

# A Study of Indian Poetry

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**Abstract – Indian poetry has a deep and prosperous history dating back to ancient times. Poetry in foreign languages such as Persian and English also has a powerful force on Indian poetry. The poetry reflects distinct metaphysical custom within India. In particular, many Indian poets have been inspired by magical experiences. Poetry is the oldest form of literature and has a rich written and oral tradition. The primitive period in India saw the evolution of various great poets which include Rahim, Kabir and Tulsidas. Tulsidas, in particular, wrote Ramcharitmanas which has been acclaimed as “The tallest tree in the magic garden of medieval Indian poetry”. Nineteenth and twentieth century has seen the emergence of several towering figures in Indian literature which include Mirza Ghalib, Rabindranath Tagore, Sarojini Naidu, Mahadevi Verma and Kamala Das.**

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## INTRODUCTION

Poetry, since occasion primeval, has been a specialty of Indian people. India has composed so many wonderful poets that have told us about our history in form of poems, stories, songs. Their poetry is the mainstay that has made us stick to our roots and implement not only with the expertise of our country and our founder but also have had a soul-nourishing effect on the majority population of the country. Indian literature was written in many languages since India is a greatly diversified nation ranging from languages like Hindi, Awadhi, and Sanskrit to Urdu, Persian etc. Many foreign travelers have come and gone to India and have written praises about its prosperity, peacefulness, and administration. India, as a country has had a really contrasting history. From being “The Golden Sparrow” of the world to being colonized by the British for 200 years. Thus, it comes as no surprise that the poetry that drew out of the hearts of these Indian poets is as beautiful as it could get. From poets writing songs about their valiant Kings to poets writing about oppression by the British and bravery of the people of India. Indian poetry is the oldest form of Indian literature, which has the attained, both fecundity and excellence of cross monestry. It represents various phases’ development of our multitudinous cultural and national life right from the beginning of the nineteenth to the mid-nineties of the twentieth century. The essential period in India saw the evolution of numerous immense poets which introduce Rahim, Kabir and Tulsidas. Tulsidas, in particular, wrote Ramcharitmanas. Due to the diverse nature of India, Indian poetry has been written in numerous languages including Sanskrit, Hindi, Oriya, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Bengali and Urdu; as well as in foreign languages like Persian and English. 5th century Indian poet Kalidasa is

regarded as one of the greatest poets of all time and he has had a major impact on not only Indian poetry but on world literature. Indian poetry and Indian literature in general, has a long history dating back to Vedic times. They were written in various Indian languages such as Vedic Sanskrit, Classical Sanskrit, Hindi, Odia, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Bengali and Urdu.

So here we are going too few of our Indian poets.

- KALIDASA
- MAHADEVI VERMA
- CHAND BARDAI
- KAMALA DAS
- TULSIDAS
- HARIVANSH RAI BACHCHAN
- RABINDRANATH TAGORE
- MAITHILI SHARAN GUPT
- MIRZA GHALIB
- MUHAMMAD IQBAL
- KABIR
- RUSKIN BOND
- RUDYARD KIPLING
- NISSIM EZEKIEL

**KALIDASA**

Famous Indian Poets of Hindi Kalidasa lived in the 4th-5th century CE and wrote in Sanskrit language and has widely been accepted as the country's greatest poet. He has written a number of works, which include poems as well as plays. The most famous one being: Abhigyan Shakuntalam that describes the love story of King Dushyant and Shakuntala. He has also written other famous works like Raghuvansam and Meghadatta. Kalidasa was a Classical Sanskrit writer, widely regarded as the greatest poet and dramatist in the Sanskrit language of India. His plays and poetry are primarily based on the Vedas, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Puranas. His surviving works consist of three plays, two epic poems and two shorter poems.

**MAHADEVI VERMA**

Mahadevi Verma (26 March 1907 – 11 September 1987) was a Hindi poet, freedom fighter and educationist from India. She is widely regarded as the "modern Meera". She was a major poet of the "Chhayavaad", a literary movement of romanticism in modern Hindi poetry ranging from 1914–1938 and a prominent poet in Hindi Kavi sammelans (Gatherings of poets). She has also written other famous works like "Mere Bachpan Ke Din".

**CHAND BARDAI**

Chand Bardai was born on 30th September 1149 in Rajasthan and has been popularly known for writing the famous epic poem Prithviraj Raso. Prithviraj Raso was written in Brajhasha and describes the life of King Prithviraj Chauhan. It is an incredibly long poem and comprises of an upward of 10,000 stanzas. Prithviraj Chauhan was a valiant King who defeated Mohammad Ghazni in the First Battle of Terrain, but let him go the first time. When Mohammad Ghazni came the second time he defeated Prithviraj and this poem describes that.

**KAMALA DAS**

Kamala Surayya, popularly known by her one-time pen name Madhavikutty and married name Kamala Das, was an Indian English poet as well as a leading Malayalam author from Kerala, India. Kamala Das is one of three most significant Indian poets writing in English today, the other two being Nissim Ezekiel and Ramanujam. She is one of the members of poetic trinity of Indian English poets. The other two are Nissim Ezekiel and A. K. Ramanujam Her important poetic works are Summer in Calcutta, "The Descendants", "The old Playhouse" and other poems most of her poems deal with the theme of unfulfilled love and yearning for love. All poems have a great impact on the readers. For example: The Descendants, urged women to unleash their hungers and give their man what he most desires.

Again, I am drunk

Yes, but on the gold

Of suns, what noble

Venom now flows through

My veins and fills my

Mind with unhurried

Laughter? My worries

Doze. Wee bubblesring

My glass, like a bride

Nervous smile and meet

My lips....

**TULSIDAS**

Tulsidas (1532-1623) was an Indian writer. Another book written by Tulsidas is Kavitavali. Tulsidas was born in Rajapur, in what is now Uttar Pradesh, in Samvat 1589 or 1532 A.D. He was a Sarayuparina Brahmin by birth and is regarded as an incarnation of Valmiki, the author of the Ramayana.

**RABINDRANATH TAGORE**

Rabindranath Tagore was born on 7th May 1861 in the Province of Bengal and was not only a poet, but also a polymath, musician, and an artist. In 1913, Rabindranath Tagore became the first Non-European to win a Nobel Prize. Rabindranath Tagore was popularly known as "The Bard of Bengal." His writing style was exceptionally mercurial but it remained vastly unknown outside the Province of Bengal.

**HARIVANSH RAI BACHCHAN**

Harivansh Rai Bachchan born on 27th November 1907 in Allahabad. He is known as one of the most famous modern poets of India. Students throughout the country have read his poems as a part of their curriculum. He also received The Padma Bhushan in 1986 for his immense contribution to Hindi literature. He was a prolific writer and his writing style was very motivational and simple. He could bring about the complexities of life and motivate people by using a very minimalistic and simple approach. Some of his famous works include Madhushala, Agnipath, Ruke Na Tu, Teer Par Kaise Rukoon.

### **MAITHILI SHARAN GUPT**

Maithili Sharan Gupt was born on 3rd August 1866 in Chirgaon. He was one of the finest Indian poets of Khari Boli or the Plain Dialect. In a time when most of the poets favored the use of Brajhasha dialect, Maithili Sharan Gupt wrote in Khari Boli and was amazingly successful at that too. He is also one of the most sought- after modern Indian poets and students throughout the country read his works as a part of their curriculum. Some of his most famous works include Nahush Ka Pegan, Dono Or Prem Palta hal, Arjun ki Pratigya.

### **MUHAMMAD IQBAL**

Muhammad Iqbal was born on 9th November 1877 in Sialkot District of Punjab Province during British India. Many literary critics and media outlooks called him the "Poet of the East". His family was descended from the Kashmiri Pandit Brahmin line and Iqbal grew up in fairly humble surroundings. He loved both of his parents and, when his mother died in 1914 he wrote a short elegy in her honor. Sir Muhammed Iqbal died on the 21st April 1938 at the age of 60. Some of Muhammad Iqbal's famous poems are Sympathy, I Desire, Ahead of the Stars, The Crescent.

### **MIRZA GHALIB**

Mirza Ghalib was the pen name of Mirza Asadullah Ghalib. He was born on 27th December 1797. He was majorly an Urdu and Persian language poet. He is considered to be one of the greatest poets of all times. Not only in the Indian Sub Continent but throughout the world. Mirza Ghalib has written various short poems that became very famous during that time. During the reign of Bahadur Shah Zafar II, Mirza Ghalib was given the title of 'Dabir-ul-Mulk' and he was also bestowed upon with an additional title of 'Najm- ul-Daulah'

### **KABIR**

Kabir lived through the 5th Century CE and was a mystical or Sufi poet. He wrote many short poems also known as 'Kabir Ke Dohe'. He mostly portrayed a side of the connection between the human and the divine. He was an extremely religious man and portrayed that in his writings. His writings became extremely popular and have since then gained even more popularity. Each of his writings had a mystical connection to the divinity and also had a moral.

### **MEERABAI**

Meerabai was born in the year 1498 in Kurki District, Pali in Rajasthan. She belonged to the Royal Family of Rajasthan. Her family disapproved of her singing in public since she belonged to the Royal Family, so she left her family and went on to sing praises of her Lord, Krishna and also called herself as her wife.

She wrote a number of poems and songs, singing the praises of Lord Krishna and went on to attain Moksha or 'Nirvana' through Bhakti Yoga. She was widely seen as a prominent figure during the Bhakti movement in the late 1600s. One of her most famous songs was 'Payo Ji Maine Ram Ratan Dhan', written in the local Rajasthani dialect.

### **RUSKIN BOND**

Ruskin Bond was born on 19th May 1934 in Kasauli, which presently lives in Shimla. He was awarded the Sahitya Academy Award in 1992 for his contribution to literature in India. He has written hundreds of short stories and poems. He wrote his first short story in 1951 which was named "Untouchable." He has written several horror stories describing the hauntings of Shimla and the adjacent areas. His short stories are a treat to read. His Autobiography was published in the year 2017 which was titled, "Lone Fox Dancing." Some of his most famous works are Himalayan Tales, Indian Ghost Stories, A Tiger in The House etc.

### **RUDYARD KIPLING**

Rudyard Kipling was born on 30th December 1865 in Bombay Presidency of British India. Although he was not an Indian national, he was born here and spent most of his life in India. He was inspired by the Indian way of living. This inspired him to write books like "The Jungle Book". In 1907, at the age of 42, he was also awarded the Nobel prize for literature which made him the first English Literature writer to win a Nobel prize. He was also offered Knighthood on several occasions, which he respectfully declined. Some of his most famous works are: The Jungle Book, If, Rikki Tikki Tavi.

### **NISSIM EZEKIEL**

Nissim Ezekiel was born on 16th December 1924 in Bombay Presidency of British India. He was awarded the Sahitya Academy Award in 1983 for his poetry collection, Latter Day Psalms. Ezekiel enriched and established Indian English language poetry through his modernist innovations and techniques, which enlarged Indian English literature, moving it beyond purely spiritual and Orientalist themes, to include a wider range of concerns and interests, including mundane familial events. Some of his famous works are Time to Change, Sixty Poems, and The Third etc. His all poems have a great impact on the readers. For example:

Don't curse the darkness  
Since you're old not to,  
But don't be in a hurry

To light a candle either.

The darkness has its secrets

Which light does not know?

It's a kind of perfection.

While every light

Distorts the truth...

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Kamala Das (1967). "The Descendants", Calcutta; Writers Workshop.

Kamala Das (1973). "The Old Polyhouse & other poems", Madras; Orient Longman.

Harivansh Rai Bachchan (1907–2003), poet of Chhayavaad literary movement (romantic upsurge)

Kabir (1440–1518), mystic poet and saint of India

Meera (1498–1547), mystic singer and composer of Bhajans

Kamala Das also known as "Kamala Suraiya" (born 1934), writer and poet in English and Malayalam

Nissim Ezekiel (1924–2004), Indian poet, playwright and art critic and editor writing in English

Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941), Indian poet who won the 1913 Nobel Prize in Literature

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