

12. Delhi in 1857 – Mirza Ghalib

I marvel at the varied wonders of fate. In the days of killing and looting, when it seemed that every house in the city was emptied even of its dust, my house escaped the looters' grasping hands. Yet I swear even so that nothing but clothes to wear and bedding to sleep upon was left to me. The answer to this riddle and the key to this false-seeming truth is this: that at the time when the black rebels seized the city, my wife, without telling me gathered her jewels and valuables and sent them secretly to the house of Kale Saheb. There they were stored in the cellar, and the door of the cellar blocked up with clay and smoothed over. When the British soldiers took the city and were given leave to loot and kill, my wife revealed this secret to me. Now there was nothing to be done.

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To go there and bring them back was impossible. I said nothing and comforted myself with the thought that we were destined to lose these things and that it was well that they had not been taken from our own home. And now it is July – the fifteenth month – and I see no sign that I shall again receive the pension which the British government formerly granted me. And so I sell the clothes and bedding to keep body and soul together, and a man might say that where others eat bread, I eat cloth. I go in fear that when all the cloth is eaten I shall die naked and hungry. Of the servants who had long been with me there are some few who even in this tumult did not desert me. These too I must feed, for in truth man may not turn his back on man and I too need them to serve my needs.

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Besides these are those suppliants who in former days laid claim to a share in the gleanings of my harvest. Even in these bad times they cry to me and their cry, more unwelcome than the cock's untimely crow, pierces my heart and adds to my distress. And now that these raging sickness and sorrows which oppress my body and soul have sapped all my strength and spirit, the thought comes suddenly to my mind, "How long can I occupy myself adorning this toy I call a book?" For this distress must end either in death or in beggary. In the first case, this tale must needs for evermore lack an ending ... and so sudden its readers' hearts. And in the second case the one clear outcome is that I must raise the beggar's cry from door to door here gathering a crumb, there driven with abuse from the lane and humiliated in the open street.

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And for how long should I tell such a tale, myself spreading the fame of my disgrace? Now even if my pension is restored it cannot wipe clean wipe clean the mirror of my heart, and if it is not, that mirror will itself be shattered to such ruined ones as I, and I must go and live in some strange land. From May of last year to July of this I have written what has befallen and from the 1st August I stay my pen.

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Comprehension

1. Choose the correct answer: -

i. Ghalib's wife sent the jewels and valuables to a friend's house because she feared that –

- a. Ghalib would take them away from her.
- b. the looters would take them.
- c. **the British soldiers will loot them.**
- d. She will be forced by Ghalib to sell them.

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Comprehension

1. Choose the correct answer: -

ii. Who does Ghalib mean by the looters?

a. **The British soldiers.**

b. The common thieves.

c. The Indian mutineers.

d. Ghalib's friends and relatives.

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Comprehension

1. Choose the correct answer: -

iii. When were the British soldiers given freedom to loot and kill?

a. **After the Indian mutiny had failed.**

b. After Queen Victoria's visit to India.

c. After Ghalib's death.

d. After Indians ran away from the battle-field.

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Comprehension

1. Choose the correct answer: -

iv. What does Ghalib mean when he says that he eats cloth?

a. He has no bread and therefore eats cloth.

b. He buys food with the money he gets on selling his clothes.

c. The British Government forces him to eat cloth.

d. The British soldiers stuff his mouth with cloth so that he may not speak against the British Raj.

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Comprehension

1. Choose the correct answer: -

v. In addition to himself and his wife who else depended on Ghalib for their bread?

a. Ghalib's parents.

b. Ghalib's brothers and sisters.

c. Ghalib's friends.

d. Ghalib's servants and other poor people who lived on his charity before the 1857 mutiny.

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Comprehension

2. Mark the statements 'true' or 'false': -

- a. Ghalib was happy with the British rule in India. (False)
- b. There was total peace in Delhi in 1857. (False)
- c. 1857 Mutiny made life very difficult for Ghalib. (True)
- d. Ghalib was as worried about his servants as about himself and his wife. (True)

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Comprehension

3. Answer the questions given below: -

a. Where did Ghalib's wife send her jewels and valuables?

Answer: **Ghalib's wife sent her jewels and valuables** to the house of Kale Saheb.

b. Where in Kale Saheb's house were those jewels and valuables kept?

Answer: **Those jewels and valuables were kept** in the cell of Kale Saheb's house.

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Comprehension

3. Answer the questions given below: -

c. What was it that Ghalib did not hope to get again from the British Government?

Answer: It was his pension that Ghalib did not hope to get again from the British Government.

d. In what will Ghalib's distress end?

Answer: Ghalib's distress will end either in death or beggary.

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Vocabulary

1. Write in your own words what you understand from the expressions given below: -
 - a. emptied even of its dust = emptied completely iw.kZ :lk ls [kkyh
 - b. Turn one's back on = did not come to help, went away lgk;rk ugha djuk
 - c. The gleanings of one's harvest = in good days vPNs fnuksa esa
 - d. Cock's untimely crow = unexpected happenings vpkud fdlh ?kVuk dk ?kfVr gksuka
 - e. Pierce the heart = very painfuls fny dks Nyuh djuk] vR;f/kd nq[k igqpuak
 - f. Wipe clean the mirror of the heart = having no ill feelings fdlh ds izfr nqHkkZouk uk gksuka
 - g. Keep body and soul together = to live thfor jguk

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Vocabulary

2. Match the words in column 'A' and 'B': -

A B

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| 1. Marvel-8 | 1. a person asking for something in a humble way. |
| 2. Riddle-4 | 2. a state in which one loses honour. |
| 3. Cellar-9 | 3. great pain or sorrow |
| 4. Suppliant-1 | 4. a statement not easily understood |
| 5. Distress-3 | 5. a very small piece |
| 6. Disgrace- | 6. harmful; very unpleasant |
| 7. Crumb-5 | 7. a lot of confused or excited noise |
| 8. Noxious-6 | 8. feel surprised |
| 9. Tumult-7 | 9. an underground room |
| 10. Ruined-10 | 10. severely damaged |

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GRAMMAR

Prefix($\frac{1}{2}$)

1. Negative Prefix

Un – unkind, unwise

In – indirect, indiscipline

Il (il) – (L – Is izkjEHk 'kCn) – illegal, illiterate

Im - (p, b, m – Is izkjEHk 'kCn) – imbalance, immovable

Dis – dislike, disrespect

Non – non-normal, non-stop

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GRAMMAR

Prefix

2. Prefix used to reverse the action

Un- unpack, unfold

De- decode, decamp

Dis – disown

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GRAMMAR

Prefix

3. Some other prefixes are: -

Mis- misbehave, mismanage

Mal- malfunction, malnutrition

Super- superman, supernatural

Sub- subcategory, subordinate

Over- overconfidence, overlook

Under- undergo

Re- rebuild, reuse

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GRAMMAR

Suffix

Adjectives - Nouns

-ness kind - kindness

-ity rapid - rapidity

-ist special - specialist

Nouns - Verbs

-ify beauty - beautify

-ize symbol - symbolize

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GRAMMAR

Suffix

Verbs - Nouns

- ment appoint - appointment
- ation meditate - meditation
- al refuse - refusal
- er play - player
- or act - actor
- ee pay - payee
- age waste - wastage

Nouns - Adjectives

- ful beauty - beautiful
- less speech - speechless

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GRAMMAR

Suffix

Nouns - Adjectives

-ful beauty - beautiful

-less speech - speechless

-ly man - manly

-ish child - childish

-y sand - sandy

-al music - musical

-able reason - reasonable

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GRAMMAR

Suffix

Verbs - Adjectives

-able accept - acceptable

Adjectives - Verbs

-ize special - specialize

-ify simple - simplify

Adjectives - adverbs

-ly quick - quickly

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GRAMMAR

Compound words

Two basic words combined together

Noun Compounds

1. Earthquake
2. Headache
3. Book-keeping
4. Girl-friend

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GRAMMAR

Compound words

Two basic words combined together

Adjective Compounds

1. widespread
2. Homesick
3. Home-made
4. Good-looking

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GRAMMAR

Compound words

Two basic words combined together

Verb Compounds

1. backbite
2. earmark
3. Sleep-walk
4. Cross-examine