

## IN THE BAZZARS OF HYDERABAD

The poem *In the Bazaars of Hyderabad* is a brilliant piece of writing by the Indian Woman **poet** Sarojini Naidu (1879–1949). To understand the context for writing this poem, you first need to know that Sarojini Naidu was a major political figure in the Indian freedom movement in the first half of the 20th century. She was the President of the Indian National Congress and the first woman Governor in India.

And as for **the context**, the poem was written as a part of the Swadeshi Movement. During that freedom movement the Indians decided to boycott European merchandise and use the Indian products instead.

Through the poem *In The Bazaars of Hyderabad* Sarojini wanted to convey **the message** that India is rich in tradition and they don't need the foreign products. So, she goes on to give a picture of a bazaar where traditional Indian products are ruling.

The poem is in **the form** of questions and answers. The poet asks the questions and the merchants answer them. Through this technique she make the picture of the bazaar visible to us.

The poem contains five stanzas of six lines each. It follows a unique **rhyme scheme** where the second, fourth and sixth lines in each stanza are rhyming. The third and fifth lines are also rhyming. The last stanza is a slight exception though. So the general scheme is ABCBCB.

### *In The Bazaars of Hyderabad: Stanza-wise Summary*

What do you sell O ye merchants?

Richly your wares are displayed.

Turbans of crimson and silver,

Tunics of Purple brocade,

Mirrors with panels of Amber,

Daggers with handles of jade.

The poem begins with the poet's question to the merchants about what they are selling. She sees that the goods are displayed nicely to

attract the buyers. The merchants reply that they are selling crimson (deep red) and silver coloured turbans, purple brocade tunics, mirrors with amber-frame and daggers with handles made of jade (a green stone).

What do you weigh, O ye vendors?

Saffron and lentil and rice.

What do you grind, O ye maidens?

Sandalwood, henna, and spice.

What do you call, O ye pedlars?

Chessmen and ivory dice.

The poet then visits the vendors, the maidens and the pedlars (salesmen). She asks the vendors what they are weighing for sale. The vendors reply that they are weighing saffron, lentil and rice. The poet then asks the maiden girls what they are grinding. the reply comes that they are grinding sandalwood, henna and spices. And now the pedlars are asked what they are calling as their trade cry. They say that they are selling chessmen and dice made from ivory for the game of chess.

What do you make, O ye goldsmiths?

Wristlet and anklet and ring,

Bells for the feet of blue pigeons,

Frail as a dragon-fly's wing,

Girdles of gold for dancers,

Scabbards of gold for the king.

The poet now goes up to the goldsmiths and asks them what they are making. They are making wristlet, anklet and ring to adorn us and bells to be tied to the feet of blue pigeons. And the bells are as thin and lightweight as the wings of a dragonfly. They are also making golden girdles for the dancers and golden sheaths for keeping the king's swords.

What do you cry, O ye, fruitmen?

Citron, pomegranate, and plum.

What do you play, O musicians?

Sitar, sarangi and drum.

What do you chant, O magicians?

Spells for aeons to come.

The poet in the poem *In The Bazaars of Hyderabad* now asks the fruit sellers what fruits are they selling. They answer that there are citron, pomegranate and plum. Now as the poet asks the musicians what instruments they are play, they reply that they are playing on sitar, sarangi and drum. After that poet goes to the magicians and asks them what they are chanting. The reply comes, he is chanting the spells to bring in aeons (a divine power) who would help him perform his magical tricks.

What do you weave, O ye flower-girls?

With tassels of azure and red?

Crowns for the brow of a bridegroom,

Chaplets to garland his bed.

Sheets of white blossoms, new-garnered

To perfume the sleep of the dead.

In the last stanza of the poem the poet asks the flower girls what they are weaving with the azure (deep blue) and red tassels (strands of flower). The flower girls are making garlands for the bride and the groom and to adorn their bed for the wedding night. They are also making sheets of newly brought white flowers for use on the dead man's grave for fragrance.

Thus the poet Sarojini Naidu represents an Indian market to give us a sense of the rich Indian heritage. This poem was her protest against the European products and an appreciation of our own goods.