist or storyteller. La Fontaine, the well-known 18th-century French author of fables, many of which are patterned on those of the *Pañcatantra*, acknowledged his debt to an ‘Indian Sage’. ***Hitopadeśa*** is derived from two words, *hita* (welfare) and *upadeśa* (advice); dated between the 6th and the 12th century, it is a selection of fables put together by Nārāyaṇa to instruct young minds in a way that they learn the philosophy of life and are able to grow into responsible adults.

A fable’s usefulness is in its moral. Perhaps the most natural reason fables exist today is because of their universal appeal and easy adaptability. Many everyday expressions have been taken from these stories. Not only do fables echo life lessons but they also tell universal truths and present themes prevalent in life and in all genres of literature. In addition, the human belief that actions result in consequences can be taught and reinforced clearly through the medium of the fable. Even in today’s world, many people are still inspired by these tales. Their simplicity and logic is what makes them favourites among children and their parents.

A ***fable*** is a succinct fictional story, in prose or verse, that features animals, mythical creatures, plants, inanimate objects or forces of nature which are anthropomorphized (given human qualities), and that illustrates a moral lesson (a ‘moral’), which may at the end be expressed explicitly in a pithy maxim.



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Here are some titles of famous *Hitopadeśa* stories. Try to relate some of them to the pictures given below:

1. The Crafty Crane and the Craftier Crab
2. The Story of the Blue Jackal
3. The Wicked Snake and the Stupid Frog King
4. The Fall and Rise of a Merchant
5. The Cunning Hare and the Witless Lion
6. The Foolish Crane and the Mongoose





Kauṇḍinya's Narrative

Who was Kauṇḍinya? The historical Kauṇḍinya was a precocious youth who was acclaimed for his early scholastic accomplishments in his study of the Vedas. He was appointed a royal court scholar during the reign of the Sākya King Śuddhodana in Kapilavastu, which was probably in Nepal. Kauṇḍinya gained further distinction when he was the only one of the court scholars to accurately predict that Prince Siddhārtha would become an enlightened Buddha. Kauṇḍinya, a Vedic scholar, became one of the five of Siddhārtha's original disciples and spent his life travelling around India to spread his master's teachings.

Kauṇḍinya in this story is a Brahmin who deeply mourns his son, when he is bitten by a snake to death. Thus runs the story of Kauṇḍinya ...

In a garden which had gone out of cultivation lived a Serpent called Mandavīśarpa. He was so old and decrepit that he lay on the banks of a pond quite unable to find food for himself. A Frog saw him, and keeping at a safe distance, said to him: 'Why do you lie there all day without trying to get something to eat?' The Serpent answered: 'Go your ways! Why should you wish to hear the story of such a wretch as I am?' The Frog was filled with curiosity, and said: 'I am very desirous to hear it; I pray you to tell it to me.' The Serpent replied: 'My friend, a learned Brāhmaṇa, whose name was Kauṇḍinya, once lived here in Brahmapura. He had a son, about twenty years of age, a very model of every virtue, and one day I, under the influence of an evil fate, bit him, so that he died. Kauṇḍinya happened to come by, and seeing his son, who was called Suśīla, lying dead upon the ground, was so overcome with grief that he fainted. Then all his kinsmen and relations who lived in Brahmapura came and sat down beside him; for it has been said:



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The man who will feast with us and mourn with us — who will follow us in famine or in war, to the king's gate, and to the place of burial: he is a kinsman indeed.

'Then a certain Kapila, a proficient in religious lore, spoke out and said: "O Kauṇḍinya, you are a fool in that you make this lament; for:

"We are clasped to the bosom by mortality — first as a nurse, then as a mother. Why should there be all this grief?

"Where are the great rulers of the earth, with their guards, their armies, their chariots? To this day the earth bears witness to their departure.

"Each day the outward form wastes away imperceptibly, like an unbaked jar standing in water. Until the jar has disappeared, it is not known that it is vanishing.

"As a victim approaches the altar, step by step, so death comes nearer day by day to every living being.

"Youth, beauty, life, riches, power, friends, all passes away. A wise man fixes not his hopes on these.

"As a plank of timber may meet another plank in the ocean and then part asunder again, even so is the meeting of men in this world.

"Therefore, sir, be calm, and dismiss all thought of sorrow. The only unfailing cure for the wounds which penetrate, as it were, even our inmost parts, is not to think upon the griefs which cause them." '

(From *Hitopadeśa* or *The Book of Good Counsel*
translated from the Sanskrit text by B. Hale Wrotham
London: George Routledge & Sons Ltd)

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Comprehension

1. Why were tales of *Pañcatantra* and *Hitopadeśa* written?
2. What do children get to learn from this form of narrative?
3. What is the moral of Kauṇḍinya's story?
4. How is Prince Siddhārtha also known?

Enrichment activities

1. Define narratives and trace their origins from different cultures.
2. If you were to choose two creatures from the animal kingdom to give a *Pañcatantra* / *Hitopadeśa* story, which two would you choose and why?
3. Why do you think messages are 'mouthed' with the help of animals in *Pañcatantra* / *Hitopadeśa* stories? Brainstorm in different groups and make a presentation before the class.
4. Collect any two *Pañcatantra* / *Hitopadeśa* stories and two fables of Aesop of your choice. Develop a small write-up on each of these, outlining the following points:
 - reason for selecting this short story
 - main characters
 - setting
 - plot
 - theme
 - language and style



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Further reading

- *Kathāsaritsāgar* / *Bṛhatkathā*: <http://archive.org/details/oceanofstorybein01somauoft>
- *Yoga-Vasīṣṭha*: www.holybooks.com/wp-content/uploads/Yoga-Vasista-Maha-Ramayana.pdf
- Aesop's Fables: <http://mythfolklore.net/aesopica/oxford/index.htm>

Internet resources (all URLs accessed July 2012)

- English translation of *Pañcatantra* by Arthur W. Ryder (1925):
<http://archive.org/details/ThePanchatantraEnglish-AwRyder>
- Illustrated stories from *Pañcatantra*:
www.kidsworldfun.com/shortstories_pt1.php (English)
www.excellup.com/kidsImage/panchtantra/monkeywedgehindi.aspx (Hindi & English)
- Readings of *Pañcatantra* stories (in Hindi):
www.youtube.com/watch?v=Segl47HfHAE
www.youtube.com/watch?v=x0xnBIVoJ7Y&feature=relmfu, etc.
- An online translation of *Pañcatantra*: <http://panchatantra.org/>
- *Hitopadeśa*: Sanskrit text & English translation, W. Ainapure, ed., & B.T. Dravid (1908):
<http://archive.org/details/hitopadesaofnr00vasuuoft>
- Online *Hitopadeśa* stories:
www.culturalindia.net/indian-folktales/hitopadesha-tales/index.html
www.nriol.com/indianparents/indian-tales.asp
www.4to40.com/katha/Hitopadesha.asp
- Readings of *Hitopadeśa* stories:
www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=cdjuE2NQ8D4 (Sanskrit)
www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=QxtVLh4H4EQ (English)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=UuCpOlfYpT8&feature=relmfu, etc.

