



SYLLABUS

Subject – English

UNIT – I	1. Rabindranath Tagore - "Where the mind is without fear" 2. A.L Basham: "The wonder that was India"(an excerpt) 3. R K Narayan - "Astrologer's Day" 4. Swami Vivekananda - "Chicago Speech (1893)" 5. Introduction to Sundarkand of Valmiki's Ramayan
UNIT – II	Comprehension Skills 1. Reading Techniques: Skimming, Scanning 2. Identifying the Main Idea and Theme 3. Making Inferences and Drawing Conclusions 4. Analysing unseen passages on Indian history, society, and art.
UNIT – III	Basic Language Skills Grammar: 1. Parts of Speech 2. Articles 3. Subject-Verb Agreement 4. Tenses and their application Vocabulary: 1. Synonyms, Antonyms, Homonyms, and Homophones 2. One-word substitutes 3. Word formation: Suffixes and Prefixes Keywords - Tense, Agreement, Clause, Phrase, Synonym, Antonym, Prefix, Suffix. Activity: 4. Grammar exercises (fill-in-the-blanks, error correction, sentence transformation). 5. Vocabulary-building games and quizzes.
UNIT – IV	Writing Skills 1. The Writing Process: Pre-writing, Drafting, Revising, and Editing. 2. Paragraph Writing: Structure, Topic Sentence, and Coherence. 3. Letter writing: Formal/Informal



UNIT I Lesson-1

'Where the Mind is Without Fear' by Rabindranath Tagore

Text of the poem:

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high
Where knowledge is free
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments
By narrow domestic walls
Where words come out from the depth of truth
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection
Where the clear stream of reason has
not lost its way
Into the dreary desert sand of dead habit
Where the mind is led forward by thee
Into ever- widening
thought and action
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.

Glossary:-

1. Domestic- related to family
2. Fragments-pieces
3. Tireless- without getting tired
4. Striving-to exert much efforts



5. Dreary- dull
6. Dead habit- old customs
7. Thee- you

Analysis of the poetry:

“Where the Mind is Without Fear” is an emotional prayer by Rabindranath Tagore before almighty God. He is an intellectual who was also popularly known as ‘Gurudev’ & ‘Bard of Bengal’; he was not only a composer but a painter, a humanist, a philosopher, a novelist as well as an educator who wrote on different subjects. This poetry is included in ‘Gitanjali’ an anthology which was composed by him during pre-independence era of India. Initially Rabindranath Tagore authored this poem in Bengali in 1901 written for a collection of divine prayers titled ‘Naibedya’ later translating it in English in the year 1911 for ‘Gitanjali’. He won Nobel for ‘Gitanjali’ in the year 1913 as well as the reputation of being the first Non-European to be a Nobel laureate. He was knighted in the year 1915, but he renounced this title in 1919 as he was anguished and as a sign of his protest against the Jallianwalla Bagh massacre (Amritsar massacre) due to the He is the composer of ‘Jana Gana Mana’ & ‘Amar Shonar Bangla’ the national anthems of India and Bangladesh respectively.

The original poem bears the title ‘Prarthana’ i.e. prayer. The poem is a prayer to the universal father as well as the fellow Indians presenting his vision of an independent India. Patriotism is the core theme of this poem solely centered on the vision of independence. The nation was under the British Rule, the society was full of disharmony and social unjust. The people were eagerly waiting to get their



freedom. This poem had given a lot of strength to the people who were struggling for India's independence.

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high
Where knowledge is free

The poet prays to the Almighty that his country should be free from any kind of external pressures and oppressive factors which would create fear. He believed that freedom from such repressive situations would generate a sense of respect in individuals which was crushed due to presence of these overwhelming situations. He wants that everyone in his country should be free to live a dignified life and hold their heads high with respect for themselves and for one another. He dreams of a nation where knowledge or education would be free and available for all. Education should not be restricted to the upper class only but everybody should be free to acquire knowledge without any caste or gender distinctions.

Where the world has not been broken up into fragments
By narrow domestic walls

Tagore envisions a world which is not disintegrated by biases based on caste, creed, color, religion, status or gender. He wants his people to reject any kinds of baseless superstitions and should not endorse any kinds of social evils. He lays emphasis on the rationality of mind because clear thinking would prevent people from becoming prey to such tribulations. He also stresses on the fact that all the external forces like prejudices and superstitions as well as internal forces like narrow-mindedness should not divide the people in groups and destroy their unity.



Where words come out from the depth of truth

Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection

He wishes the people of his nation to be truthful; he is of the view that people should not distort the truth for their personal benefits. The words spoken should be full of sincerity and not mere empty words which come from the bottom of the heart and soul. The poet expresses his deep desire where people of his country strive towards perfection or development free from all the biases and superstitions without giving up or getting exhausted.

Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way
Into the dreary desert sand of dead habit

The poet visualizes that his fellow countrymen should not lose their reasoning due to baseless superstitions and preconceived notions which is referred as dead habits as they hinder the unity of a nation and progress of an individual. He believes that these habits are like a lifeless barren region where no life can prevail. So he emphasizes on the fact that the every individual should possess a clear intellect which resembles to a clear stream free from any kinds of stagnation.

Where the mind is led forward by thee
Into ever-widening thought and action

Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.

The poet prays to the almighty to bestow his countrymen the purity of thoughts, actions and rational intellect. He wishes that God awakens the shackled mind of the people and lead them towards a heavenly country. He wants his natives not to be bound by any internal or external factors which pull them back from the path of progress. Tagore makes a plea before almighty 'Father', to awaken his country

About the Author

1. Name: Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941), also known as Gurudev.
2. Birthplace: Jorasanko Thakur Bari, Calcutta, India.
3. Occupation: Poet, philosopher, novelist, playwright, musician, painter, and educator.
4. Major Achievements:

First Asian Nobel Laureate in Literature (1913) for Gitanjali (Song Offerings).

Composed India's National Anthem – Jana Gana Mana and Bangladesh's National Anthem – Amar Sonar Bangla.

Founded Visva-Bharati University at Santiniketan — a place for holistic, liberal, and creative education.



5. Philosophy:

Believed in humanism, universalism, and spiritual freedom.

Stood against orthodoxy, colonial domination, and blind imitation of the West.

Advocated freedom of the individual mind as the foundation of true civilization.

6. Belief on Nationalism: Tagore's nationalism was ethical and humanistic—he wanted India's freedom to be a freedom of conscience, thought, and compassion, not just political independence.

 Writing Style

1. Simplicity with Depth: Tagore uses plain and musical English, but the meaning carries philosophical depth and emotional richness.

2. Free Verse Form:

The poem does not follow a rhyme scheme or metrical pattern.

Its rhythm arises naturally from prayer-like intonation.

3. Symbolism:

“Mind without fear” symbolizes mental freedom and courage.

“Head held high” symbolizes self-respect and dignity.

“Narrow domestic walls” represent social divisions such as caste, class, religion, and prejudice.

“Clear sTream of reason” represents rational thinking.

“Dreary desert sand of dead habit” stands for blind traditions and lifeless customs.

“Heaven of freedom” is Tagore's utopian vision of an ideal India and a spiritually liberated humanity.

4. Tone: Reverential, inspirational, and introspective — the poet speaks as a visionary reformer.

5. Imagery:

Strong visual and metaphorical imagery transforms abstract ideals into living pictures.

For example, the movement of “clear stream” through “desert sand” symbolizes how reason can get lost in unthinking tradition.

6. Language Features:

Highly musical, with repetition and flow that resemble devotional chant or hymn.

Alliteration and assonance enhance musicality (e.g., “dreary desert sand of dead habit”).



7. Philosophical and Universal Appeal:

Though written about India, the poem transcends national boundaries — it speaks about human liberation everywhere.

Setting of the Poem

1. Historical Context:

Written before India's independence, during the early 20th century when India was under British colonial rule.

It was a time of political enslavement, social inequality, and intellectual suppression.

2. Spiritual Setting:

The poem is addressed to God (the Eternal Father), making it a prayer for awakening — not just for India, but for all of humanity

3. Cultural Setting:

India, divided by religion, caste, and superstition, serves as the background against which Tagore dreams of unity, rationality, and dignity.

4. Psychological Setting:

It represents the internal landscape of the human soul, yearning for enlightenment, truth, and purity of thought.

5. Temporal Setting:

The poem exists in a timeless realm — it speaks both to pre-independence India and to future generations seeking moral and intellectual liberation.

Theme

1. Freedom – Political, Mental, and Spiritual

The central theme is freedom — not merely from British rule, but from fear, ignorance, and narrow-mindedness.

Tagore envisions a nation where freedom is not limited to politics but extends to thoughts, words, and actions.

He believes that true liberty begins in the human mind — a fearless mind can create a fearless nation.

The poem calls for the liberation of conscience, where people act from reason, not compulsion.

2. Knowledge and Enlightenment



“Where knowledge is free” emphasizes that education and learning should be open to all, unchained by class, gender, or caste barriers.

Tagore, as an educationist, saw ignorance as the root of all fear and division.

Knowledge here is not merely academic but moral and spiritual wisdom — the ability to discern truth and live rightly.

He believed that an educated nation is a fearless nation, one capable of progress and harmony.

3. Unity and Universal Brotherhood

The phrase “narrow domestic walls” criticizes social fragmentation caused by religion, caste, race, and region.

Tagore’s India was deeply divided; he dreamed of a world without boundaries, where humanity lives as one family.

His vision is cosmopolitan and inclusive, reflecting his faith in universal humanism (Vishva-Manavta).

True nationalism, for him, must never come at the cost of human unity.

4. Truth and Sincerity

“Where words come out from the depth of truth” reflects the moral dimension of freedom.

Tagore despised hypocrisy, flattery, and deceit — which were rampant under colonial rule.

He believed that a society can prosper only when speech arises from sincerity and truth guides human conduct.

5. Reason vs. Blind Habit

The line “where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit” is among Tagore’s most powerful metaphors.

It contrasts reason (symbol of life, purity, and clarity) with habit (symbol of death, stagnation, and unthinking conformity).

Tagore criticizes those who follow customs blindly without questioning moral or logical foundations.

He promotes intellectual independence and critical thinking as the path to progress.

6. Moral and Intellectual Awakening

The poem ends with an earnest plea:

> “Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.”

“Awake” symbolizes national awakening, spiritual renewal, and enlightenment of the human soul.



The poet sees awakening not as rebellion but as self-realization — when a nation realizes its divine potential through truth, knowledge, and unity.

7. Vision of an Ideal Nation

Tagore's "heaven of freedom" is an ideal India, where citizens are:

Fearless in mind

Dignified in self-respect

United beyond boundaries

Guided by truth

Driven by reason and moral conscience

This vision aligns with his philosophy of "Visva-Bharati" — the world as one nest, where all cultures and minds flourish together.

The Wonder that was India by A. L. Basham (an excerpt)

Text:

Hindu civilization will, we believe, retain its continuity. The Bhagavad Gita will not cease to inspire men of action, and the Upanishads men of thought. The charming graciousness of the Indian way of life will continue, however much affected it may be by the labour-saving devices of the West. People will still love the tales of the heroes of the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, and of the loves of Duryodhana and Sakuntala and Pururavas and Urvashi. The quiet and gentle happiness which has at all times pervaded Indian life where oppression, disease and poverty have not overclouded it will surely not vanish before the more hectic ways of the West.

Much that was useless in ancient Indian culture has already perished. The extravagant and barbarous hecatombs of the Vedic age have long since been forgotten, though animal sacrifice continues in some sects. Widows have long ceased to be burnt on their husbands' pyres. Girls may not by law be married in childhood. In buses and trains all over India brahmins rub shoulders with the lower castes without consciousness of grave pollution, and the temples are open to all by law. Caste is vanishing; the process began long ago, but its pace is now so rapid that the more objectionable features of caste may have disappeared within a generation or so. The old family system is adapting itself to present-day conditions. In fact the whole face of India is altering, but the cultural tradition continues, and it will never be lost.

The whole of South-East Asia received most of its culture from India. Early in the 5th century B.C.



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colonists from Western India settled in Ceylon, which was finally converted to Buddhism in the reign of Ashoka. By this time a few Indian merchants had probably found their way to Malaya, Sumatra, and other parts of South-East Asia. Gradually they established permanent settlements, often, no doubt, marrying native women. They were followed by brahmans and Buddhist monks, and Indian influence gradually leavened the indigenous culture, until by the 4th century A.D. Sanskrit was the official language of the region, and there arose great civilizations, capable of organizing large maritime empires, and of building such wonderful memorials as their greatness as the Buddhist stupa of Borobodur in Java, or the Saivite temples of Angkor in Cambodia. Other cultural influences, from China and the Islamic world, were felt in South-East Asia, but the primary impetus to civilization came from India.



Indian historians, proud of their country's past, often refer to this region as "Greater India", and speak of Indian "colonies". In its usual modern sense the term "colony" is hardly accurate, however. Vijaya, the legendary Aryan conqueror of Ceylon, is said to have gained the island by the sword, but beyond this we have no real evidence of any permanent Indian conquest outside the bounds of India. The Indian "colonies" were peaceful ones, and the Indianized kings of the region were indigenous chieftains who had learnt what India had to teach them.

Northwards Indian cultural influence spread through Central Asia to China. Faint and weak contact between China and India was probably made in Mauryan times, if not before, but only when, some 2,000 years ago, the Han Empire began to drive its frontiers towards the Caspian did India and China really meet. Unlike South- East Asia, China did not assimilate Indian ideas in every aspect of her culture, but the whole of the Far East is in India's debt for Buddhism, which helped to mould the distinctive civilizations of China, Korea, Japan and Tibet.

As well as her special gifts to Asia, India has conferred many practical blessings on the world at large; notably rice, cotton, the sugarcane, many spices, the domestic fowl, the game of chess and most important of all, the decimal system of numeral notation, the invention of an unknown Indian mathematician early in the Christian era. The extent of the spiritual influence of India on the ancient West is much disputed. The heterodox Jewish sect of the Essenes, which probably influenced early Christianity, followed monastic practices in some respects similar to those of Buddhism. Parallels may be traced between a few passages in the New Testament and the Pali scriptures. Similarities between the teachings of western philosophers and mystics from Pythagoras to Plotinus and those of the Upanisads have frequently been noticed. None of these similarities, however, is close enough to give certainty, especially as we have no evidence that any classical writer had a deep knowledge of Indian religion. We can only say that there was always some contact between the Hellenic world and India, mediated first by the Achaemenid Empire, then by that of the Seleucids, and finally, under the Romans, by the traders of the Indian ocean. Christianity began to spread at the time when this contact was closest. We know that Indian ascetics occasionally visited the West, and that there was a colony of Indian merchants at Alexandria. The possibility of Indian influence on Neo-platonism and early Christianity cannot be ruled out.



Many authorities may doubt that Indian thought had any effect on that of the ancient West, but there can be no doubt of its direct and indirect influence on the thought of Europe and America in the last century and a half, though this has not received adequate recognition. This influence has not come by way of organized neo-Hindu missions. The last eighty years have seen the foundation of the Theosophical Society, of various Buddhist societies, and of societies in Europe and America looking for inspiration to the saintly 19th-century Bengali mystic, Paramahansa Ramakrishna, and to his equally saintly disciple, Swami Vivekananda. Lesser organizations and groups have been founded in the West by other Indian mystics and their disciples, some of them noble, earnest and spiritual, others of more dubious character. Here and there Westerners themselves, sometimes armed with a working knowledge of Sanskrit and first-hand Indian experience, have tried to convert the West to a streamlined Yoga or Vedanta. We would in no way disparage these teachers or their followers, many of whom are of great intellectual and spiritual caliber; but whatever we may think of the Western propagators of Indian mysticism, we cannot claim that they have had any great effect on our civilization. More subtle, but more powerful, has been the influence of Mahatma Gandhi, through the many friends of India in the West who were impressed by his burning sincerity and energy, and by the ultimate success of his policy of non-violence in achieving India's independence. Greater than any of these influences, however, has been the influence of ancient Indian religious literature through philosophy.

The pioneers of the Asiatic Society of Bengal quickly gained a small but enthusiastic following in Europe, and Goethe and many other writers of the early 19th century read all they could of ancient Indian literature in translation. We know that Goethe borrowed a device of Indian dramaturgy for the prologue to "Faust" and who can say that the triumphant final chorus of the second part of that work was not in part inspired by the monism of Indian thought as he understood it? From Goethe onwards most of the great German philosophers knew something of Indian philosophy. Schopenhauer, whose influence on literature and psychology has been so considerable, indeed openly admitted his debt, and his outlook was virtually that of Buddhism. The monisms of Fichte and Hegel might never have taken the forms they did if it had not been for Anquetil-Duperron's translation of the Upanisads and the work of other pioneer Indologists. In the English-speaking world the strongest Indian influence was felt in America, where Emerson, Thoreau and other New England writers avidly studied much Indian religious literature in



translation, and exerted immense influence on their contemporaries and successors, notably Walt Whitman. Through Carlyle and others the German philosophers in their turn made their mark on England, as did the Americans through many late 19th-century writers such as Richard Jeffries and Edward Carpenter.

Though in the contemporary philosophical schools of Europe and America the monistic and idealist philosophies of the last century carry little weight, their influence has been considerable, and all of them owe something at least to ancient India. The sages who meditated in the jungles of the Ganges Valley six hundred years or more before Christ are still forces in the world.

It is today something of an anachronism to speak of Western civilization or Indian civilization. Until very recently cultures were sharply divided, but now, when India is but a thirty hours' journey from London, cultural divisions are beginning to disappear. If a *modus vivendi* is reached between liberal democracy and communism, and civilization survives, the world of the future will have a single culture with, it is to be hoped, many local differences and variations. India's contribution to the world's cultural stock has already been very large, and it will continue and grow as her prestige and influence increases. For this reason if for no other we must take account of her ancient heritage in its successes and its failures, for it is no longer the heritage of India alone, but of all mankind.

About the Author:

Arthur Llewellyn Basham (1914-1986), professor of South Asian history, was born on 24 May 1914 at Loughton, Essex, England, son of English parents Arthur Abraham Edward Basham and his wife Maria Jane, née Thompson, who were both journalists. As a child he learned the piano and by the age of 16 had written several compositions; he continued to play throughout his life. In 1935 he published a collection of his poetry entitled *Proem*.

After achieving first-class honours in Indo-Aryan studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London (BA, 1941; Ph.D., 1950), Basham served in civil defence during World War II. In 1948 he was appointed lecturer in the history of India at the SOAS, becoming reader in South Asian history in 1953 and professor in 1957. He was director of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland in 1964-65. On 9 October 1942 he had married Violet Helen Kemp in the Rushall parish church, Norfolk; they were later divorced. He married Namita Catherine Shadap-Sen, a 34-year-old Indian research student, on 11 November 1964 at the register office, Hampstead.

In 1965-79 Basham was foundation professor and head of the new department of Oriental (Asian) civilisation(s) in the faculty of Oriental (Asian) studies at the Australian National University, Canberra. He served as dean of the faculty from 1968 to 1970. His inspiration and leadership contributed greatly to the expansion of Asian studies at ANU. Through his supervision of over fifty doctoral students, both at the



SOAS and at the ANU, he exercised a broad influence in his field. As well as providing intellectual stimulus and concrete assistance, he showed kindness and personal concern to colleagues.

Basham's eminence as a historian of India had been established by the publication in London of his doctoral thesis *History and Doctrines of the Aji-vikas* (1951) and by his monumental *The Wonder That Was India* (1954). In this book, which has been republished many times and translated into several languages, he tried to cover 'all aspects of Indian life and thought' before the arrival of the Muslims in the sixteenth century. His fine and demanding scholarship concealed itself in an easy and elegant style. This work showed him as a historian and humanist with wide interests, a discerning appreciation of art and literature, and an affection for the people and the land he made the focus of his life's work. After publishing *Studies in Indian History and Culture* (1964) and *Aspects of Ancient Indian Culture* (1966), Basham edited *Papers on the Date of Kaniska* (1968), *The Civilizations of Monsoon Asia* (1974) and *A Cultural History of India* (1975). He wrote about fifty research articles, a similar number of review articles, and numerous contributions to encyclopaedias.

In 1970 'Bash' became vice-president of the Australian Academy of the Humanities, of which he was a foundation fellow, and in 1976 he was elected vice-president of the Asian Studies Association of Australia. Due to his international stature and his efforts, the 28th International Congress of Orientalists was held at the ANU in 1971. Basham served as president. In 1979 he was president of the First International Conference on Traditional Asian Medicine, held in Canberra. This meeting led to the formation of the International Association for the Study of Traditional Asian Medicine.

In the 1960s and 1970s Basham held several visiting professorships in the United States of America and India. His contribution to scholarship was recognised by a D.Litt. from the University of London (1966), honorary doctorates from the universities of Kurukshetra (1965) and Nava Nalanda Mahavihara (1977), as well as the Bimala Churn Law gold medal of the Asiatic Society of Calcutta in 1975 and the Desikottama award from the Visva-bharati University in 1985. Survived by his wife and their son and daughter, Basham died of cancer on 27 January 1986 at Calcutta, India, and was buried in the Old Military Cemetery of All Saints Cathedral, Shillong.

Analysis of the Chapter:

The most important quality of Indian culture is that it is able to maintain its continuity even after the passage of so many years. The message of Karma mentioned in the Bhagvad Geeta will always inspire the men who believe in doing karma. The Upanishads are the treasure house of Indian Philosophy and they will keep influencing the thinkers. The teachings of Bhagvad Geeta are globally renowned and they even taught in the world's top most institutes. The Indian way of living is quite peaceful in comparison to the lives of the people of the Western countries this phenomenon increases the charisma of Indian life.

Indian culture consisted of some ill-traditions like sati system, animal sacrifice, child marriage, caste system or untouchability but now things are changing. The identity and character of the whole country is changing but the only thing that didn't change was legacy of the Indian



culture.

The whole of South-East Asia was influenced by the Indian culture especially of Buddhism to a greater extent. In 5th century BC people from the Western India settled in Ceylon i.e. present day Sri Lanka. This region was wholly converted to Buddhism especially during the reign or the efforts of King Ashoka. Even Indian merchants discovered routes to Malaya, Sumatra and other parts of South-East Asia. After the merchants the Buddhist monks and the Brahmins also went to these regions and spread Indian culture in those parts. Sanskrit was the official language of this area and even some civilizations who successfully established their empire due to their naval power. Even some memorials like Buddhist stupa of Borobodur in Java, or the Saivite temples of Angkor in Cambodia were built. Though; many countries like China and the Islamic world in South-East Asia but mainly the influence came from India.

Indian Historians proudly called this region or colonies as the “Greater India”. Aryan king Vijaya of Ceylon had won over an island apart from him no other conquest were done out of India. The Indians colonies were peaceful and their chiefs were took in all the learning from India. Indian culture was spreading towards north and during Mauryan period India and China came in contact with each other or around 2000 years ago during the Han empire conquest. China didn't include the Indian ideas in their culture in totality but one cannot deny the debt of India for Buddhism.

India also gave gifts like rice, cotton, sugarcane, spices, the domestication of fowls, game of chess and the decimal system. The influence of Indian culture over the Ancient West is disputed. Early Christianity was influenced by Jewish sect but the monastic principles they followed were similar to the Buddhism. Similarities have been found between the Indian culture especially Upanishads and the New Testament, teachings of the Western philosophers, various spiritual philosophers. Though there is no evidence that the Indian teachings had direct influence but the contact between the Indian and the Western world cannot be denied.

The effect of the Indian influence was not due to a planned mission of the Hinduism. Many societies like Theosophical society, Buddhist society or the European or American societies desired to learn the teachings of Paramhansa and Swami Vivekanand. Many groups were found in the Western countries and many Westerners had the working knowledge of Sanskrit. They tried to bring a change to Yoga or Vedanta. Though they had many teachers who propagated these thoughts but it cannot be said that they didn't had much effect on India. Mahatma Gandhi's non-violence is one of the finest instances that the Indian thought was popularized in the West.



Many writers gained the knowledge of translated versions of Indian literature. Like the writer Goethe used dramaturgy i.e. the theory and practice of dramatic composition in the introduction of his play 'Faust' and its ending was inspired by the Indian monism. The German philosophers like Schopenhauer, was the only one who accepted that he was indebted to the Buddhism which was reflected in his literature and psychology. In America and other European countries many thinkers and writers studied Indian religious literatures which were translated. The German philosophers influenced England deeply. All the countries in some or the other way followed Indian philosophies and Indian culture existed in a since a long time back even before Christ. The cultures are avidly divided due to geographical boundaries if all the nations leave other aspect and reach to common point between democracy and communism the whole world will be painted in one color which would reflect Indian Culture. Therefore Indian culture not only belongs to India alone but also to the whole world.

1. About the Author

A.L. Basham (Arthur Llewellyn Basham) was a prominent British historian and Indologist, known for his expertise in ancient Indian history and culture. He was born in 1914 and passed away in 1986. Basham's contributions significantly shaped Western understanding of Indian civilization.

Basham's *The Wonder That Was India* is one of the most widely read books on ancient Indian history, appreciated for its thorough research and accessible style.

2. Writing Style

Accessible and Engaging: Basham uses clear, straightforward language, making complex ideas and historical facts easy to understand for readers unfamiliar with the subject.

Narrative-driven: He intertwines historical facts with vivid descriptions of life in ancient India, creating a narrative that is not purely academic but also engaging.



Non-Eurocentric Approach: Unlike many Western scholars of his time, Basham avoids the colonial lens of portraying Indian civilization as inferior to the West. Instead, he presents a balanced and appreciative view of India's rich cultural heritage.

Use of Evidence: Basham draws extensively from archaeological findings, ancient texts, and other primary sources. He supports his interpretations with references to Vedic literature, Buddhist texts, and other historical records.

3. Theme and Setting

Ancient Indian Civilization: The book provides an extensive look at the history, culture, religion, and achievements of India from ancient times to the beginning of the medieval period.

Focus on Cultural Achievements: Basham focuses on India's contributions in various fields, including art, literature, science, mathematics, and philosophy. The text highlights India's advancements in these areas and their impact on world civilization.

Religious and Philosophical Development: The book explores the origins of major Indian religions, including Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism, and their philosophical underpinnings.

Social Structure: Basham delves into the social and political organization of ancient India, including the caste system, the position of women, and economic systems.

Inter-cultural Influence: The book also discusses India's interactions with other ancient civilizations like Greece, Rome, and China, showcasing India's role as a central hub in the ancient world.

4. Characteristics of the Chapter

Rich Descriptions: Basham vividly describes the daily lives, rituals, and customs of ancient Indians, helping readers visualize the civilization.

Balance Between Religious and Secular Aspects: Basham emphasizes not just the religious and philosophical achievements of India but also its secular advancements, particularly in art, science, and literature.

Chronological Flow: He takes a chronological approach, beginning with the Harappan civilization and covering the Vedic age, the Mauryan Empire, and the Gupta period, giving readers a broad understanding of India's historical timeline.

Global Context: The book often places India in the broader context of world history, comparing its development with that of contemporary civilizations.

Objective Analysis: While being appreciative of India's past, Basham does not shy away from



discussing the societal flaws, like the rigidity of the caste system or the subordinate status of women in ancient society.

5. Important Points

Harappan Civilization: Basham gives detailed accounts of the urban planning, architecture, and economy of the Indus Valley Civilization, emphasizing its sophistication.

Vedic Culture: The chapter covers the transition from the Harappan to the Vedic period, focusing on the rise of Aryan society and the development of early Vedic religious thought.

Short Questions and Answers

1. Q: Who was A.L. Basham? A: A.L. Basham was a British historian and Indologist, known for his works on ancient Indian history, particularly *The Wonder That Was India*.
2. Q: What is the primary focus of *The Wonder That Was India*? A: The book focuses on the history, culture, and achievements of ancient Indian civilization, emphasizing its contributions to art, literature, science, and religion.
3. Q: What was one of the key features of the Harappan civilization according to Basham? A: The Harappan civilization was known for its advanced urban planning, including grid-patterned cities, drainage systems, and standardized weights and measures.
4. Q: How does Basham view the caste system in ancient India? A: While acknowledging the societal structure it provided, Basham also critiques the rigid caste system for its restrictions and inequalities.
5. Q: How did the Mauryan Emperor Ashoka influence Indian culture? A: Ashoka promoted Buddhism, non-violence, and ethical governance, significantly impacting Indian society and spreading Indian culture to other parts of Asia.

CHAPTER – 3

AN ASTROLOGER's DAY – BY R.K. NARAYAN

Punctually at midday he opened his bag and spread out his professional equipment, which consisted of a dozen cowrie¹ shells, a square piece of cloth with obscure mystic charts on it, a notebook and a bundle of palmyra writing. His forehead was resplendent with sacred ash and vermilion,² and his eyes sparkled with a sharp abnormal gleam which was really an outcome of a continual searching look for customers, but which his simple clients took to be a prophetic light and felt comforted. The power of his eyes was considerably



commonly found in warm, shallow waters of the Pacific and Indian Oceans. 2. Here, obscure means "difficult to understand" and mystic means "having hidden or secret meanings." Palmyra (pal mī'rə) refers to paper made from the leaves of the palmyra tree. The man's forehead is full of splendor (resplendent) in that it is painted with dark ash and a red pigment called vermilion. Encountering the Unexpected What do customers misunderstand about the astrologer? 56 UNIT 1 THE SHORT STORY enhanced by their position-placed as they were between the painted forehead and the dark whiskers which streamed down his cheeks: even a half-wit's eyes would sparkle in such a setting. To crown the effect he wound a saffron-colored³ turban around his head. This color scheme never failed. People were attracted to him as bees are attracted to cosmos or dahlia stalks. He sat under the boughs of a spreading tamarind tree which flanked a path running through the Town Hall Park. It was a remarkable place in many ways: a surging crowd was always moving up and down this narrow road morning till night. A variety of trades and occupations was represented all along its way: medicine-sellers, sellers of stolen hardware and junk, magicians and, above all, an auctioneer of cheap cloth, who created enough din all day to attract the whole town. Next to him in vociferousness⁴ came a vendor of fried groundnuts,⁵ who gave his ware a fancy name each day, calling it Bombay Ice-Cream one day, and on the next Delhi Almond, and on the third Raja's Delicacy, and so on and so forth, and people flocked to him. A considerable portion of this crowd dallied before the astrologer too. The astrologer transacted his business by the light of a flare which crackled and smoked up above the groundnut heap nearby. Half the enchantment of the place was due to the fact that it did not have the benefit of municipal lighting. The place was lit up by shop lights. One or two had hissing gaslights, some had naked flares stuck on poles, some were lit up by old cycle lamps and one or two, like the astrologer's, managed without lights of their own. It was a bewildering criss-cross of light rays and moving shadows. This suited the astrologer very well, for the simple reason that he had not in the least intended to be an astrologer when he began life; and he knew no more of what was going to happen to others than he knew what was going to happen to him self next minute. He was as much a stranger to the stars as were his innocent customers. Yet he said things which pleased and astonished everyone: that was more a matter of study, practice and shrewd guesswork. All the same, it was as much an honest man's labor as any other, and he deserved the wages he carried home at the end of a day. He had left his village without any previous thought or plan. If he had continued there he would have carried on the work of his forefathers—namely, tilling the land, living, marrying and ripening in his cornfield and ancestral home. But that was not to be. He had to leave home without telling anyone, and he could not rest till he left it behind a couple of hundred miles. To a villager it is a great deal, as if an ocean flowed between. He had a working analysis of mankind's troubles: marriage, money and the tangles of human ties. Long practice had sharpened his perception. Within five minutes he understood what was wrong. He charged three pice per question and never opened his mouth till the other had spoken for at least ten minutes, which provided him enough stuff for a dozen answers and advices. When he told the person before him, gazing at his palm, "In many ways you are not getting the fullest results for your efforts," nine out of ten were disposed to agree with him. Or he questioned: "Is there any woman in your family, maybe even a distant relative, who is not well disposed⁷ towards you?" Or he gave an analysis of character: "Most of your troubles are due to your nature. How can you be otherwise with Saturn where he is? You have an impetuous nature and a rough exterior." This endeared him to their hearts immediately, for even the mildest of us loves to think that he has a forbidding exterior. The nuts-vendor blew out his flare and rose to go home. This was a signal for the astrologer to bundle up too, since it left him in darkness except for a little shaft of green light which strayed in



from somewhere and touched the ground before him. He picked up his cowrie shells and paraphernalia and was putting them back into his bag when the green shaft of light was blotted out; he looked up and saw a man standing before him. He sensed a possible client and said: "You look so careworn. It will do you good to sit down for a while and chat with me." The other grumbled some vague reply. The astrologer pressed his invitation; whereupon the other thrust his palm under his nose, saying: "You call yourself an astrologer?" The astrologer felt challenged and said, tilting the other's palm towards the green shaft of light: "Yours is a nature ..." "Oh, stop that," the other said. "Tell me something worthwhile...." Our friend felt piqued, "I charge only three pice per question, and what you get ought to be good enough for your money...." At this the other withdrew his arm, took out an anna and flung it out to him, saying, "I have some questions to ask. If I prove you are bluffing, you must return that anna to me with interest." "If you find my answers satisfactory, will you give me five rupees?"⁸ "No." "Or will you give me eight annas?" "All right, provided you give me twice as much if you are wrong," said the stranger. This pact was accepted after a little further argument. The astrologer sent up a prayer to heaven as the other lit a cheroot.⁹ The astrologer caught a glimpse of his face by the matchlight. There was a pause as cars hooted on the road, jutka¹⁰ drivers swore at their horses and the babble of the crowd agitated the semi-darkness of the park. The other sat down, sucking his cheroot, puffing out, sat there ruthlessly. The astrologer felt very uncomfortable. "Here, take your anna back. I am not used to such challenges. It is late for me today...." He made preparations to bundle up. The other held his wrist and said, "You can't get out of it now. You dragged me in while I was passing." The astrologer shivered in his grip; and his voice shook and became faint. "Leave me today. I will speak to you tomorrow." The other thrust his palm in his face and said, "Challenge is challenge. Go on." The astrologer proceeded with his throat drying up. "There is a woman . . ." "Stop," said the other. "I don't want all that. Shall I succeed in my present search or not? Answer this and go. Otherwise I will not let you go till you disgorge" all your coins." The astrologer muttered a few incantations and replied, "All right. I will speak. But will you give me a rupee if what I say is convincing? Otherwise I will not open my mouth, and you may do what you like." After a good deal of haggling the other agreed. The astrologer said, "You were left for dead. Am I right?" "Ah, tell me more." "A knife has passed through you once?" said the astrologer. "Good fellow!" He bared his chest to show the scar. "What else?" "And then you were pushed into a well nearby in the field. You were left for dead." "I should have been dead if some passerby had not chanced to peep into the well," exclaimed the other, overwhelmed by enthusiasm. "When shall I get at him?" he asked, clenching his fist. "In the next world," answered the astrologer. "He died four months ago in a far-off town. You will never see any more of him." The other groaned on hearing it. The astrologer proceeded. "Guru Nayak-" "You know my name!" the other said, taken aback. ¹² "As I know all other things. Guru Nayak, listen carefully to what I have to say. Your village is two days' journey due north of this town. Take the next train and be gone. I see once again great danger to your life if you go from home." He took out a pinch of sacred ash and held it out to him. "Rub it on your forehead and go home. Never travel southward again, and you will live to be a hundred." "Why should I leave home again the other said reflectively.¹³ "I was only going away now and then to look for him and to choke out his life if I met him." He shook his head regretfully. "He has escaped my hands. I hope at least he died as he deserved." "Yes," said the astrologer. "He was crushed under a lorry."¹⁴ The other looked gratified to hear it. The place was deserted by the time the astrologer picked up his articles and put them into his bag. The green shaft was also gone, leaving the place in darkness and silence. The stranger had gone off into the night, after giving the astrologer a handful of coins. It was nearly midnight when the astrologer reached home. His wife was waiting for him at



the door and demanded an explanation. He flung the coins at her and said, "Count them. One man gave all that." "Twelve and a half annas," she said, counting. She was overjoyed. "I can buy some jaggery¹⁵ and coconut tomorrow. The child has been asking for sweets for so many days now. I will prepare some nice stuff for her." "The swine has cheated me! He promised me a rupee," said the astrologer. She looked up at him. "You look worried. What is wrong?" "Nothing." After dinner, sitting on the pyol, he told her, "Do you know a great load is gone from me today? I thought I had the blood of a man on my hands all these years. That was the reason why I ran away from home, settled here and married you. He is alive." She gasped, "You tried to kill!" "Yes, in our village, when I was a silly youngster. We drank, gambled and quarreled badly one day-why think of it now? Time to sleep," he said, yawning, and stretched himself on the pyol.

About the Author – R. K. Narayan (1906–2001)

Full Name: Rasipuram Krishnaswami Iyer Narayanaswami.

One of the pioneers of Indian Writing in English, along with Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao.

His stories are usually set in the fictional town of Malgudi, which represents the essence of small-town South Indian life.

Style: Known for simple, conversational English with Indian sensibilities. He avoided heavy ornamentation in language and wrote for the common reader.

Themes: Middle-class life, human follies, irony of fate, subtle humor.

Awards: Sahitya Akademi Award (1960), Padma Bhushan (1964), Padma Vibhushan (2001).

Famous Works:

Swami and Friends (1935) – his first novel.

The Guide (1958) – won Sahitya Akademi Award, later adapted into a film.

Malgudi Days – short stories collection, immortalized in TV serial.

Writing Style in An Astrologer's Day

R. K. Narayan's style is unique and easy to recognize:

1. Simplicity of Language

He writes in clear, straightforward English without complex vocabulary.



Example: The astrologer is described in plain words – “He had left his village without any previous thought or plan.”

2. Irony and Humor

Narayan’s stories often have a humorous touch, even when serious.

The astrologer, though a fraud, is presented in an amusing light as he confidently deceives people.

3. Psychological Realism

Narayan understands the inner working of ordinary people.

The astrologer knows human weaknesses (money, marriage, enemies) and uses this to trick customers.

4. Suspense and Twist Ending

The whole story builds towards a shocking revelation – the astrologer was once a criminal who tried to murder a man.

This technique of surprise is common in Narayan’s short stories.

5. Indian Background

Settings are authentically Indian: busy marketplace, oil lamps, vendors, rural beliefs in astrology.

Characters feel relatable to Indian readers, while still universal in their struggles

Themes of the Story (Detailed)

1. Fate vs. Free Will

The story highlights the power of destiny over human effort.

The astrologer pretends to control people’s fate, but ironically, he himself is trapped by his past actions.



The stranger's sudden appearance proves that fate eventually catches up.

Quote: "The man who sought to kill had been saved, and the one who thought he was a murderer was set free."

2. Deception and Survival

The astrologer makes a living by bluff, without real knowledge.

His trade is survival in a competitive world – he must cheat or starve.

This reflects how society sometimes forces people into roles of deception.

3. Crime, Guilt, and Redemption

The astrologer carries the burden of a crime (attempted murder).

All his life, he hides from his past.

When he meets the victim alive, he feels liberated from guilt.

His redemption is accidental, not earned.

4. Illusion vs. Reality

Customers believe the astrologer has divine powers.

Reality: He simply reads people's expressions and guesses cleverly.

The story suggests that much of what we believe as "supernatural" is based on illusion.

5. Irony of Life

The astrologer, who claims to predict others' lives, could not predict his own fate.

His victim, whom he thought dead, reappears to free him.

Life works in mysterious, ironic ways.

Character Sketch (Detailed)



The Astrologer

Appearance: Wears saffron turban, sacred ash, and vermilion to look holy.

Profession: Fraud – has no real knowledge of astrology, but sharp observational skills.

Traits:

Clever, witty, and quick-thinking.

Survivor – adapts to city life after running away from his village.

Haunted by guilt of attempted murder.

Change: At the end, he feels relieved and lighter, having discovered his victim is alive.

Symbolism: Represents the duality of man – outwardly spiritual, inwardly flawed.

The Stranger (Guru Nayak)

Personality: Rough, aggressive, revenge-driven.

Purpose: Wants to find and kill the man who attacked him years ago.

Irony: He consults the same astrologer who once tried to murder him.

Symbolism: Represents fate catching up with the past.

Astrologer's Wife

Nature: Simple, innocent, practical.

Role: Provides contrast and comic relief – worried about daily earnings.

Unawareness: She knows nothing of her husband's past.

Symbolism: Domestic life and innocence, compared to her husband's guilt and secrets.

Important Word Meanings



Cowrie shells – small shells used for divination.

Connoisseur – expert judge in matters of taste.

Esoteric – understood by a small group with special knowledge.

Garrulous – excessively talkative.

Menacing – threatening, suggesting harm.

Shrewd – having sharp judgment.

Tranquil – calm, peaceful.

Paraphernalia – miscellaneous articles.