

# Cambridge IGCSE™

## **DRAMA**

0411/11

Paper 1

May/June 2020

PRE-RELEASE MATERIAL



**This material must be given to candidates on receipt by the centre.**

## **INSTRUCTIONS**

- The questions in Paper 1 will be based on the stimuli and the play extract provided in this booklet.
  - You may do any appropriate preparatory work. It is recommended that you perform the extract, at least informally.
  - You will **not** be allowed to take this copy of the material **or** any other notes or preparation into the examination.
  - A copy of the pre-release material will be provided with the question paper.

## STIMULI

Choose **one** of the following three stimuli and devise a piece of drama based on it. You should work in groups of between two and six performers. Your piece should last approximately 15 minutes.

In the Written examination, you will be asked questions about your piece that will cover both practical and theoretical issues.

### **Stimulus 1**

**Historical situation:** *The fall of the Berlin Wall (1989)*

### **Stimulus 2**

**Theme of motion picture:** *Groundhog Day (1993)*

### **Stimulus 3**

**Photograph:** *A busy street scene in Ho Chi Minh City, Saigon, Vietnam*



**EXTRACT****Taken from *Agra Bazaar*, by Habib Tanvir**

These notes are intended to help you understand the context of the drama.

The extract is taken from Habib Tanvir's play, *Agra Bazaar*. The play was first performed in Jamia, and then New Delhi, India in 1954. The play takes place on a single day in 1810 and is set in a busy part of Kinari Bazaar in Agra.

The play highlights the importance of poetry and song in India at the time. The character of the POET represents the struggle to be published. The play contrasts high culture, represented by the POET, with the harsh and sometimes comedic struggle of ordinary life.

The play is in two Acts, and the extract consists of an abridged version of Act One.

**Characters:**

FAKIRS  
KAKRI SELLER  
MELON SELLER  
LADDOO SELLER  
BOOK SELLER  
MADARI (MONKEY TRAINER)  
MONKEY

POET  
POET's COMPANION  
TAZKIRANAWIS – a literary biographer

POTTER  
KARIMAN  
CHAMELI

Other roles such as passers-by, children, singers, etc. can be played by the company.

A GLOSSARY is provided at the end of the extract.

## SCENE ONE

*Two FAKIRS enter the auditorium singing Nazir's 'Shahar Ashob'. The FAKIRS are dressed in the traditional kafni and carry the customary begging bowl and beads in one hand and a short wooden rod in the other. They strike the rod against the metal bands round their wrists to the rhythm of their song.*

5

FAKIRS:

My words no longer have their usual grip,  
My speech has begun to falter and trip;  
I am always in a sad thoughtfulness caught,  
And my poetry has virtually come to a halt.

Jewellers, traders and other wealthy gents,  
Who thrived by lending, are now mendicants;  
The shops are deserted, dust on counter and scale,  
Desolate shopkeepers wait like captives in jail.

10

Poverty has destroyed what was once a lovely city,  
Every street, woebegone, every mansion arouses pity;  
A garden needs a gardener in order to grow and thrive,  
But Agra waits in vain for a tender, caring eye.

15

Call me lover or doting slave, I am Agra's native,  
Call me mullah or learned knave, Agra's where I live;  
Call me poor or call me fakir, I am Agra's native,  
Call me poet or simply Nazir, Agra's where I live.

20

*FAKIRS exit, singing. A market-place. A pall of gloom shrouds the scene. Various vendors—including the sesame-seed LADDOO-SELLER and KAKRI-SELLER—are desperately trying to hawk their wares. They call out to passers-by in vain. In the background, the sound of a woman singing a ghazal to the accompaniment of tabla and sarangi. A couple of customers browse through books at the bookstore. As KAKRI-SELLER approaches them, they move away to the paan shop. BOOK-SELLER busies himself with the accounts book.*

25

30

LADDOO-SELLER:

Six for half a pie ... sir, six for half a pie. You won't get it any cheaper anywhere else. Six for half a pie, sir, six for only half a pie. [To a child] Try some, little master. Sesame-seed laddoos! Sweet as sugar! Come on, try them.

*The child turns away.*

35

MELON-SELLER:

Watermelon! Sweet and cool melon. Pleases the eye and cools the heart. Like a bowl of sweet red sherbet, my melon! Drives out the heat and quenches the thirst! Watermelon, sweet cool melon!

*People continue to pass by without paying any attention to the vendors.*

40

ICE-SELLER:

Ice! Buy my ice! Sweet creamy ice!

KAKRI-SELLER:	Fresh kakri! Come, it's really fresh! Crisp, green and juicy kakri. Four for a damri! Taste it, sir! Soft as silk and sweet as sugarcane. Fresh kakri from Iskandara. Fresh kakri!	45
EAR-CLEANER:	Pick your teeth or have your ear cleaned ... just one chhadam! Two services for just one chhadam! Two birds in one stroke! I'll clean your teeth and the wax from your ears! Only one chhadam!	
PAAN-SELLER:	Masters, come and taste my tender Banarasi paan! Take a bite and see how red your tongue becomes! Large-sized paans specially for you. The fragrance of the cardamoms will knock you over. Come, masters, try my paan!	50
KAKRI-SELLER	[to LADDOO-SELLER]: Hey, you're sitting in my place again!	
LADDOO-SELLER:	No wonder. No one is buying my laddoos. [Calls out to the passers-by] It's going cheap, will be gone before you know it. Already sold 200 since the morning. Only a few left. Be quick, buy them before it's too late!	55
KAKRI-SELLER:	Sitting in my place and lying so brazenly—[mimicking him] 'Sold 200 since the morning!'	60
LADDOO-SELLER:	What else should I say? That I haven't sold a single laddoo in the last 10 days? This is business, my love. Here you're paid for how well you talk. Six for half a pie, sir! You can't find laddoos cheaper than mine! Sir, six for only half a pie!	
KAKRI-SELLER:	Move! Get out of my place.	65
LADDOO-SELLER:	Get lost.	
KAKRI-SELLER:	Hey, don't act so smart.	
LADDOO-SELLER:	Shut up! Don't you take that tone with me. Driving me bloody mad! Your parents must have given birth to you so that you could be a constant pain in other people's you-know-what.	70
KAKRI-SELLER:	You shut up, you skinny bag of bones! Don't make my blood boil. Lay off. [Calling out to the customers] Four for a damri ... Soft as silk and sweet as sugarcane. Especially from Iskandara. Four for a damri. Fresh kakri, sirs, fresh kakri. Four for a damri!	75
<i>Some people enter. KAKRI-SELLER goes towards them and stands in their way. Meanwhile, a MADARI, who has entered with his monkey from the right, begins his show. Hawkers, children, youth and passers-by gather around him. The noise stops and, for the first time, the MADARI's words can be heard clearly.</i>		80
MADARI	[to the monkey]: Come, show them your dance. Let us dance for the people of Agra. Children, give him a hand—can you clap with one hand? [To the monkey] Show us how you play <i>mridang</i> in Holi. [Monkey mimes playing the <i>mridang</i> ] And how do you fly a kite? [Monkey mimes] And how will you go to the fair of Mahadev dressed like a dandy? [Monkey puts on a cap at a slanting angle and swaggers] And if it starts to rain? [Monkey pretends to slip and fall] You'll slip and fall? Very good. And what if you feel cold? [Monkey mimes the shivers] And when you are old? [Monkey bends over a stick and walks] And when you die? [Monkey lies down motionless]. Gentlemen, please move back a little. [To the monkey] All right, now show us, how did the British enter India? [Monkey mimes begging] And what did the Laat Sahib do in the battle of Plassey? [Monkey holds the stick like a gun and mimes firing] Oh! He opened fire! And	85
		90
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	what happened in Bengal? [Monkey slaps his stomach and mimes weakness] There was a famine! [Monkey lies down] People died of hunger! And what is our condition today? [Monkey slaps the stomach again] And what will happen to us tomorrow? [Monkey falls down] So what should we do? [Monkey approaches those watching the show and prostrates itself at their feet] Salute them! [Monkey salutes; people start to slip away]	100
KAKRI-SELLER:	Kakri from Iskandara. Four for a damri!	105
LADDOO-SELLER:	Sir, six for half a pie! Six for only half a pie!	
MELON-SELLER:	Beat the heat! Buy watermelon, cool watermelon!	
MADARI:	Salute!	
	<i>Monkey moves to the paan shop—which is on the right—and salutes a customer.</i>	110
KAKRI-SELLER	[to the same man]: Fresh kakri! Yes, yes, fresh kakri! Try it! Taste it, sir! Green, juicy, crisp! Soft as silk and sweet as sugarcane!	
	<i>The man moves away. Upset at losing a probable patron, MADARI pounces on KAKRI-SELLER and, snatching the basket from his hand, throws it down, scattering the kakris.</i>	115
MADARI:	Damn you! One blow from my stick and you'll forget all kakri selling!	
KAKRI-SELLER:	You bloody monkey!	
MADARI:	I'll make a monkey of you, if you don't shut up! Bloody idiot, trying to sell kakri! His kakri drove away all my patrons.	120
LADDOO-SELLER:	Hey! What's happening?	
MELON-SELLER:	Let's bash up this bloody madari!	
MADARI:	He drove away all my patrons.	
KAKRI-SELLER:	I was only trying to sell my kakri.	
MADARI:	Sell your kakri! You couldn't find another place to sell your wretched kakri?	125
LADDOO-SELLER:	Why are you hell bent on ruining the little chance you have of some earnings? How can he drive away your customers? Don't you know, these days people vanish the moment you mention money?	
MELON-SELLER:	As God is my witness, brother, I have not sold a single watermelon in ten days!	130
MADARI:	That man was about to pay me but this fellow shoved in his kakri.	
LADDOO-SELLER:	All right, enough of this now! Go your own way.	
MADARI:	Why? Does this street belong to your father?	135
LADDOO-SELLER:	You mind your language, eh?	
MADARI:	Why? Who do you think you are?	
MELON-SELLER:	Let's thrash the bastard!	
KAKRI-SELLER	[from the right corner]: People here don't have money to buy food and he thinks they'll pay to see his monkey.	140
LADDOO-SELLER:	Don't mess with me, you rascal, I'll skin you alive. You better watch out!	
MELON-SELLER:	Go, get out of here! Get lost.	145
MADARI	[from the left corner]: What a crazy town! [Exits]	

*Enter FAKIRS, singing.*

FAKIRS:	An eyeless fakir was once asked:  Of what stuff are the moon and stars. The fakir smiled and shook his head: Bless you, sir, the answer's bread. The poor know not planets nor the stars, The thought of food our vision mars.	150
	On empty stomach, nothing feels good, No taste for pleasure, just craving for food. The hungry can't live the pious way, Food prompts people to worship and pray.	155
	<i>Exit FAKIRS.</i>	
REWRI-SELLER:	Rose-flavoured rewri. My rewri is sweet and syrupy. Sir, buy some for your family! Rose-flavoured rewri!	160
EAR CLEANER:	Double service, single price! Pick your teeth and clean your ears! Only one chhadam!	
MELON-SELLER:	Watermelon, sweet and cool!	
LADDOO-SELLER:	Sir, six for half a pie!	
CHANA-SELLER:	The chana I have got So spicy and so hot! Agra's fame runs far and wide, My chana is the city's pride, The price I ask is not too high, You can afford it, come and try!	165
	It helps adults' stomachs clear, Sends kids to school without a tear!	
KAKRI-SELLER:	This chana I have got So spicy and so hot!	
LADDOO-SELLER:	Wow! What a clever idea!	175
KAKRI-SELLER:	What are you talking about?	
LADDOO-SELLER:	Something absolutely novel.	
KAKRI-SELLER:	You aren't thinking of committing suicide, are you?	
MELON-SELLER:	Only fools think of suicide. There are better alternatives for the wise ones.	180
KAKRI-SELLER:	What clever idea have you had? Let's hear it too.	
LADDOO-SELLER:	Those who can't think, won't be able to understand either.	
KAKRI-SELLER:	We'll try our best.	
MELON-SELLER:	Now you'll see how my kakri sells!	
LADDOO-SELLER:	Why, are you going to turn into a monkey-tamer?	185
MELON-SELLER:	How can he afford a monkey? He'll have to dance himself to sell his kakri.	
KAKRI-SELLER:	What is it? It won't harm you to tell us, will it?	
LADDOO-SELLER:	It isn't wise to reveal one's business secrets to all and sundry.	
KAKRI-SELLER:	Don't you put on such airs! Why won't you tell us what you're thinking of? [Grabs KAKRI-SELLER by the arm.]	190
KAKRI-SELLER:	I won't tell you. Do what you like!	
LADDOO-SELLER:	You watch out! I'll give you one in the neck!	
KAKRI-SELLER:	Give me one in the neck? You? I'll smash your face before that!	
LADDOO-SELLER:	Hey, mind how you speak to me. Who do you think you are? All right, stop fighting and tell us your secret.	195
KAKRI-SELLER:	Let's see who wins today—you or me! Bloody fool! Thinks he's Alexander the Great himself!	

LADDOO-SELLER:	Have you got a death wish? A couple of hard punches from me and you'll turn into a bloody laddoo yourself.	200
KAKRI-SELLER:	Oh yes? You better watch out or I'll beat you to a pulp!	
LADDOO-SELLER:	You little bag of bones, I'll grind you to a powder!	
KAKRI-SELLER:	Let's see, I challenge you! Says he'll turn me into powder!	
LADDOO-SELLER:	I'll rearrange your face!	205
KAKRI-SELLER:	I'll demolish you. One blow and your mouth will collapse into your throat! Your tongue will drop out! Don't be under any illusions!	
LADDOO-SELLER:	You better guard your dental works!	
MELON-SELLER:	Hey! What are you two up to?	210
LADDOO-SELLER:	He's acting bloody haughty.	
KAKRI-SELLER:	Who's acting haughty, me or you?	
MELON-SELLER:	Ok, friends, now stop this quarrel.	
LADDOO-SELLER:	You'll be on a stretcher when I'm through with you.	
MELON-SELLER:	All right, all right! Now calm down, friends!	215
KAKRI-SELLER:	You shut up! Eh?	
LADDOO-SELLER:	Yes, shut up and don't meddle. I can handle this myself.	
MELON-SELLER:	Snapping at everyone! Didn't get enough to eat at home today?	
LADDOO-SELLER:	Quiet!	220
MELON-SELLER:	You think you can shout everyone down!	
LADDOO-SELLER:	Will you shut up or do I give you one too?	
MELON-SELLER:	Crazy fellow! Who do you think you are?	
LADDOO-SELLER:	Your father!	
MELON-SELLER:	What did you say?	225
LADDOO-SELLER:	Want me to repeat it?	
MELON-SELLER:	You scoundrel! I'll carve you into slices!	
LADDOO-SELLER:	Laddie, I can eat you raw! I can chop you into pieces!	
ICE-SELLER:	Keep quiet, you fools! Blasting our ears with your tongues snipping like the tailor's scissors!	
LADDOO-SELLER:	Oh, are you asking for it too? Come on then! I can flatten you both in no time!	230
REWRI-SELLER:	Why must you wrestle so foolishly? Just shut up!	
KAKRI-SELLER:	Don't you talk to me about wrestling! I've been trained by Haji Sharifuddin! One throw and that's the end of you.	235
LADDOO-SELLER:	Who's this bird, Sharifuddin? Sharifuddin's student, my bloody foot!	
KAKRI-SELLER:	Now, don't you push me too far. You're making my blood boil.	
LADDOO-SELLER:	Ha! I'll reduce you to rubble, you coxcomb!	
KAKRI-SELLER:	Just try. I challenge you!	240
<i>They come to blows. The rest join in the fray leaving their wares. A few idlers and urchins use this opportunity to help themselves to rewri, kakris and laddoos, etc. This further aggravates the situation. In the melee, some of the POTTER's wares are destroyed. Shopkeepers pull down their shutters. The FAKIRS enter, singing.</i>		
FAKIRS:	Only the poor know the pain of poverty! They know no polite formality, They fall upon food with alacrity, 'Tis bread they seek, for food they moan, And fight like dogs o'er every bone. The poor become mean in adversity, Only the poor know the pain of poverty!	250

Famed scholars, of themselves so sure,  
 Lose heart on becoming poor,  
 Confused by hunger, they begin to see  
 Day as night and A as B,  
 Clothes torn, hair unkempt, unoiled,  
 Mouth parched, body badly soiled.  
 Uncomely and grim is the face of adversity,  
 Only the poor know the pain of poverty!

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*Exit FAKIRS.*

POTTER: What a fight! Just wouldn't stop. What harm had I done to any of you? The blighters have broken two of my pots. As it is, business is down, and now I have to suffer this.

265

KAKRI-SELLER: I'm sure you still have a few pots intact. I've been rendered bankrupt. The rain spoiled all my kakris yesterday. I'd borrowed money to buy this lot. And now half of it is gone.

LADDOO-SELLER: It's you who started the quarrel. Now sit quietly!

MELON-SELLER: Don't start all over again. Otherwise, there'll be neither a single laddoo left with you nor a single melon with me.

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KAKRI-SELLER PASSER-BY: [going after a passer-by]: Sir?

PASSER-BY: Yes? What is it?

KAKRI-SELLER PASSER-BY: I want to ask you something. I hope you don't mind.

PASSER-BY: Go on.

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KAKRI-SELLER PASSER-BY: Do you write poetry?

PASSER-BY: I have not felt competent enough to, as yet. But why do you ask?

KAKRI-SELLER PASSER-BY: Just like that!

PASSER-BY: What crazy people one meets!

280

*Passer-by leaves. POET enters with COMPANION.*

POET: He writes and how he writes!

'Mir, mingle not with the wealthy any more,  
 It is their wealth which rendered you poor.'

285

COMPANION: Excellent!

KAKRI-SELLER [moving closer]: Excellent! Beautiful, sir, very beautiful! I too have a small request, if you don't mind.

POET: I don't want it, brother!

KAKRI-SELLER: No, no! There's something else I want to say, if you would kindly walk this way with me.

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POET: What is it?

KAKRI-SELLER: Sir, it's a question of my livelihood. I will be able to sell my kakri and bless you for the rest of my life! If only you ... Please excuse me, but I'm struck by a thought. I hawk through the entire city from morning to evening. I have not sold a pie's worth of kakri during the past few weeks!

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POET: As I have already told you, I don't want your kakri.

KAKRI-SELLER: But, sir, I am not asking you to buy kakri. In fact, you can have them all for free.

POET: What a pest! What is it then? What d'you want? Why don't you just say it?

300

KAKRI-SELLER: It has occurred to me that if I were to hawk my kakri by singing, my business would pick up!

POET: Very good! Congratulations!

KAKRI-SELLER:	I will be very grateful to you if you would kindly write a few verses on my kakri!	305
POET	[guffaws]: Sir, I am too small a poet for this job! If you wish, I can get a great master to write an entire ode on your kakri.	
COMPANION:	What's the matter?	
POET:	This gentleman wants me to write a few verses on his kakri. So I told him that if he wished I could ask the great master Zauq to write a poem on this rare subject.	310
COMPANION:	Absolutely right! Brother, have you heard Zauq's name?	
KAKRI-SELLER:	I am a poor uneducated person, sir! What do I know about poets and poetry?	315
POET:	But you sound clever enough! How can an unschooled person come up with such a bright idea!	
COMPANION:	He is tutor to His Majesty, the Emperor! His praise can make a mean particle of dust glow like the sun itself.	
KAKRI-SELLER:	Such a great poet, why would he want to write on this humble kakri.	320
POET:	Why not? He is a poet after all!	
KAKRI-SELLER:	How can I have access to the royal court!	
POET:	If you wish, we could forward your request.	
KAKRI-SELLER:	You're making fun of a poor man, sir.	325
POET:	Frankly, brother, only an established poet can do justice to a subject as beautiful as kakri. It's not something that a novice like me can handle.	
<i>Still laughing, POET and COMPANION approach BOOK-SELLER's shop.</i>		330
MELON-SELLER	[waylaying them]: Watermelon! Cool watermelon! Cools the heart, satisfies the eye, gives new life to the summer day, red bowl of pure sherbet, beats the heat and quenches the thirst! Try it, sir, cool, sweet melon!	
POET:	Listen, brother, you will not be able to sell your melons like this. You, too, should get a Mirza or Mir to write a few verses on your watermelons. Then we will also buy them if only as a tribute to their poetry. [Laughs and moves on.]	335
MELON-SELLER	[going to LADDOO-SELLER]: Do you know what the secret was? He wants a poet to write verses on his kakri!	340
LADDOO-SELLER:	Why doesn't he memorize the couplet that the madari used: 'Come, buy my kakri and be quick! Or you'll get one blow of my stick!'	
MELON-SELLER:	Yes, quite right! [They both laugh.]	
LADDOO-SELLER	[laughing]: If poets were to start writing verses on kakris and melons, they might as well give up poetry and start selling fruit.	345
MELON-SELLER:	Or better still, why don't we give up selling fruit and take to writing poetry instead? If we have to starve, we may as well starve as poets. What do you say?	
POET	[at the bookstore, looking through a book]: Now look at this. He writes: 'Now even alms are denied to them in Delhi town, Who till yesterday dreamt only of sceptre and crown.'	350
BOOK-SELLER	[settling in his seat]: Wonderful! I hear that Mir-sahib suffers from bouts of insanity these days?	355
POET:	It's remarkable he's still alive. He's above eighty.	

COMPANION:	And the times Mir-sahib has seen in this life! In this very town, he saw the unfaithfulness of his own dear ones. Left home, left his native town. Even left Delhi which was once the ultimate destination of every sensitive and accomplished person. And now he lives in Lucknow and is witness to the havoc caused by the English.	360
BOOK-SELLER:	You are right, these are turbulent times. When I look at it, what I see is not the Mughal Empire but a big, powerful lion being attacked by hundreds of cats and dogs. Seeing it wounded and helpless, vultures and other birds of prey have also gathered to tear it to pieces. And the lion has neither the leisure to moan nor the luxury to die.	365
POET:	Very good, Maulvi-sahib! Only you can speak like this. What language, what style! I am a poet in name only. But you talk poetry in everyday conversation!	370
BOOK-SELLER:	This is only because I keep company with persons like you!	
COMPANION:	You are both being modest.	
POET	[sitting near BOOK-SELLER]: Call it our modesty or your own graciousness. In any case, I feel my verse should be published only by one who is a connoisseur of poetry.	375
BOOK-SELLER:	And I believe that if I am to publish poetry, it must be the work of a genuine poet. I don't like to publish all and sundry.	
COMPANION	[to POET]: Your collection must be ready by now?	380
POET:	A poet's collection is complete only with the termination of his life. However, I do have a sufficient number of verses to make up a book.	
BOOK-SELLER:	And you didn't even mention it to me.	
COMPANION:	He's so laidback. A poet, after all.	385
POET:	I thought there was no formality between us. That I could give you my manuscript at any time and let you decide what to do with it.	
BOOK-SELLER:	Don't be so unfair. You must send me your manuscript first thing tomorrow.	390
FAKIRS enter.		
FAKIRS:	All the world loves a flatterer God loves one too.	
	Flatterers get whatever they want, Those who can't, live in poverty and want, Flattery brings house, land and crown, Turns white to black, black to brown.	395
	All the world loves a flatterer God loves one too.	
	Flatter the good, flatter the bad, Flatter the happy, flatter the sad, Flatter the holy, and unholy, Flatter the dog, the ass, the rat.	400
	All the world loves a flatterer God loves one too.	405

- BOOK-SELLER: Gentlemen, just before you arrived, the whole place was rocked by such a din as though doomsday itself was at hand.
- POET: Why?
- BOOK-SELLER: There was a dispute among some low-class persons. Before we knew, it turned into a full-fledged brawl. Looting and rioting!
- POET: I hope nothing happened to your shop?
- BOOK-SELLER: Perhaps one should feel thankful that there is no great demand for books in the world.
- COMPANION: Why, they can always be sold as waste paper.
- BOOK-SELLER [laughs]: The mischief was started by a kakri-seller.
- POET: That man sitting out there?
- BOOK-SELLER: Yes. That's the one.
- POET: He approached me a while ago and requested me to write verses on his kakri.
- BOOK-SELLER: Really?
- COMPANION: But isn't it possible for a poet to capture this entire milieu in words?
- POET: What do you think Mir's work is all about if not a profoundly moving picture of these tragic times? 'Troubled livelihood, a troubled heart'—this single phrase encapsulates a whole world of meaning.
- COMPANION: No, sir, he is only expressing his personal difficulties.
- POET: [interrupting]: Why should the poet carry the burden of the whole world's woes?
- COMPANION: No, what I meant was that perhaps the ghazal as a form lacks that broadness of scope which would allow all kinds of subjects and ideas to be written about.
- POET: You are attacking a centuries-old tradition of great Persian and Indian masters. In which other culture can you find a thing as beautiful as the ghazal?
- COMPANION: I am not disputing its beauty, only commenting on its limited scope.
- KAKRI-SELLER: [seeing TAZKIRANAWIS]: Sir, you are a person of eminence, I am a small man. Your mind is like the very sun in the sky and I am no more than the dust under your feet. It may sound like audacity on my part but please forgive my impudence. Kindly listen to a small request.
- TAZKIRANAWIS looks towards him, frowns and moves on.
- TAZKIRANAWIS [on reaching the bookstore]: Assalam Alaikum!
- BOOK-SELLER: Walaikum Assalam! Please come in, Maulana! [Gives his seat to TAZKIRANAWIS and sits on a stool.]
- POET: The poor man has been waiting for you since the morning to request you to write a couple of verses on his kakri. And you didn't even bother to answer him.
- TAZKIRANAWIS: I don't want to pollute my speech by talking to riff-raff.
- BOOK-SELLER: It seems you are following in Mir-sahib's footsteps. It is said that on his way from Delhi to Lucknow, Mir-sahib shared a horse-carriage with a man from Lucknow but did not utter a word throughout the journey lest it corrupt his speech!
- TAZKIRANAWIS: Sahib, it is these traditions which will probably keep the language and literature alive in the times to come. Otherwise, everything is all but ruined! Look at the kind of language spoken in Delhi these days. I just shut my ears ...

COMPANION:	I believe that our new system of education will also give birth to human beings. These are difficult times. Every person one meets complains of the lack of jobs. Hopefully, these new colleges will at least be able to provide employment to some people.	460
BOOK-SELLER	[to TAZKIRANAWIS]: I don't think, Maulana, that there is much future for writings like yours. I think you should also explore new avenues now. [Rises and sits next to TAZKIRANAWIS.] There is a rumour that a publishing house is coming up in Delhi and that soon, there will be journals and newspapers in Urdu. I think I should also shift my bookstore to Delhi and join newspaper publishing.	465
TAZKIRANAWIS:	These are tough times! Truly tough times! Only yesterday I met Nasrullah Beg-sahib at Abul Fatah-sahib's clinic. We talked about how Delhi and Agra have been ravaged by the rapacity of some people. We went on to discuss poetry and literature ... Beg-sahib told me the tragic tale of our friend Mir Amman Khan. It seems his home has been destroyed and his property seized. He is now living in Calcutta and writing a new book. He wants me to come to Calcutta and says that I can earn a living there teaching Persian. I have received a similar message from several other friends also of the same opinion.	470
BOOK-SELLER	[rises to go out]: Now look at Suroor himself. He is an officer in the British Army and living in comfort. [Goes out through the left.]	475
POET:	It is said that his nephew Asadullah has married?	
TAZKIRANAWIS:	That's right. An unusually bright boy, this Asadullah! Even at this young age he writes poetry in Persian. And such poetry that, frankly, even I cannot fully comprehend it.	480
COMPANION:	He's only thirteen or fourteen years old, isn't he?	
POET:	Yes, but what's so surprising about it? Take 'Zauq'. He couldn't have been more than eighteen or twenty when he went to the royal court and challenged and overthrew the dominance of several established scholars and now he is the tutor to the Emperor. He is held in high regard by everyone in Delhi.	485
TAZKIRANAWIS:	Which Delhi are you talking about? Which royal court and which ruler? Sounds of poetry and literature are heard for a brief moment before a terrifying desolation takes over again. People have started fleeing the city. Delhi's royal cemetery is once more home to dogs and owls.	490
	<i>A customer enters from the right.</i>	495
BOOK-SELLER	<i>and the customer enter the shop. A group of villagers, dressed colourfully, enters from the left, singing. A group of religious devotees enters from the opposite side, singing. There is tension in the air as the two groups seem about to clash and swords, spears and lathis are brandished. Eventually all sing together and then leave, peacefully.</i>	500
POET:	<i>The groups exit to the right, singing.</i>	505
TAZKIRANAWIS:	Maulana, I hear that you are writing a book about poetry?	
POET:	Yes.	
	At what stage is it now?	

TAZKIRANAWIS:	Well, sir, it is stumbling through one blind alley after another. The late Soz-sahib was my friend and companion. It was he who encouraged me to write. We used to meet often. But his departure has put an end to all that.	510
BOOK-SELLER	[stopping a village lad]: Boy, come here a moment. [The BOY does not respond.] Hey, you scoundrel, come here! [The BOY comes to him.] These idiots don't understand simple prose unless one uses abusive words. [Giving him money] Go and get four paans from that shop there!	515
	<i>The BOY goes to the paan shop.</i>	
BOY:	Can you make four paans, brother?	520
PAAN-SELLER:	Yes sir, sure. Large Banarasi leaves with lots of cardamoms.	
TAZKIRANAWIS:	Mir-sahib returned to his birthplace, Delhi, after a gap of some thirty years. He met scholars and intellectuals. He received honour and recognition. But he did not meet anyone who could provide succour to his restless soul.	525
	<i>A man enters briskly through the back door and goes out to the left. KAKRI-SELLER, calling out, runs after him.</i>	
POET	[referring to BOOK-SELLER]: Maulvi-sahib here insists on publishing my collection. If you would look it over, it will help me improve it. It may also provide you with a fresh breakthrough in your idea of writing a book about poetry.	530
TAZKIRANAWIS:	Well, there is hardly any chance of a new breakthrough. However, I am happy to be of service to you at any time.	
	<i>The same man enters from the right and goes out through the left. KAKRI-SELLER also enters, pursuing the man, but stops on reaching the centre of the stage. His voice grows faint. He slowly walks towards the paan shop and sits down on a bench near it.</i>	535
BOOK-SELLER	[to a customer]: No, sir. The Persian text of <i>Laila Majnoon</i> is not in stock. I had informed you earlier too.	540
	<i>The customer leaves.</i>	
TAZKIRANAWIS:	Do you see how depressing the times are? These days you cannot find even the classics in bookstores. Now even prose is written in Urdu. So what commentary can one write and to what purpose?	545
BOOK-SELLER:	Oh, that reminds me! Recently, a disciple of Nazir came to me with a poem of his and inquired if I would use my influence and have it published. Now, you tell me, who would want to read Nazir's poetry?	
	<i>Three or four men walk across the stage, laughing. KAKRI-SELLER runs after them. The men exit. KAKRI-SELLER is disappointed.</i>	550
POET:	In times to come only vulgar things will be read. Anyone who can write a few cheap rhymes will be thought to have scaled the heights of scholarship and creativity. After all, that is what	555

popular taste demands these days. A little while ago, this kakri-seller came running up to me and requested me to write a poem on his kakris. Now what would you say to that!

- A VOICE OFFSTAGE: I've told you a hundred times, I don't want your kakris. Have you gone mad or what? 560  
 KAKRI-SELLER [offstage]: No, sir, no ... It's like this ...  
 VOICE: Just lay off. I've told you I don't want your kakris. Nor can I write poetry. Driving me crazy when I myself am in such dire straits!
- People have begun to gather at POTTER's shop to celebrate the birth of a baby.* 565
- KARIMAN: May God save you and the saints protect you! The proud father of the new baby boy! Accept my love and my blessings, dear soul! May God save you and the saints protect you! 570  
 TAILOR: Ramu, hey, Ramu! How long are you going to be closeted with your wife? Come out and sit with your friends for a while. [RAMU, *the potter, comes out laughing.*] Silly shy fellow! Won't you offer us sweets?  
 KARIMAN: May God save you and the saints protect you! On this happy day, I must have a new dress. I will settle for nothing less. May God bring you prosperity! 575  
 POTTER: Hey, why are you all barging in like this? Move, make way!  
 KARIMAN: May you live long and may God protect you! Hey, Chameli, why are you sitting there like a statue? Come here, Miss Lost-Soul!  
 POTTER: Get out, all of you! Go away! Will someone drive these busybodies out of here!  
 CHAMELI: Why do you shout and scold us on this happy occasion? I'll call you such names that you'll see stars, be swept off your feet. Hey, Kariman! Where the hell has she disappeared, the fool! [Spotting her] There you are! I'm hoarse from calling out for you! Don't just stand there gaping, sing a song!  
 KARIMAN: May God grant long life to the baby boy! May he flourish and replenish the earth! May God save you and the saints protect you! How can I refuse to sing on such an auspicious day! 590  
 POTTER: Shut up! Don't you dare sing your filthy songs here!  
 CHAMELI: Hey, Kariman! You silly woman, why are you inviting trouble? Sing something decent and leave the rude songs alone!  
 GROCER: Ramu, why don't you sing first? 595  
 ALL: Yes, good idea! Come Ramu, you begin.  
 POTTER: [sings, playing the rhythm on a pitcher]: Behold the splendour of my pots of clay!  
 Like a bed of flowers on a sunny day,  
 That freshen your heart and brighten the way;  
 Useful for storing milk, curd and whey,  
 By tapping on it like this you can play  
 Any old rhythm, either sad or gay.  
 Behold the splendour of my pots of clay!
- Enter CONSTABLE. Seeing him, people melt away. Shopkeepers mind their shops.* 605

CONSTABLE	[goes to BOOK-SELLER]: Maulana, do you know what caused the rioting in this bazaar?	
BOOK-SELLER	[respectfully rising to his feet]: Sir, my greetings to you. Constable-sahib, rioting has now become a daily occurrence. Some incident or the other takes place every day in this town. There was a fight between some street vendors, that is all.	610
CONSTABLE:	I have received a report that there was rioting among the shopkeepers here.	
BOOK-SELLER:	Sir, it was entirely the fault of a kakri-seller. The poor shopkeepers were unnecessarily dragged into it.	615
CONSTABLE:	Anyway, it has been decided to levy a fine of one rupee on each shopkeeper.	
BOOK-SELLER:	Kindly sit down. [Calling out to PAAN-SELLER] Hey, Munney Khan, will you please make one of your best paans for constable-sahib. Sir, what do I have to do with fights and quarrels? As I have already submitted, it was a fight among the low-class street vendors.	620
CONSTABLE:	Yes, yes. They too shall be fined.	
BOOK-SELLER:	Please do accept the paan.	625
CONSTABLE:	Some other time. [Moves away.]	
BOOK-SELLER:	How very unfair!	
TAZKIRANAWIS:	What exactly happened here?	
CONSTABLE	[to MELON-SELLER]: Who was this kakri-seller and where is he now?	
MELON-SELLER:	He must be somewhere around, sir. Should be here any moment. It was he who started it all.	630
CONSTABLE:	Ay, ay! I know all that. All of you are to blame and all of you will be fined. Go to the police station and deposit the fine.	
LADDOO-SELLER:	Sir, why should we all have to suffer because of one man? He is the one who provoked us and started a fight for no reason at all.	635
CONSTABLE:	We shall soon find that out too. Investigation is on.	
	<i>Picks up a melon, assesses its weight and carries it away with him.</i>	640
LADDOO-SELLER:	What a cruel joke. It was just getting peaceful when this fellow marched in. Now, the innocent will suffer along with the guilty.	
MELON-SELLER:	Brother, it's our fate! We can't escape it.	
GROCER:	Where is Mian Nazir? Great injustice has been let loose upon the town. He should write a poem on it. We are all being forced to pay a fine of one rupee. And through no fault of ours.	645
COMPANION:	Maulana, how would you rank Nazir as a poet?	
TAZKIRANAWIS	[browsing through a book]: A very lively man—good-natured, soft-spoken, greets everyone with a smile, does not hurt anybody. In other words, a man probably without a parallel anywhere in the world. But poetry? That's an entirely different matter.	
POET:	How many copies should one print of the first edition?	650
BOOK-SELLER:	About 500.	
POET:	However, I have certain personal difficulties. So if I could get an advance of a few rupees it'll free me from these problems.	655
BOOK-SELLER:	Oh, sir, don't you know? These days the authors publish books at their own expense. There are three new texts that I am keen to publish but am unable to do so for lack of money.	

FAKIRS enter, singing.

660

FAKIRS:

Money is what the rich desire,  
 Money is what the poor require,  
 Of power and glory money's the sire,  
 Makes the world spin and go haywire;  
 To colour and beauty money gives birth,  
 The penniless have no value, no worth.

665

Heaps of money makes one rise above all,  
 Bestows greatness where none exists at all,  
 Brings name and fame with many mansions tall,  
 Without it man is weak and small;

670

To colour and beauty money gives birth,  
 The penniless have no value, no worth.

Money can make you tame a wild bear,  
 Without it even a mouse fills you with fear,  
 With money you're 'master,' and even 'dear,'  
 Without it, a leper whom no one comes near;

675

To colour and beauty money gives birth,  
 The penniless have no value, no worth.

It's money that leads to bloodshed and wars,  
 Invents guns, daggers and scimitars,  
 It peeps from soldier's wounds and scars,  
 And makes them die for medals and stars.

680

To colour and beauty money gives birth,  
 The penniless have no value, no worth.

Charity exists on the strength of money,  
 Religion persists on the strength of money,  
 Hell is shunned on the strength of money,  
 Paradise earned on the strength of money.

685

To colour and beauty money gives birth,  
 The penniless have no value, no worth.

690

Money is the reason for name and fame,  
 It leaves only credit, removes all blame,  
 Controls all bodies and the souls they frame,  
 It's man's god, his master, his guiding flame.

To colour and beauty money gives birth,  
 The penniless have no value, no worth.

695

KAKRI-SELLER has entered during the song and listens to it  
 with rapt attention.

KAKRI-SELLER	[with great wistfulness]: Why won't somebody write a poem on my kakris? [Begins to leave but, suddenly struck by a thought, calls out to the FAKIRS] Come back! [Still calling, runs out through the right but comes back soon and runs out through the left] Come back! Come back!	700
	FAKIRS re-enter, singing. KAKRI-SELLER enters calling out to them but they go out. Dejected, he sits down, holding his head in his hands. FAKIRS' song continues to be heard as the curtain comes down.	705

## GLOSSARY

baksheesh	tip
besan roti	bread made of gram flour
chana	chickpea
chhadam, damri, pie	small coins in the local currency
dholak	traditional drum
fakir	mendicants who sing or chant and receive alms; often associated with the <i>sufi</i> (mystical) tradition
ghazal	poetic form specific to Urdu and Persian
kafni	traditional shroud-like robe (usually green) worn by fakirs
kakri	variety of cucumber, peculiar to north India
kauri	cowry shell, used as small currency in the past
laddoo	round sweets made of sesame seed and molasses or sugar
Madari	one who trains animals and makes them perform
mathnavi	poetic form in Urdu and Persian poetry
Maulana, Maulvi	title or form of address for a learned person
mridang	traditional drum
mushaira	poetry-reading session
nazm	poetic form in Urdu and Persian poetry
paan	betel leaf prepared as a popular digestive
paan-daan	traditional partitioned container to hold all the ingredients necessary to prepare paan
quasida	poetic form of eulogy
rewri	small sesame-seed candies
sarangi	string instrument
Shahar Ashob	traditional poetic form which laments or describes the hardships faced by the citizens of a town
tabla	small drum
Tazkirawis	one who compiles and chronicles biographical as well as literary information about known poets and writers; the closest English term perhaps is 'biographer'.



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