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CHAPTER

Our Indian Music— Stories and Anecdotes

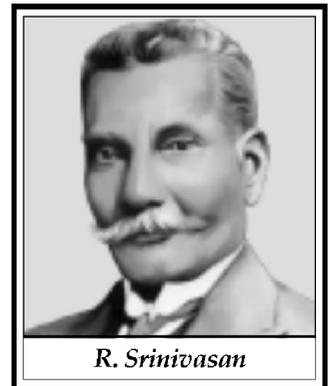
—R. Srinivasan (1859-1945)

◆ *About the Author*

R. Srinivasan is a famous writer in English. He has written so many short stories, music reviews and many essays. His writings are on general topics and social subjects. His style is very interesting.

◆ *About the Lesson*

The history of Indian Music is full of stories and Anecdotes. The origin of music and fine arts is in itself a story. Brahma made the whole universe and filled it with all sorts of beauty and charm. But he still felt sad. His wife Saraswati helped him and gave the people music and arts. We feel enchanted when we hear the soul-stirring music of our musicians. The chapter deals with the story of Akbar and his court musician Tansen.



The history of Indian Music is brimming with stories and anecdotes. Why, the very origin of music and other fine arts is in itself a story. The creator, Brahma, made this universe. He created a variety of wonderfully beautiful and enchanting things. He created the majestic mountain ranges, the thundering water-falls and the giant forest trees, as also the nimble deer, the colourful peacocks and the exquisite flowers. He filled his creation with beauty, charm and splendour. But he was sad. His consort Saraswati asked him the reason for his sadness.

Brahma said, "It is true I have created all this wonder and charm and showered beauty everywhere. But what is the use? My children, the human souls, simply pass them by; they do not seem to be sensitive to the beauty around. It seems to have been wasted on them, this creation seems to be purposeless."

Saraswati understood his feelings and told him, "Well, let me do my share in the great work. You have created all this beauty and splendour; I shall create in our children the power to respond, to appreciate and be uplifted by them. I shall give them music and other arts which will draw out from deep within them the capacity to respond to the majestic splendour and exquisite charm and wondrous beauty of all creations."

The great muse then gave us music and the other fine arts, in the hope that through them man would understand something of the Divine in his manifestation. A strange story? Yes, but it has a great moral.

One of the basic truths on which all Indian art is developed is that true art is never made to order; it comes as a result of an irresistible inner urge. We hear a song of Thyagaraja and are enthralled, we see a majestic temple tower and gaze on it with wonder; we see some of our ancient sculptures and feel thrilled. Why? Behind all such works of art is a great spiritual urge. The artists who gave them to us poured their devotion into the shape of such exquisite works of art; it was an act of self effacing dedication.

A story is told of Tansen, the great bard of Akbar's court, which illustrates this point vividly. Tansen was a great musician and Akbar was very fond of his music. One day when Tansen was in particularly good form, Akbar went into ecstasy and asked him, "What is the secret of this sweet concord of notes which takes me out of this world and transports me to Divine regions? I have not heard anyone else who can thus cast a spell of magic and make a slave of our hearts. You are really wonderful, Tansen.

The great bard replied, "Sir, I am only a humble pupil of my master, Swami Hari Das; I have not mastered even a fraction of the master's technique, grace and charm. What am I beside him whose music is a rhythmic flow of Divine harmony, beauty and charm in sound?"

"What! the emperor cried, "Is there one who can sing better than you? Is your master such a great expert?"

"I am but a pigmy by my master's side," said Tansen.

Akbar was greatly intrigued; he wanted to hear Hari Das but, emperor though he was, he could not get Hari to his court. So he and Tansen went to the Himalayas where in his ashrama dwelt the Swami. Tansen had already warned Akbar that the Swami would sing only if he wanted to. Several days they stayed at the ashrama; but the Swami did not sing. Then, one day Tansen sang one of the songs taught by the Swami and deliberately introduced a false note. It had almost an electric effect on the saint; his aesthetic nature received a rude shock. He turned to Tansen and rebuked him, saying, "What has happened to you, Tansen, that you, a pupil of mine, should commit such a gross blunder?"

He then started singing the piece correctly; the mood came upon him and enveloped him and he forgot himself in the music, which filled the earth and heaven. Akbar and Tansen forgot themselves in the sheer melody and charm of the music.

It was a unique experience. When the music stopped, Akbar turned to Tansen and said, "You say you learnt music from this saint and yet you seem to have missed the living charm of it all. Yours seems to be but chaff beside this soul-stirring music."

"It is true, Sir," said Tansen. "It is true that my music is wooden and lifeless by the side of the living harmony and melody of the master. But then there is this difference—I sing to the emperor's bidding, but my master sings to no man's bidding but only when the prompting comes from his innermost self. That makes all the difference."

|| Glossary ||

Emotions	भावनाएँ	feelings and sentiments
Spontaneously	स्वेच्छा से, तुस्त	willingly instantaneously
Urged by	प्रेरित	inspired by

Pour out	उड़ेलना, व्यक्त करना	express
Underlines	महत्त्व बताती है	emphasises
Brimming with	से भरी हुई	overflowing with
Anecdotes	उपाख्यान	a narrative of detached incidents
Universe	ब्रह्माण्ड	whole creation
Variety	विविधता, भिन्नता	diversity
Enchanting	मोहक	attractive, charming
Majestic	भव्य	splendid
Thundering	गर्जन, शोर करते हुए	roaring
Giant	विशालकाय	enormous/huge
Nimble	चपल	quick-moving
Exquisite	अति सुन्दर	marvellous
Creation	रचना, संसार	beings created by him
Splendour	वैभव	grandeur
Consort	सहगामिनी, पत्नी	spouse
Showered	बिखेरा	rained, scattered
Pass them by	उनके पास से गुजर जाना	disregard them, uneffected with
Sensitive	संवेदनशील	responsive
Purposeless	निरुद्देश्य	aimless
Respond	प्रत्युत्तर देना	react
Appreciate	प्रशंसा करना	praise
Capacity	क्षमता	ability
Muse	ज्ञान की देवी	Minerva the Goddess of wisdom
Divine	दैवी	godly
Manifestation	संसार	earthly creation
Made to order	कहने पर बनाया	made on demand
Irresistible	जिसे रोका न जा सके	too strong
Urge	प्रेरणा	inspiration
Enthralled	मोहित कर दिया	charmed
Gaze	निहारना, ध्यान से देखना	stare
Ancient	प्राचीन	primitive
Sculpture	शिल्प/मूर्तिकला	art of stone carving
Thrilled	प्रफुल्लित हो जाना	overjoyed
Devotion	भक्ति	dedication to God
Self-effacing	विनम्र	polite
Dedication	समर्पण	self-surrendering
Bard	गायक, कवि	a singer, a poet
Illustrates	समझाता है, सजाता है	portrays, clarifies
Vividly	स्पष्ट रूप से	clearly
Particularly	विशेष रूप से	specially

Ecstasy	अत्यधिक आनन्द	supreme joy
Concord	सुर संगम	harmony
Transport	पहुँचा देना	transmit
Region	क्षेत्र	area
Pupil	शिष्य	scholar
Fraction	अंश	part, portion
Rhythmic	लयपूर्ण	tuneful, melodious
Pigmy	अति तुच्छ, बौना	dwarf
Intrigued	जिज्ञासा उत्पन्न कर दी	aroused curiosity
Dwelt	रहते थे	resided
Deliberately	जान-बूझकर	intentionally
Aesthetic	सौन्दर्य प्रेमी	lover of beauty
Rude shock	गहरी ठेस	a severe jerk
Rebuked	डाँटा	chided
Commit	करना	to do
Blunder	बड़ी गलती	gross mistake
Enveloped	ढक लिया	wrapped up
Melody	सुरीला गीत-संगीत	sweet music
Chaff	भूसी	worthless
Soul stirring	आत्मा को प्रभावित करने वाला	inciting affect
Bidding	आदेश	order
Prompting	निर्देश	urge

|| Exercise ||

↳ COMPREHENSION

(A) Read the following passages and answer the questions given below :

(a) The history of Indian music.....to the beauty around.

1. Write the title of the lesson from which the above noted passage has been taken. Who is the author of this lesson?
2. What beautiful things were made by Brahma?
3. How did Brahma feel after creating the universe?
4. What did Saraswati ask Brahma?
5. Write the Synonyms of the following words :
(a) Nimble (b) Origin.

(b) Saraswati understood his feelings.....in his manifestation.

1. Write the title of this lesson from which the above noted passage has been taken. Who is its author?
2. Why did Saraswati offer to give music to the children?
3. Why did the great muse give us music?

4. What did Saraswati offer to create?
 5. Point out the two words in the passage which have the following meanings :
 - (a) React
 - (b) Magnificence.
- (c) Akbar was greatly intrigued.....charm of the music.**
- Or The great bard.....gross blunder?**
- Or Akbar was greatly.....the piece correctly.**
1. Write the name of this lesson from which the above noted passage has been taken. Who is its author?
 2. What did Akbar wish? What did he do to fulfil his wish?
 3. How was Tansen successful in making his 'Guru' sing?
 4. What was the effect of Hari Das's music on Akbar and Tansen?
 5. Point out the words from the passage, which have the following meanings :
 - (a) Scolded
 - (b) Lived.
 6. What did Akbar do to hear Hari Das?
 7. What did Tansen do to make his Guru Hari Das sing?
- (d) Then one day Tansen.....charm of the music.**
1. Write the title of this lesson from which the above noted passage has been taken. Who is the author of the lesson?
 2. What was the name of the Swami who taught Tansen the art of singing?
 3. What was the cause of anger of the Swami?
 4. What was the effect of the Swami's music?
 5. Which words in the above passage have the following meanings :
 - (a) Knowingly
 - (b) Scolded.
- (e) Tansen was a great musician.....really wonderful, Tansen.**
- (a) Write the name of the lesson from which the given passage has been taken. Who is the author of this lesson?
 - (b) Who was Tansen? How did Akbar react to his music?
- (f) It was a unique experience all the difference.**
- Or It is true all the difference.**
1. Write the name of this lesson from which the above noted passage has been selected. Who is the author of the lesson?
 2. "It was a unique experience". What experience has been referred to here?
 3. What was Akbar's opinion about Tansen's music besides the music of his master?
 4. What did Tansen say to Akbar to explain the difference between the music of his great teacher and his own?
 5. Locate the two words in the given passage which have the following meanings :
 - (a) Being the only one of its kind
 - (b) Command.
 6. What difference did Tansen notice between his and his master's music?
 7. What was the cause of difference in Tansen's opinion?
 8. Who was Tansen? To whom did he sing?

(B) Long Answer Type Questions:

Answer the following questions in not more than 60 words each :

1. What did Brahma create in the universe? How did Saraswati help him?
2. Do you think Tansen was a conceited man? Give reasons for your answer.
3. What is Tansen's opinion about his master? How did he make him sing?
4. Bring out the greatness of art as described in the lesson "Our Indian Music".
5. How did Tansen prove to Akbar that his teacher's music was superior to his own? What reason did he give for it?
6. Who was Swami Hari Das? Why did Akbar want to hear him? Why could Akbar not call Hari Das to his court? What did he do then?
7. What 'Makes all the difference' between the music of Tansen and that of Swami Hari Das? Whose music was more appealing to Emperor Akbar?
8. What did Brahma create in the universe? Why was he sad?

(C) Short Answer Type Questions:

Answer the following questions in not more than 25 words each :

1. Why was Brahma very sad? Who helped him and how?
2. Who is the creator of the universe? What has he created?
3. What did Brahma feel after he had created the universe?
4. Who was Saraswati? What did she want to create in the universe?
5. What is the nature of true art?
6. How does a great work of art affect us and why?
7. What is the basic truth about the development of Indian art?
8. Who was Tansen? How did Akbar react to the music of Tansen?
9. What intrigued Akbar? What did he do to fulfil his wish?
10. Why did Akbar and Tansen go to the Himalayas?
11. Why was Hari Das's music soul stirring?
12. Tansen says, "That makes all the difference" what does he refer to and why?
13. How did Tansen make Swami Hari Das sing for Akbar?
14. Why did Saraswati give man music and other fine arts?
15. What had Brahma created? Why was he sad?
16. Who was Swami Hari Das? Why did Akbar want to meet him?
Or Who was Swami Hari Das? Why did Akbar go to him?
17. What makes all the difference between the music of Tansen and that of Swami Hari Das?
18. How did Tansen provoke Hari Das to sing?
19. Who was Swami Hari Das? Where did Akbar go to listen to his music?
20. What did Akbar do to listen to Swami Hari Das?

(D) 1. Select the most suitable alternative to complete each of the following statements :

(i) This universe is created by :

- (a) Brahma (b) Saraswati (c) Akbar (d) Tansen

(ii) Tansen was a great :

- (a) actor (b) preacher (c) teacher (d) musician

2. *Say whether each of the following statements is 'true' or 'false':*

- (i) Hari Das was the guru of Tansen.
 (ii) The creator, Brahma, made this universe.
 (iii) Saraswati was not the consort of Brahma.
 (iv) Tansen was the great bard of Akbar's court.
 (v) Akbar alone went to the Himalayas.

(E) *Vocabulary*

1. *Give the opposite words of the following :*

variety, giant, remember, ugly, old.

2. (i) *Match the following words of List 'A' with their meanings in List 'B':*

List 'A'

Variety
 Consort
 Appreciate
 Unique
 Vividly
 Pigmy

List 'B'

Admire
 Unmatchable
 Diversity
 Clearly
 Dwarf
 Wife

(ii) *Match the following words of List 'A' with their meanings in List 'B':*

List 'A'

Unique
 Sculpture
 Mystery
 Gravity

List 'B'

Seriousness
 Secret
 Being only one of its kind
 The art of stone carving

3. *Fill in the blanks with suitable words select from the list given below :*

appreciate, majestic, experience, musician.

- (i) Tansen was a.....
 (ii) He created the.....mountain ranges and the thundering water falls.
 (iii) People always.....good music.
 (iv) It was a unique.....

↪ Project Work

- (a) Prepare a chart of different musical instruments with their functions and figures.
 (b) Write a letter to your younger sister who is learning in a Music School. Tell her the differences between Hindustani music and Carnatic music in a table form.

- (c) Make a chart of different musicians of modern age representing different branches of music. Collect their pictures and paste them on the chart.

|| Worksheet–6 ||

Usage

↳ **Language:**

(Use of—Instead of, unless and besides)

I. Use of instead—Combine the following sets of sentences :

↳ **Example :**

- He wanted to go to Agra. (But he did not go)
- He went to Delhi.

Ans. Instead of Agra, he went to Delhi.

1. He wanted to buy a scooter. (But he didn't buy one)
He bought a bicycle.
2. He wanted to go to school. (But he didn't go)
He went to the pictures.
3. He wanted to give Ravi a book on his birthday.
(But he did not give the book)
He gave him a pen.
4. He wanted to buy a book. (But he didn't buy)
He bought a pen.
5. They wanted to go out for a walk. (But they did not go.)
They stayed at home.

II. Use of unless:

↳ **Example :**

- He is not working hard.
 - He can not pass the examination.
Unless he works hard, he cannot pass the examination.
1. He is not walking fast. He cannot reach the station in time.
 2. She is not reading the novel quickly. She can't finish it in two days.
 3. You are not approaching him personally. You can't get a job.
 4. You are not working seriously. You can't finish your work.

III. Use of Besides:

↳ Example :

- Tea was served in the party.
- Sweets were also served there.

Ans. Besides tea, sweets were also served in the party.

1. The thief was arrested. Two other persons were also arrested.
2. The teachers were present in the meeting. The principal was also present.
3. The doctor asked the patient to have the medicine. He also asked the patient to have a lot of fruits.

↳ COMPREHENSION

Q. Read the following passage and answer the questions given below :

Akbar ranks among the greatest rulers of India. Babur had founded the Mughal Empire in India but it was his grandson Akbar, who laid its real foundation. Babur's son Humayun died in 1556, leaving the responsibility of the empire on the shoulders of his thirteen years old son Jalaluddin Akbar. Akbar, who at that time was at Kalanaur in Punjab, was crowned king there. When Akbar ascended the throne, he faced many problems. In the early days of his reign, Akbar was guided and advised by his tutor Bairam Khan, a trusted officer of Humayun.

Questions :

1. What was the name of Babur's son? When did that son die? How old was Akbar at that time?
2. Who laid the real foundation of Mughal empire in India?
3. When and where was Akbar crowned?
4. Give the antonyms of the following words :
(i) Real (ii) Trusted.
5. What is the appropriate title of this passage?
6. Write meanings of the underlined words.

↳ COMPOSITION

Q. Here is an outline of a story. Complete it in not more than 40 words :

Summer.....a thirsty crow.....no water any where.....flying in the sky.....sees a pitcher.....finds very little water inside.....unable to reach the beak to the water level.....brings some pebbles.....drops into the pitcher.....drinks water.