

## Saints and Poets of India Depicted in Stamps

By IVOR H. HARRY

For the basis of this article I am indebted to Hakimuddin, a former pen-pal living in India. He was kind enough to send me a set of six stamps which showed the saints and poets of India with a description of each series of 1952.

The first stamp in the series is 9 pies and is yellow green in color. Kabir, a mystic saint of the 15th century, wrote poetry and his teachings represent a combination of both Hindu and Muslim thought. He condemned intolerance and religious hypocrisy. He was a firm believer in simple devotion and non-violence. His couplets are easy and intelligible Hindu and have an irresistible appeal. The following is a translation of a couplet which he composed:

"Those, who searched for Him,  
found Him, even in the depths of  
the sea.

I also went out to seek Him,  
but kept sitting foolishly on the  
bank."

The second stamp is one anna in denomination and is crimson in color. Tulsidas, a celebrated saint-poet of the 16th-17th century, was a contemporary of Akbar, a Mogul Emperor. As an author of Ramcharirmans which is a popular Hindi version of the Indian epic poem, Ramayan, his contribution to Hindi literature is unique. The couplet follows: "The Universe I see as pervaded by Lord; To him I bow with folded hands."

The third issue is two annas in denomination and is scarlet in color. Mira, a Rajpur princess and consort of the heir-apparent to the throne of Udaipur in the 15th-16th century, gave up earthly glories for the sake of divine love. Her songs have enchanted generations of listeners to this day. The couplet follows: "Let me be thy servant, O' Lord: I shall serve Thee, and tend Thy garden and as my reward see Thy face every day; Of Thee, shall I sing in the lanes and bowers of Vindraver" (a beautiful jungle).

The fourth stamp in the series is four annas in denomination and blue in color. Surdas, a blind poet of the 15th-16th century, preached the gospel of universal love like Tulsidas. The language used is noted for its simplicity and sweetness. Swisaga, a collection of his poems, is a masterpiece of literature in the national language. The couplet follows: "Look not at my vice, O' Lord: All are equal in Thy eyes they say, Thou canst, only if Thou will, grant me salvation."

The fifth stamp in the series is 4½ annas in denomination and magenta in color. Galib, whose full name is Mirza Asadullah Khan Galib, was a renowned Urdu (language) poet of

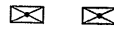
the 19th century, closely associated with the court of Mogul Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar. Also a Persian poet, he originated a new style of writing. His poems, mainly sonnets, range over the entire gamut of human emotions and reveal deep insight. The couplet follows: "Difficult it is for every task to be rendered easy: Even as it is hard for man to be human."

The sixth and last stamp in the series is 12 annas in denomination and dark brown in color. Tagore, whose full name is Rabindranath Tagore, a poet, dramatist and philosopher, is a literary genius of modern India. Among his works, the "Gitanjali" won him the Nobel prize in 1931. The couplet follows:

"Thou hast made me known,  
To friends whom I know not.

Thou hast given me seats  
In homes not my own.

"Thou hast brought the distant near  
And made a brother of the  
stranger."



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