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VALUE-ADDED / ADD-ON COURSE
DESIGNED BY DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
The Impact of Bhartiya gyan Parampara on English Literature
MODULE -02
Poetry

1.0 Introduction

Welcome to the fascinating world of poetry! In this chapter, we will explore how the rich traditions of Indian philosophy and spirituality have influenced and inspired some of the greatest English-language poets. We will examine four poems that draw deeply from Bhartiya gyan parampara (Indian knowledge traditions): *Meru* by W.B. Yeats, *Songs of Radha* by Sarojini Naidu, *Brahma* by Ralph Waldo Emerson, and an excerpt from *The Dry Salvages* by T.S. Eliot.

Through close reading and analysis of these poems, we will uncover how concepts from Hinduism, Buddhism, and Indian mysticism are creatively woven into Western poetic forms. You will gain insight into how cultural exchange between East and West led to new modes of poetic expression and spiritual exploration. This journey through poetry will deepen your appreciation for both the universal themes of human existence and the unique contributions of Indian thought to world literature.

1.1 Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, learners will be able to:

- ❖ Identify key concepts from Indian philosophy and spirituality in English-language poetry
- ❖ Analyze how poets incorporate Indian imagery, myths, and ideas into their work
- ❖ Compare and contrast Western and Eastern approaches to spiritual themes in poetry
- ❖ Explain the influence of texts like the Bhagavad Gita and Upanishads on specific poems
- ❖ Evaluate how cross-cultural exchange enriched poetic traditions
- ❖ Interpret symbolic and metaphorical uses of Indian concepts in poetry
- ❖ Discuss how poets adapted Indian ideas to address modern spiritual and existential questions

Learning Outcomes:

After completing this chapter, learners will:

- ❖ Have a deeper understanding of the cultural dialogue between India and the West in literature
- ❖ Be able to recognize and interpret Indian philosophical concepts in poetry
- ❖ Appreciate how poets synthesized Eastern and Western traditions
- ❖ Develop skills in close reading and analysis of complex, multilayered poems
- ❖ Gain insight into universal spiritual and philosophical questions explored through poetry

1.2 Reference to Prior Learning

This chapter builds on your existing knowledge of:

- Basic poetic forms and devices
- Major movements in English literature
- Fundamental concepts in world religions and philosophy
- Cultural exchange between India and the West

Your prior exposure to these topics will provide a foundation as we delve deeper into how Indian thought specifically influenced and transformed English-language poetry. We will expand on these basics to explore more nuanced cultural and philosophical intersections.

INTRODUCTION

The most ancient Indian Literature is 'Vedas'. The Puranas and The greatest two epics, The Ramayana and The Mahabharata are the most significant pieces of poetry even today. The portrayal of the deities Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva has a strong influence on English literature. The Ramayana and The Mahabharata are examples of epic poetry that are not mere classics that are the everlasting inspiration for English literature. These epics have not only guided the people of the country through their triumphs and failures but also fascinated Western writers.

Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism are ultimately the most ancient and naturalistic religions which sprung in the world in general and in East Asia or India in particular. These religions are established on the incorporation of nature and spirituality and their close adherence to them, it is not strange to find mythical stories and ritual orders within it as well. The ancient Indian communities were too close to nature and this is obviously incarnated from their primitive and simple way of life. Hindu religion deals with the origin of the creation as an absolute, unending and timeless one. In spite of their monotheist belief but this astonished the Hindu to be a polytheist worship at the same time. The ultimate reality of oneness of god is enhanced with these words "...eternal beginning ...is only the supreme Identity of "That One"...It means that God came from not being as light from darkness as well as separated sky from earth The concept of Trinity is available in most religions including Hinduism, Buddhism and Christianity. It is common to find these in the poems of Butler Yeats, and Ralph Waldo Emerson. The presence of the Indian myth in the western poetry is very huge and unavoidable. It is incarnated through a special reflection of the availability of Hindu and Buddhist images in the poetry of greatest western poets like T.S. Eliot, Sir William Jones, W.B. Yeats, RalphWaldo Emerson, John Berryman, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and so on. They fostered their poetry with very rich Oriental beautiful and decorative pictures, imbibing cultural and religious doctrines. Four poems has been selected in this study, which are: William Butler Yeats poem 'Meru', Sarojini Naidu,' Songs of Radha' and Ralph Waldo Emerson's 'Brahma' and T.S.Eliot's 'The Dry Salvages' Part III. These chosen poems stand for different ages and periods of poetry writers in English and writing careers. India and Bhartiya Gyan Parmpara was and will be the subject of inspiration and innovation for these poets in particular, as a result of all the secrets and treasures behold within its great heritage and very rich mystical and unsolved ambiguities of its' cultures, east west encounters etc but the influence of India has been cannot be denied.

POEM 1:- Meru

William Butler Yeats (born June 13, 1865, Sandymount, Dublin, Ireland—died January 28, 1939). He was an Irish poet, dramatist, and prose writer, one of the greatest English-language poets of the 20th century. He received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1923.

Yeats's fascination with Indian culture served as an inspiration throughout most of his life both aesthetically and spiritually. From as early as his first poetic endeavors in the late 1800s, references to India and Hindu spiritual practices permeated his writing. The poems of Yeats suggest Yeats's prior engagement with the literature and ideas of India from a myriad of sources. Ashim Dutta in "India in Yeats's Early Imagination: Mohini Chatterjee and Kālidāsa" notes the influence of Indian poet Kalidasa's play *Sakuntala* on Yeats's imagery of Indian flora, fauna, and landscape in "The Indian To His Love"; both Dutta and Elleke Boehmer in their close readings of these poems also observe Vedantic concepts of self and anti-self unfolding through the exchanges in "Anushaya and Vijaya," which they propose stems from Yeats's reading of the Hindu holy text, the *Bhagavad Gita*. These three "Indian" poems may have served as a way for Yeats to experiment with a bucolic, pastoral landscape that he would later make Irish in "The Lake Isle of Innisfree" in 1890 (117). Traces echoes of Brahmanite texts and teachings, specifically the Upanishads, through this early phase's poems that are not nominally "Indian", including "Quatrains and Aphorisms," "The Way of Wisdom," "The Pathway," "The Priest and the Fairy," "The Song of the Happy Shepherd," "Fergus and the Druid," and his little-published *The Seeker* among his close readings. The text of the Upanishads were introduced to Yeats by his schoolmate and fellow poet AE (George Russell), who obtained his copy through the spiritualist network. Yeats's greatest source of accessing Hindu spiritual texts: Theosophy. Yeats's obsession with India came in three waves spurred by three crucial Indian figures: pre-Tagore, Mohini Chatterjee, Rabindranath Tagore, and, post-Tagore, Purohit Swami.

Text

***Civilisation is hooped together, brought
Under a rule, under the semblance of peace
By manifold illusion; but man's life is thought,
And he, despite his terror, cannot cease
Ravening through century after century,***

*Ravening, raging, and uprooting that he may come
Into the desolation of reality:
Egypt and Greece, good-bye, and good-bye, Rome!
Hermits upon Mount Meru or Everest,
Caverned in night under the drifted snow,
Or where that snow and winter's dreadful blast
Beat down upon their naked bodies, know
That day bring round the night, that before dawn
His glory and his monuments are gone.*

The poem *Meru* by William Butler Yeats appeared last in his work ‘Parnell’s Funeral & Other Poems (1935)’ and summed up what came before it in that volume, concluding that human civilization is an illusion. This is a two stanza poem that can be separated into one set of eight lines and another set of six lines. Due to the nature of the rhyme scheme, and the fact that this poem contains a total of fourteen lines, it is considered to be a Shakespearean sonnet following the rhyming pattern of ababcdcdefefgg. Yeats makes use of alliteration in the fifth and sixth lines of the first stanza. There are a number of words that come one after another which begin with “r.” This technique, along with the poet’s use of repetition, such as that in the eighth line of the first stanza, helps to unify the text. The connections between words and phrases are not trivially arranged. Yeats created moments of alliteration with the intention of giving certain phrases a greater emphasis, especially when the poem is read aloud.

Summary of *Meru*

Meru by William Butler Yeats describes the illusion of civilization and the importance of embarking on a spiritual journey.

The poem begins with the speaker describing how civilization is not the solid construct that many assume it to be. It is instead a “manifold illusion.” It is an imaginary experience had in tandem throughout human existence.

The sonnet continues on to state that humankind has no true understanding of civilizations’ transitory nature. One might “rage” throughout their life looking for meaning but without a true journey and full understanding of life, there will be no meaningful revelations. In the second half of the poem, the speaker moves on to briefly describe the lives of two hermits who are positioned on Mount Meru and Mount Everest. While Everest is being traversed as a physical test, the scaling of Meru is a spiritual one. The poem concludes with the speaker

restating the fact that the world is always changing. Dawn will bring on the night for the rest of time until God's creation is destroyed. These are facts the hermits have come to know throughout their spiritual and physical struggles.

Analysis

In the first stanza of this piece, the speaker begins by describing the state of "Civilisation," or civilization. He states that all of the humankind throughout time has been connected throughout the ages. It has been "hooped together" and unified "Under a rule." This "rule" is not the reign of a king, institution, or spiritual belief system, it is instead "illusion." The speaker believes that humans are connected through "manifold illusion," that of the illusion of civilization itself.

Throughout time there has only been a "semblance of peace," no real embodied state which exists in reality.

The speaker states that this fact is not commonly known. Men and women are living their lives as they always have, with no full consideration for the truth of their existence. He speaks on "man's life is thought." A man living through the days of his life spends time analyzing each moment and worrying over all the details.

He continues on to describe how even though this is the case, the man cannot stop, "Ravaging through century after century." Humankind has an unquenchable thirst for more. It is animalistic, almost desperate.

This generalized depiction of humankind is continued. People have lived in this manner through all the ages of the earth. No matter the situation, there is always "Ravaging, raging, and uprooting" in an effort to "come / Into the desolation of reality."

The speaker is stating that even though humankind continues to search for meaning, they are unable to see the illusion of their lives that connects them all. In the last lines of this section the speaker bids farewell to the great ancient civilization. He speaks of "Egypt, Greece" and "Rome." The speaker brings these up to prove the point that nothing lasts, there is no permanence. Eventually, all tangible structures made by humankind disappear. The second half of the poem, which is made up of six lines, the speaker discusses the importance of a spiritual journey versus a physical one.

The first lines bring up two different mountains, "Meru" and "Everest." Mount Meru is a mystical and imagined mountain which is referenced in Hindu, Jain, and Buddhist texts. It is thought to be the center of all spiritual universe's. The speaker describes "Hermits" who are squatting on either Meru or Everest. These two peaks are quite different, but similar

in the fact that it takes a great effort to surmount them. The hermits are “Caverned...under the drifted snow.” Both of these beings are existing in an ever-changing world. It is here that “snow and winter’s dreadful blast” pours down on them. Their bodies are described as being “naked.” This choice was made by the poet in an effort to show the strain and depth of one’s spiritual or physical journey. They have been stripped down to nothing as they attempt to climb, or even exist upon these mountains.

Both hermits know that the day, which brings with it more hospitable conditions, will eventually give way to night. Nothing, no civilization, nor even the warmth of the sun, will last. They both know that “before dawn / His glory and...monuments are gone.” The speaker is now referring directly to God, adding in “His” own creations into the process of continual transformation. The poem closes this description to emphasize the intensity and depth of their spirituality and physical journey. They have been stripped down to nothing as they strive to climb further on their spiritual journey.

Both hermits are aware that the day, which brings more favorable conditions, will eventually give way to night. Nothing, not even civilization or the warmth of the sun, is permanent. They both understand that "before dawn / His glory and...monuments are gone." The speaker now directly refers to God, incorporating His own creations into the ongoing process of transformation.

THEMES

1. Futility of Material Civilization: The poem explores the illusions of civilization, revealing the hidden chaos beneath. It highlights humanity's destructive tendencies throughout history and questions the pursuit of progress. Using vivid imagery, it shows how society's illusions unravel, exposing discord. It ponders if civilization is ultimately fuel and predicts its inevitable destruction. The poem warns of the consequences of power and dominance, leaving behind a desolate wasteland. The poem exposes the fragility of society, urging us to question illusions and confront uncomfortable truths. It inspires us to seek an authentic life that embraces the complexities of humanity.

2. Significance of Spiritual Quests: "Meru" is a poem that delves into the meaning behind climbing Mount Meru or Everest, emphasizing the importance of embarking on a spiritual journey. The hermits on these mountains symbolize individuals detached from the material world, seeking spiritual enlightenment and inner peace. The poem highlights the transformative power of a spiritual quest and reminds us that worldly fame and landmarks are temporary. By contrasting the physical challenges of climbers with the spiritual quest of the hermits, "Meru"

encourages readers to reflect on their own lives and seek something greater. Ultimately, it serves as a reminder that a spiritual journey can lead to personal growth and a deeper understanding of the transient nature of worldly achievements.

3. Mythical and Spiritual Symbolism: The poem combines Hindu and Upanishadic symbols, guiding readers on a spiritual journey. It explores the multifaceted nature of truth through divine figures and draws inspiration from the Upanishads. The poet encourages readers to question their beliefs and perceptions, leading them to uncover their own truth. The language and imagery create a mystical atmosphere, making abstract concepts relatable. Ultimately, the poem guides us to self-discovery and the truth within ourselves, emphasizing that it is not external. By exploring our inner world, we embark on a transformative journey, uncovering life's secrets and the profound truth at its core.

4. Transience of Glory and Monuments: The poem explores the essence of human greatness and structures. It describes a magnificent city that represents human success, but quickly moves on to show how these achievements decay and disappear. The city's glory fades away as the buildings crumble and the streets become empty. The vivid descriptions and imagery highlight the temporary nature of human greatness. The poem suggests that we should embrace this temporality and focus on the present moment. By acknowledging the transience of our accomplishments, we can find meaning in the journey itself.

5. Influence of Hinduism: The poem delves into human existence and consciousness, drawing from Hindu teachings. It uses vivid imagery and metaphors to capture Hindu spirituality, prompting readers to ponder life's mysteries. The poem also explores the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth, incorporating Hindu rituals and emphasizing self-reflection. It highlights the illusory nature of the world and encourages seeking a higher truth. Ultimately, it showcases the poet's spiritual journey influenced by Hinduism and invites readers to embark on their own quest for truth.

THEMES IN DETAIL

The poet's use of vivid imagery and descriptive language further emphasizes the essence of human greatness. The reader can almost see the city's grandeur slowly dissipating, like a mirage disappearing in the desert heat. The poem serves as a poignant reminder that no matter how great our accomplishments may seem, they are ultimately temporary and subject to the ravages of time. Furthermore, the poem suggests that the transience of human greatness is not something to be mourned, but rather embraced. It highlights the impermanence of our achievements as a reminder to focus on the present moment and appreciate the beauty and

wonder that surrounds us. By acknowledging the essence of our accomplishments, we are encouraged to find meaning and fulfillment in the journey itself, rather than solely in the end result. In conclusion, the poem delves into the concept that human greatness and structures are eeng, using vivid imagery and descriptive language to illustrate the rapid disappearance of these accomplishments. It serves as a reminder that even the most impressive monuments and achievements are ultimately temporary, urging us to end meaning and fulfillment in the present moment rather than solely in the pursuit of laansing glory. The poem, with its profound and introspective tone, delves into the depths of human existence and consciousness, drawing heavily from the teachings and philosophies of Hinduism. Just as the Upanishads emphasize the importance of self-realization and the search for enlightenment, the poem embarks on a similar spiritual journey. Through its vivid imagery and metaphors, the poem captures the essence of Hindu spirituality, inviting readers to contemplate the mysteries of life and the nature of reality. It explores the interconnectedness of all beings, echoing the Hindu concept of Brahman, the ultimate reality that permeates everything. Furthermore, the poem reflects the Hindu belief in the cyclical nature of existence, as it explores themes of birth, death, and rebirth. It contemplates the transient nature of life and the impermanence of worldly attachments, encouraging readers to seek a deeper understanding beyond the material realm. In addition, the poem draws inspiration from Hindu rituals and practices, incorporating elements such as meditation, mantra recitation, and the concept of karma. It emphasizes the importance of self-reecon and introspection, urging individuals to look within themselves for answers and to strive for spiritual growth. Moreover, the poem highlights the Hindu concept of Maya, the illusory nature of the world, and the need to transcend it in order to aain true enlightenment. It encourages readers to question the limitations of their perception and to seek a higher truth beyond the illusions of the physical realm.

Self-Assessment

- a) How does Yeats use the image of Mount Meru to explore spiritual concepts?
- b) Discuss the theme of impermanence in "Meru" and how it relates to Indian philosophy.

POEM 2 :- *Songs of Radha*

Sarojini Naidu (13 February 1879 – 2 March 1949) was an Indian political activist and poet who served as the first Governor of United Provinces, after India's independence. She played an important role in the Indian independence movement against the British Raj. She was the first Indian woman to be president of the Indian National Congress and appointed governor of a state. Naidu's literary work as a poet earned her the nickname the "Nightingale of India" by Gandhi because of the colour, imagery and lyrical quality of her poetry.

Text

AT DAWN

*All night my heart its lonely vigil kept
Listening for thee, O Love. All night I wept.
Where went thy wanton footsteps wandering,
Sweet Ghanashyam, my King?
My bridal veils are flung upon the floor,
My bridal garlands drop across the door.
The buds that on my bed their fragrance spilt,
Grief-scattered, wane and wilt.
O Flute-player, how quickly dost thou tire
Of thine own gladness and thine own desire!
Couldst thou not find upon my sheltering breast
Thy rapture and thy rest?
Whose are the fingers that like amorous flocks
Raid the ambrosial thickets of thy locks?
Ah, whose the lips that smite with sudden drouth
The garden of thy mouth?
What shall it profit to revile or hate
Thy fickleness, her beauty or my fate,
Or strive to tear with black and bitter art
Thine image from my heart?
Without thy loveliness my life is dead,
Love, like a lamp with golden oils unfed.
Come back, come back from thy wild wandering.
Sweet Ghanashyam, my King!*

AT DUSK

Krishna Murari, my radiant lover

Cometh O comrades haste.

Bring me rich perfumes my limbs to cover.

Saffron and sandal paste.

Bring shining garments for my adorning,

Blue of the dusk and rose of the morning.

Gold of the flaming noon.

Bring me a breastband of gems that shimmer,

Making the lamps of the stars grow dimmer,

Fillets and fringes of pearls whose glimmer

Shameth the Shravan moon.

Krishna Murari, my radiant lover

Cometh, O sisters spread

Buds and ripe blossoms his couch to cover,

Silver and vermeil red.

With flowering branches the doorways darken,

Is that his flute call? Sisters hearken!

Why tarrieth he so long?

O like a leaf doth my shy heart shiver,

O Like a wave do my faint limbs quiver.

Softly, softly, Jamuna river,

Sing thou our bridal song.

THE QUEST

My foolish love went seeking thee at dawn,

Crying — O wind where is Kanhaya gone?

I questioned at noonrise the forest glade,

Rests my sweet lover in thy friendly shade?

At dusk I pleaded with the dovegray tides,

O tell me where my Flute-player abides?

Dumb were the waters, dumb the woods, the wind,

They knew not where my playfellow to find.

I bowed my weeping face upon my palm,

*Moaning — O where art thou, my Ghanashyam?
Then, like a boat that rocks from keel to rafter,
My heart was shaken by thy hidden laughter.
Then didst thou mock me with thy tender malice,
Like nectar bubbling from my own heart's chalice.
Thou saidst, — O faithless one, self-slain with doubt,
Why seekest thou my loveliness without
And askest wind or wave or flowering dell
The secret that within thyself doth dwell?
I am of thee, as thou of me, a part.
Look for me in the mirror of thy heart*

Songs of Radha by Sarojini Naidu - A Poetic Journey of Love and Longing

Songs of Radha by Sarojini Naidu offers readers a poignant exploration of love, longing, and spiritual devotion through the lens of the legendary Radha-Krishna romance. Radha is the goddess of love, tenderness, compassion and devotion as portrayed in this poem. In scriptures, Radha is mentioned as the avatar of Lakshmi and also as the Mūlaprakriti, the Supreme goddess, who is the feminine counterpart and internal potency (hladini shakti) of Krishna. Radha accompanies Krishna in all his incarnations. This poem is divided into three evocative sections, "At Dawn," "At Dusk," and "The Quest," the poems transport readers to the mystical realm of Vrindavan, where Radha's passionate yearning for her beloved Krishna unfolds in lyrical verses.

In the first section, "At Dawn," Naidu captures Radha's lonely vigil and heartache as she awaits the return of her beloved Krishna. Through vivid imagery and emotive language, the poet conveys Radha's sense of abandonment and longing as she pines for her absent lover. The juxtaposition of Radha's bridal veils and wilted garlands symbolizes the ephemeral nature of love and the pain of unfulfilled expectations.

"At Dusk" transports readers to a scene of anticipation and preparation as Radha awaits Krishna's arrival. Naidu masterfully paints a picture of Radha adorning herself in luxurious garments and jewels, eagerly anticipating her radiant lover's return. The imagery of saffron, sandalwood, and shimmering gems evokes a sense of opulence and sensuality, heightening the anticipation of their impending reunion.

In "The Quest," Naidu delves into Radha's relentless search for Krishna, as she seeks him in the natural world and within her own heart. Through poignant verses, the poet

explores themes of faith, doubt, and self-discovery as Radha grapples with the elusive nature of divine love. The revelation that Krishna resides within Radha's own heart serves as a powerful reminder of the inherent connection between lover and beloved, and the transformative power of introspection and self-realization.

Throughout "Songs of Radha," Naidu's lyrical language and emotional depth resonate with readers, inviting them to immerse themselves in the timeless tale of Radha and Krishna's love. The poems' universal themes of longing, devotion, and spiritual awakening transcend cultural and temporal boundaries, resonating with readers of all backgrounds.

In conclusion, "Songs of Radha" by Sarojini Naidu is a captivating poetic journey that captures the essence of love and longing through the timeless story of Radha and Krishna. Naidu's exquisite verses and evocative imagery create a rich tapestry of emotions, inviting readers to explore the depths of the human heart and the boundless nature of divine love. This timeless collection is sure to enchant readers with its beauty and resonance, leaving a lasting impression on hearts and minds alike. A poem dealing with Krishnabhakti, Krishnaprem, it is about love for Krishna, the same Shyam-Ghanashyam.

Songs of Radha as a poem is a series of reflections, a set of three poems enjoined together to celebrate Krishna love which Radha feels it for Krishna. As the tunes change it so the notes and melodies with the dawn break and the twilight as do change human feelings and emotions. Love for Krishna forms a prominent aspect of all the three poems under our perusal and discussion, be it At Dawn, At Dusk or The Quest. In Sagun Brahma there lies it the picture of the Nirguna Brahman too. The poem expresses Sarojini Naidu's strong belief in love. Through the iconic love of Radha and Krishna the poet reveals that the realization of true love lies in spiritual union and not in physical union. The beauty of the poem, lies in the beautiful description of nature. The Words like 'wind', the 'forest glade' and 'dove gray tide' convey purity and serenity of the surrounding. It enhances its beauty as well as adds flavor to the intense emotion of love. The use of images of 'hidden laughter' and 'nectar bubbling from my own heart chalice' brings out the concept of divinity in the poem. she laid emphasis on the decayment of life and the importance of fortune, the real purpose of life and mystery of death. Legends and mythological particulars interest her too much and she loves to sing the importance of the God and Goddess of all the religions with a free heart and open mind. She sees the beauty of life and she marks the imaginative plight as well as a realistic description of divine love. The important theme of Sarojini Naidu's poetry is pure and intense aspiration of love. The central idea of the poem Song of Radha, is that true love is deep and can never be controlled. The world becomes heaven for the lover and he/she is never bothered by the

people around him/her. In the poem, we find Radha in deep love for Krishna. She cries his name again and again. The people around her laugh at her and even get angry. However she does not think of them. Instead she keeps praying for her beloved Krishna.

Self-Assessment

- a) How does Naidu portray the relationship between Radha and Krishna in her poem?
- b) Analyze the use of natural imagery in *Songs of Radha* and its connection to bhakti tradition.

POEM 3:- Brahma

Ralph Waldo Emerson (May 25, 1803 – April 27, 1882), who went by his middle name Waldo, was an American essayist, lecturer, philosopher, abolitionist, and poet who led the Transcendentalist movement of the mid-19th century. He was seen as a champion of individualism and critical thinking, as well as a prescient critic of the countervailing pressures of society and conformity. Friedrich Nietzsche thought he was "the most gifted of the Americans," and Walt Whitman called him his "master". Emerson and his fellow Transcendentalists, including Henry David Thoreau and Bronson Alcott, were among the first in America to explore the crown jewels of Indian philosophy: the Upanishads and the Bhagavad-Gita. The Bhagavad-Gita dates back to before the time of Christ, and recounts the conversation between the spiritual teacher Krishna and his heroic disciple Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurushetra in ancient India.

The Upanishads may well predate ancient Egypt and weave spiritual lessons into timeless stories including the tale of Nachiketas journeying into the realm of death to atone for the sins of his father. In Nachiketas' discussion with Yama, the Lord of Death, the mysteries of life and death are revealed.

These two source writings can provide a lifetime of inspiration. Swami Vivekananda, one of the first Indian yogis to come to America, first speaking at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893, carried with him two books from India. One was the Bhagavad-Gita.

The title of the poem, 'Brahma' comes from the Hindu god of creation. He is one of the three major gods of the religion, alongside Vishnu and Shiva. It is from his perspective that the poem is written, alluding to his control over everything. The text is an exploration of the universality of the spirit of Brahma and how he moves through time and space. Brahma was written by Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882), a spiritual and intellectual giant of American history. In this 16-line poem we are able to explore significant foundations of Eastern and

Western philosophy. The essence of spirituality and Hinduism is synthesized in the poem Brahma by the American philosopher, writer and poet Emerson. This poem touches on essential themes of metaphysics and spirituality while simultaneously being applicable to our daily lives.

Text

*If the red slayer think he slays,
Or if the slain think he is slain,
They know not well the subtle ways
I keep, and pass, and turn again.
Far or forgot to me is near;
Shadow and sunlight are the same;
The vanished gods to me appear;
And one to me are shame and fame.
They reckon ill who leave me out;
When me they fly, I am the wings;
I am the doubter and the doubt,
And I the hymn the Brahmin sings.
The strong gods pine for my abode,
And pine in vain the sacred Seven;
But thou, meek lover of the good!
Find me, and turn thy back on heaven.*

The poem begins with the speaker telling the reader that they are wrong about life or earth. Anyone who thinks they have killed or died does not understand how Brahma, the god of creation, works. He also explains how subtle he is in his movements and that he can pass through the world and come back again effortlessly. The poem speaks in the first person. It is the voice of one who has reached the pinnacle of spiritual illumination. The insights echo first hand experiences of illumined saints and sages from all traditions while the imagery and framework are from Hinduism. It is also the voice of Brahma, who in the Hindu religion is the ultimate God. Hinduism has many gods, just as the Bible has many saints and angels and archangels; but the supreme God in Christianity is the Father and in Hinduism the word used is Brahma.

The red slayer can represent anyone who kills and the message of the first stanza is that death is not the end of existence. Most people live in constant fear of growing old and

death. We fear pain and the idea of non-existence. Our society pushes death away from our eyes while glorifying youth. Death is a transition to a more subtle realm and from the careful observation of the death process we can learn so much. The red slayer is also symbolic of Kali the Hindu goddess of death and transformation. She is often portrayed carrying a sword with blood dripping from it; hence the red-slayer.

Emerson approaches the immortality of the soul both from the vantage point of he who thinks he can destroy others: the red slayer, and the vantage point of she who fears death. The “subtle ways” referred to is the subtle existence of the soul, which is hidden from the view of most people because their minds are bounded by material objects.

The second stanza is from the same point of view but this stanza reflects the viewpoint of one who has transcended duality. The four dualistic conceptions that no longer affect the speaker are far/ near; remembered/ forgotten; shadow/ sunlight; vanished / appearing; and shame / fame.

Dualistic thinking emerges from undifferentiated consciousness. Through meditation and deep prayer one can enter the realm of pure consciousness. In that state there is no duality; hence fame and shame are the same.

Think of a glass of water. The water is one entity. If you shake the glass there will be waves and water will splash, that is the moment of duality. If you see only the splashes you will think of the water as separate units but if you know the source you will know that ultimately all the water is one. It is the same with shame and fame. They appear different yet at a deeper level they are both the same: human experience from which we grow.

The second stanza points to the idea that ultimately the differences we observe in ourselves and the world dissolve as we begin to understand that our mind itself is the creator of what we perceive and the differences we observe.

The same principle applies the physical world: that which was lost can become found and that which was near can become far. What is far from one person can be near to another. Hence reality depends on our vantage point and how we relate to our vantage point is determined by our minds, not by any external control system.

It speaks about the idea that all activity, efforts and results are ultimately the same energy. The poem says that ultimately all comes from the Source. There is no difference between the seeker, the prayer offered and the God who hears it. The poem says, “I am the doubter and the doubt.” Normally we think of ourselves as separate from our thoughts and our thoughts separate from the world. It concluded that ultimately all is one and that the Ultimate

energy is in each aspect of our devotion and aspiration: “And I the hymn the Brahmin sings.” Brahmins are the priestly class in Indian society.

The final stanza proclaims the majesty of the “meek lover of the good.” Brahma says that many long to enter the ultimate realm of existence but that it is the individual who is meek and loves goodness that will be able to enter the realm of the truly sacred. This echoes Jesus’ teachings from the Sermon on the Mount.

The last line, “Find me and turn your back on heaven.” The insight here is that heaven is a conception in our minds, a thought based dream, a hope, that we carry with us. In experiencing the realm of Brahma the seeker goes beyond the world of thought and has the direct experience of the Ultimate Reality. At that time one goes beyond ideas and conceptions and hence can “turn your back on heaven,” and instead be in the Ultimate.

It is important to note that Emerson was not writing from a theoretical or solely scholarly vantage point. In this poem he recounts a mystical experience that he has while walking through the woods on afternoon: his third eye, the mind’s eye of internal vision, opens up and he describes the experience of being able to see in all directions and to see the cosmos spinning.

He wrote: “Standing on the bare ground, — my head bathed by the blithe air, and uplifted into infinite space, — all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eyeball; I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or particle of God.”

This transcendental experience opens through prayer, meditation, yoga, and other spiritual practices can accelerate our ability to access this level of awareness.

‘Brahma’ is a four-stanza poem that is separated into sets of four lines, known as quatrains. The lines follow a specific rhyme scheme that conforms to the pattern of ABAB CDCD, and so on, changing end sounds as Emerson saw fit. Repetition is one of the most important techniques used in ‘Brahma’. It can be seen through the use and reuse of words such as “slay” in the first stanza, as well as general use of alliteration. It occurs when words are used in succession, or at least appear close together, and begin with the same letter. For example, “Shadow,” “sunlight” and “same” in the second stanza and “doubter” and “doubt” in the third. ‘Brahma’ details the powers of the Hindu god to move effortlessly through the world, in his own words. It presents a series of contrasting images that speak to the way he sees the world. Light and dark are the same, as are fame and shame. He can see into the spirit world and know where all the vanished gods are. It emphasizes how important he is to the worshipers. If one does not adequately appreciate him, they will only have cause to regret it. He concludes by asking the reader to give up worrying about heaven and instead devote their time to him. Brahma is more of a spirit than a physical human being. Emerson also refers to the “Brahmin,”

the highest social caste. Members of this group are responsible for maintaining sacred knowledge. It is named for Brahman, the universal principle of the Vedas. The poem is composed in the form of an utterance- a form which comprises sublime or metaphysical content while adding to it the balladic quatrain-music pattern. (A dramatic form not in vogue, and distinctly different from Browning's dramatic developments). The form, therefore, is the first of its kind to include Oriental poetical material in the Western verse framework. The central speaker of the poem is Brahma Himself, who according to Hindu philosophers of India, is omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent. The study of the vedantic philosophy, the Gita, and the Katha Upanishad is impressed upon the poem. Body is for some certain period of time but within the body of man there is the soul that is the divine spark, eternal, everlasting and never-ending. It is a part of the over-soul who is the supreme God, the super power of the universe. Different religions have different beliefs about their deity but the core concern of all is the Brahma, the superpower. Thus, the theme of the poem is universal: The Brahma, the superpower, has many little parts atman, the human, who has to achieve salvation (linkage of atman to the Brahma), but entrapped in Maya, transient one, the physical beauty of the world. One who can overcome the Maya will certainly understand the Brahma i.e. the achievement of salvation. Brahma is the philosophical explication of the universal spirit by that name. The poetic form of elastic quatrain is used to represent the solemn nature of the subject. Throughout, the poem the Brahma appears as the only speaker, sustaining the continuity of the work. That the spirit is the only speaker signifies not only its absolute nature but also its sustaining power, upon which the existence of the entire universe metaphorically.

Self-Assessment

- a) Explain how Emerson incorporates the concept of non-dualism from Advaita Vedanta in "Brahma".
- b) How does the poem challenge Western notions of life and death?

POEM 4: The Dry Salvages

T.S. Eliot (born September 26, 1888, St. Louis, Missouri, U.S.—died January 4, 1965, London, England) was an American-English poet, playwright, literary critic, and editor, a leader of the Modernist movement in poetry. Eliot exercised a strong influence on Anglo-American culture from the 1920s until late in the century. His experiments in diction, style, and versification revitalized English poetry, and in a series of critical essays he shattered old

orthodoxies and erected new ones. The publication of Four Quartets led to his recognition as the greatest living English poet and man of letters, and in 1948 he was awarded both the Order of Merit and the Nobel Prize for Literature.

Four Quartets: The Dry Salvage The third of the Quartets, *The Dry Salvages* appeared in 1941. The word “salvages” in the title should be pronounced, as Eliot mentions in a note to the poem, to rhyme with “assuages,” with the emphasis on the penultimate syllable. *The Dry Salvages* are a group of small, rocky islands with a lighthouse off the coast of Massachusetts. Eliot presumably visited them or at least knew of them as a boy. In the poem *The Dry Salvages* the Indian impact upon Eliot’s work is due to his study of oriental philosophy. As a serious scholar of Philosophy at Harvard, T.S. Eliot applied himself to the study of Sanskrit and Pali for two years. He had a fascination for the profound wisdom of ancient India. Eliot admits that his:...own poetry shows the influence of Indian thought and sensibility and it is now certain that he flatly... refused to draw any absolute line between East and West, between Europe and Asia. In his poetry, references abound to show that he had knowledge of the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita and Patanjali’s Yoga-Sutras. He was well versed in Buddhistic lore and literature too. *The Dry Salvage* , part III is both vedic in origin and Upanishadic in content. Eliot seems to have been attracted by the Indian concept of ‘Fatalism’. K. Smidt speaks of “fatalism in Hindu belief” progress in the journey of life. Yoga also fascinated Eliot immensely. The great Hindu mystic, Patanjali also finds berth in Eliot’s poetry. Yoga-Sutras, had truly left the poet in a state of enlightened mystification. The end of all yoga is liberation (moksha) which implies the annihilation of the individual and the ultimate immersion into the divine soul.

The central image of *The Dry Salvages* is water and the sea. The images are similar to the *Odyssey* but represent internal aspects. Humanity loses itself to technology and theories like evolution that separate mankind philosophically from the past. According to Eliot, within each man there is a connection to all of mankind. If we just accept drifting upon the sea, then we will end up broken upon rocks. We are restrained by time, but the Annunciation gave mankind hope that he will be able to escape. This hope is not part of the present. What we must do is understand the patterns found within the past to see that there is meaning to be found. This meaning allows one to experience eternity through moments of revelation. Eliot brings in the image of Krishna to discuss how the past and future are related: Krishna, speaking to Arjuna, claims that death can come at any time and that men should always find the divine will instead of worrying about what their actions will bring. If an individual were to follow

Krishna's words then they would be able to free themselves from the limitations of time. Even if it cannot be fully attained, the effort in attempting it is still important.

Lines 515-520

I sometimes wonder if that is what Krishna meant—

Among other things—or one way of putting the same thing:

That the future is a faded song, a Royal Rose or a lavender spray

Of wistful regret for those who are not yet here to regret,

Pressed between yellow leaves of a book that has never been opened.

And the way up is the way down, the way forward is the way back.

- The speaker continues to struggle with all of the contradictions that he faces when he tries to talk about something he knows is inexpressible. His energy starts to wane a little here, and he starts to wonder about the true meaning of something said by Krishna, one of the primary avatars of the Hindu god Vishnu.
- When it comes to wondering about what Vishnu meant, the speaker is wondering if everything he (the speaker) has said in Section 2 of "The Dry Salvages" can be linked to the spiritual teachings of Krishna. For example, he wonders if "the future is a faded song," meaning that it's just going to be a time of regret for those who aren't around (who haven't been born) to regret yet.
- He wonders if the future is actually a time of sadness that no one really cares about, "Pressed between the yellow leaves of a book that has never been opened." He further wonders if we truly wish to elevate our spirits, "the way up is the way down, the way forward is the way back." These questions actually bring us all the way back to the beginning of "Burnt Norton," where the speaker's second epigraph comes from the Greek philosopher Heraclitus, translating as, "The way upward and the way downward is one and the same." Here, we see the speaker continue to struggle with the unsayable meaning of life by talking in riddles and contradictions. He does this quite frankly because life itself is a bundle of contradictions, and the more he writes like this, the more the speaker wonders if he's just saying the same stuff that the Hindu religion said thousands of years ago.

Lines 521-527

You cannot face it steadily, but this thing is sure,

That time is no healer: the patient is no longer here.

When the train starts, and the passengers are settled

*To fruit, periodicals and business letters
(And those saw them off have left the platform)
Their faces relax from grief into relief,
To the sleepy rhythm of a hundred hours.*

- Whatever it is that the speaker's been trying to get at (death, the rock, the inexpressible, etc.), he says "You cannot face it steadily." But, in spite of this, one thing is sure, and that's that "time is no healer." Why can't time heal us? Well, because the person who needs to be healed no longer exists, because we're constantly changing in the flow of time. That's why he says that "the patient is no longer here," because, from moment to moment, the person we once were disappears and is replaced by another person, then another.
- The speaker uses the image of a train to once again symbolize the forward-moving, single-track way that most modern people approach their lives. We all get into a train in our own lives when we settle into our routines and focus on our personal goals.
- When we do this, we stop thinking about others in the same way that train passengers, after a moment of grief, relax "into relief" and settle into their snacks (fruit), entertainment (periodicals), and work (business letters). The overall effect of our routine, though, is numbness, and the speaker emphasizes this by showing that the train passengers relax into "the sleepy rhythm of a hundred hours."

Lines 528-535

*Fare forward, travellers! not escaping from the past
Into different lives, or into any future;
You are not the same people who left that station
Or who will arrive at any terminus,
While the narrowing rails slide together behind you,
Watching the furrow that widens behind you,
You shall not think "the past is finished"
Or "the future is before us."*

- On the one hand, we don't escape the past as we move forward on the journey of our lives. Further, we don't escape into some completely different life, or into the future, even though we're never the same person we were a few moments ago (when we left the station), and we're not the same person we'll be a few minutes in the future (when

we arrive at any terminus). As we move forward, we won't be able to say that the past is finished or that the future is coming.

- As you might have already noticed, the speaker finds it much easier to say what the nature of life isn't ("Don't look ahead. Don't look back.") more than he can say what it is. Every time he starts to say, "Well it's kind of like this," he has to backtrack and say the opposite. It seems like the closer we get to the heart of things, the more unavoidably contradictory we get.

Lines 536-541

At nightfall, in the rigging and the aerial,

Is a voice descanting (though not to the ear,

The murmuring shell of time, and not in any language)

"Fare forward, you who think that you are voyaging;

You are not those who saw the harbour

Receding, or those who will disembark.

- Now all of a sudden we're back to the nautical imagery. As we continue on our life's voyage (this time on a boat and out at sea), we can hear the murmuring of a shell, which if you've ever heard it is like an endless, droning hum. The message of this wordless hum is pretty much the same as the speaker just told us: we're not the same person we were a moment ago (when we saw the harbor) or the people we'll be in the future (those who will disembark).
- In this sense, we only "think [we] are voyaging," although whether or not we're actually getting anywhere is uncertain. After all, if we're always changing from one moment to the next, can we really say that it's "us" who will arrive somewhere in the future? Think about it (but be sure to do some brain stretches before you do—don't want to cramp up).
- the people around us. We will "not think of the fruit of action" because we won't be thinking about ourselves so much anymore. The more we pay attention to the fact that we'll die, the less inclined we'll be to do things for ourselves.
- With this piece of advice in our minds, the speaker tells us to "Fare forward" on our life's journey while trying to stay humble and connected to our own mortality. We're getting tons of advice here. We hope you're taking notes.

Lines 553-560

*O voyagers, O seamen,
You who come to port, and you whose bodies
Will suffer the trial and judgment of the sea,
Or whatever event, this is your real destination."
So Krishna, as when he admonished Arjuna
On the field of battle.
Not fare well,
But fare forward, voyagers.*

- The speaker understands that all of us, like sailors, will suffer from a lot of hardship, just like "the trial and judgment of the sea." But no matter what happens, "this" is our "real destination." "This" probably refers to an experience in which we can be intimately connected to the moment (or at least realization) of our own death at every moment.
- Here, we also realize that we've been getting a straight quotation from the Hindu god Krishna since the single quotation mark back in line 546. The speaker has been quoting from the lesson that Krishna teaches Arjuna on the "field of battle" in Hindu Holy Scripture. What Krishna hopes to teach Arjuna in this quotation is the importance of acting without thinking about how one's actions will benefit oneself. Like Arjuna, we must all learn to act in a way that reflects our spiritual respect for death. If we do this, we will become humble, giving, and good people.

At the end of Section 3 of *The Dry Salvages*, the speaker is not promising us a pleasant journey, so he won't say "fare well." He'll only say, "Fare forward" as he keeps encouraging us to press onward in our spiritual education.

The poem opens with a contemplation of the river as a powerful, untamed force, representing the natural world and its rhythms. The river serves as a reminder of what humanity tends to forget – the cycles of life, the passage of time, and the inevitability of mortality. Eliot describes the sea as a vast, eternal entity that holds the remnants of the past, including the wreckage of ships and the prayers of the dead. The sea symbolizes both the continuity of life and the inexorable passage of time. The poem delves into the idea that the past is not a linear sequence but a pattern and that moments of happiness and agony are permanent and universal, transcending individual lives. The third section of the poem contemplates the concept of timelessness and the intersection of the timeless with time. It discusses the human endeavor to

understand the mysteries of existence, whether through scientific inquiry, divination, or spiritual practices. Ultimately, the poem suggests that true understanding and freedom come from accepting the present moment, transcending the constraints of the past and future, and embracing a state of mindfulness and selflessness.

In the final section, the poem addresses the idea of incarnation – the union of different realms of existence. It explores the notion of right action leading to freedom from the constraints of past and future, emphasizing the importance of continuous effort and striving in the face of life's challenges. The poem concludes with a sense of acceptance and contentment, acknowledging the cyclical nature of life and the nourishment of the earth, symbolizing the continuity of existence beyond individual lifespans. *The Dry Salvages* follows a unique and complex structure, consisting of fourteen stanzas with varying line lengths. The poem does not adhere to a specific rhyme scheme or metrical pattern, embodying the free verse form. The lack of a predetermined form allows Eliot to explore diverse ideas and emotions within each stanza. The poem's sections are loosely connected, yet they seamlessly flow into one another, much like the interconnectedness of human experiences. This form enables Eliot to convey a wide range of sentiments, from contemplative reflections on the passage of time to profound spiritual insights. The poet's choice to employ free verse demonstrates his confidence in his words and their ability to convey meaning without the constraints of traditional forms. This freedom allows Eliot to experiment with imagery, symbolism, and metaphor, creating a rich tapestry of language that engages the reader on multiple levels.

T.S. Eliot's poem *The Dry Salvages*, Part III has several prominent themes explored, showcasing the complexity of human existence, nature, and spirituality. The relentless passage of time is vividly portraying the river and the sea as timeless entities, emphasizing the cyclical nature of life. The sea is a place where "the past and future are conquered and reconciled," highlighting the eternal aspects of existence. Another significant theme in the poem is the interconnectedness of past, present, and future. Eliot challenges the linear perception of time, suggesting that moments of happiness and agony are not bound by individual lifespans, underscoring the idea that understanding comes from reflecting on past experiences, connecting them to the present and future. Eliot delves deep into the human psyche, contemplating the intricacies of time, existence, and the quest for meaning in the face of mortality. T.S. Eliot employs various poetic techniques and figurative language in 'The Dry Salvages' to convey his profound message. Through the use of symbolism, allusions, metaphor, personification, repetition the poet makes this poem rich and layered in meaning.

Self-Assessment

- a) Discuss Eliot's use of Krishna's teachings to Arjuna in this excerpt. What philosophical ideas does he explore?
- b) How does Eliot blend Western and Eastern concepts of time and existence in this section of the poem?

Conclusion

The chapter concludes by highlighting the profound influence of Bhartiya Gyan Parampara (Indian knowledge traditions) on English literature, especially through the works of poets such as W.B. Yeats, Sarojini Naidu, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and T.S. Eliot. By exploring how these poets integrated Hinduism, Buddhism, and Indian mysticism into their poetry, readers gain a deeper understanding of how Eastern spiritual and philosophical concepts have shaped Western poetic traditions. The chapter emphasizes the enduring cultural exchange between East and West, encouraging readers to reflect on the universal themes of spirituality, existence, and the human condition as portrayed through the selected poems. This cross-cultural dialogue enriches the study of literature, allowing for a more nuanced and holistic appreciation of global literary traditions.

Activity

Activity 1: Creative Writing Exercise

Objective: Encourage creative engagement with philosophical concepts.

- **Task:** Write a poem incorporating Indian philosophical concepts such as maya, karma, or moksha.

- **Instructions:**

- Use elements from Hinduism or Buddhism (like mythological figures, symbols, or teachings) and blend them with Western poetic structures (sonnet, free verse, etc.).

- **Outcome:** This exercise will help students creatively apply what they've learned about Indian and Western literary fusion.

Activity 2: Debate

Objective: Develop critical thinking and debate skills.

- **Topic:** “Eastern spiritual philosophy has contributed more significantly to Western poetry than Western thought has influenced Eastern literature.”

- **Instructions:**

- Divide the class into two teams: one supporting the motion, the other opposing.

- Each team will present their arguments, using examples from the chapter’s poems and other literary works to support their stance.

- **Outcome:** Students will critically examine the cultural impact of Indian philosophy on Western literature and vice versa.

Activity 3: Reflection Essay

Objective: Encourage reflective and analytical writing.

- **Task:** Write a reflective essay on the theme: "How Indian Philosophy Shapes Western Poetry."

- **Instructions:**

- Discuss how Indian spiritual ideas, such as non-dualism, karma, or the transient nature of life, are explored in the selected poems.

- Provide examples from at least two poems covered in the chapter.

- **Outcome:** This exercise will develop students' essay writing skills and deepen their appreciation for cross-cultural literary influences.

Assessment/Know your progress

1. How does W.B. Yeats incorporate Indian spiritual and philosophical ideas in his poem *Meru*? Explain with reference to key concepts from Hinduism or Buddhism used in the poem.
2. Analyze how Sarojini Naidu uses the theme of devotion and longing in *Songs of Radha* and connect it to the Bhakti tradition of Indian philosophy.
3. Explain the central theme of Emerson's *Brahma* and discuss how it challenges the Western concepts of life, death, and duality.
4. Discuss how T.S. Eliot blends Eastern and Western ideas in *The Dry Salvages* by referencing the Bhagavad Gita and the cyclical nature of time.

Glossary

1. **Bhartiya Gyan Parampara** – Refers to the ancient Indian knowledge traditions encompassing various philosophical, spiritual, and cultural practices.
2. **Maya**– A concept in Hinduism and Buddhism representing the illusion or appearance of the material world, which distracts individuals from realizing the true spiritual reality.
3. **Advaita Vedanta** – A school of Hindu philosophy that teaches non-dualism, the belief that the individual soul (atman) and the ultimate reality (Brahman) are one and the same.
4. **Bhakti** – A devotional movement within Hinduism that emphasizes personal love and devotion to a deity, particularly Krishna or Vishnu.
5. **Meru** – A mythical sacred mountain in Hindu, Jain, and Buddhist cosmology, considered the center of all physical, metaphysical, and spiritual universes.
6. **Upanishads** – Ancient Indian texts that form the philosophical basis of Hinduism, focusing on meditation, morality, and metaphysical knowledge.
7. **Karma** – A concept in Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism that refers to the law of cause and effect, where an individual's actions (good or bad) determine their future experiences.
8. **Brahma** – In Hinduism, Brahma is the god of creation and one of the three main deities in the Trimurti (the others being Vishnu and Shiva).
9. **Krishna** – A major deity in Hinduism, known for his role in the Bhagavad Gita, where he imparts wisdom on duty, righteousness, and devotion to the warrior Arjuna.
10. **Bhagavad Gita** – A 700-verse Hindu scripture that is part of the Indian epic Mahabharata, focusing on the dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna on duty, life, and spirituality.
11. **Samsara**– The cycle of birth, death, and rebirth in Hinduism and Buddhism, governed by the law of karma.
12. **Nirvana** – In Buddhism, the ultimate goal of spiritual practice, representing liberation from the cycle of samsara and the cessation of suffering.
13. **Hermit** – A person who lives in solitude, often for spiritual reasons, symbolized in the poem "Meru" as seekers of enlightenment on Mount Meru.
14. **Dualism**– The philosophical concept of the existence of two separate entities, often contrasted with non-dualism (Advaita), which states that all existence is unified.
15. **Transcendence** – A concept in spiritual and religious thought that refers to surpassing the ordinary limits of material existence to achieve a higher understanding or spiritual awakening.
16. **Illusion** – Refers to the deceptive nature of the material world in Hindu and Buddhist philosophy, which prevents individuals from realizing spiritual truths.
17. **Monuments**– Symbolic of human achievements and civilizations, often discussed in the context of their impermanence in the poems.

18. Sagun and Nirgun Brahman – In Hindu philosophy, Sagun Brahman refers to God with attributes (physical form), while Nirgun Brahman refers to God without attributes, beyond physical form.

19. T.S. Eliot's Four Quartets – A set of four poems by T.S. Eliot, exploring time, existence, and spirituality, with "The Dry Salvages" being one of them, influenced by both Eastern and Western philosophies.

20. Vedantic Philosophy – A branch of Indian philosophy that emphasizes the spiritual teachings found in the Upanishads, particularly on self-realization and the oneness of existence.

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