

Our Indian Music (Stories and Anecdotes) Prose Summary

Chapter 6 English Class 10th

Characters

1. **Brahma:** He is the God of Creation.
2. **Saraswati:** The wife of the great god Brahma.
3. **Tansen:** He is a very versatile singer who sings to the emperor's biddings.
4. **Akbar:** He is the emperor who loves to hear music.
5. **Hari Das:** He is Tansen's master and only sings when he feels like it.

Introduction

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.

Summary

Brahma felt that his creation was effortless

The creator, Brahma, made this universe. He created a variety of wonderfully beautiful and enchanting things. He created the majestic mountain ranges, the thundering waterfalls, 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 that he created all this wonder and charm and showered beauty everywhere. But his children, the human souls, simply pass them by; they do not seem to be sensitive to the beauty around them. It seems to have been wasted on them, this creation seems to be purposeless.

Saraswati created arts and music

Saraswati understood his feelings and told him to let her help in the great work. She shall create in their children the power to respond, appreciate, and be uplifted by them. She will 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.

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 at it with wonder; we see some of our ancient sculptures and feel thrilled. 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.

Tansen, the great musician

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 was the secret of the sweet concord of notes which took him out of this world and transported him to Divine regions. Akbar had not heard anyone else who can thus cast a spell of magic and make a slave of our hearts. Tansen replied that he is only a humble pupil of his master, Swami Hari Das; Tansen had not mastered even a fraction of the master's technique, grace, and charm.

Akbar was greatly intrigued; he wanted to hear Hari Das, even though he was an emperor, 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. For 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.

Hari Das, the master of Tansen

Hari Das 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 that he learned music from this saint, and yet he seemed to have missed the living charm of it all. Tansen seemed to be chaff beside this soul-stirring music.

Tansen replied by saying that his music is wooden and lifeless by the side of the living harmony and melody of the master. But then the difference was that he sang to the emperor's bidding, but his master sings to no man's bidding but only when the prompting comes from this innermost self.

Conclusion

Music is the glorious combination of heart and soul that unites nations, demonstrates the expressiveness of thousands, and can alter your every mood and quite possibly your beliefs. Music can open doors to entire worlds. It can pick you up from the worst moods or bring you back down to earth after stressful times.

Music can speak when you have no words to say. Tansen even though was a great musician, his music seemed useless in front of his master's voice. Tansen comprehended the reason for his master's melodious music is because he is not bound to please anyone else rather he sings when he feels like pleasing his soul.