



# A STUDY OF HOW KALIDASA'S "MEGHADUTTA" ALLUDES TO CONSERVE NATURE

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## **ABSTRACT**

"Meghaduta" by Kalidasa is a great poem of love and nature in classical Indian literature. The poem deals with the intense love affair between husband and wife even after their separation. Here, Yaksha is banished for transgressing the orders of Kubera, the Hindu god of wealth under whom Yaksha, has served. The infuriated master banishes him from Alaca, the city of Yakshas to the mountain of Ramagiri in Central India for twelve months exile. Thus Yaksha is separated from his home and his beloved wife. Their love never fades in any circumstance because the inspiration of their love lies in the core of their hearts. Seasons as changing agents of nature affect human mind in love making. The rainy Season or monsoon season brings freshness in nature and deep emotions in lovers' mind. The clouds moving from one part of sky to another bring rain and message of love in the mind of lovers. Yaksha uses the clouds as messenger. This paper intends to convey that Kalidasa has alluded to preserve nature through his landmark poem "Meghadutta".

**Keywords:** Love, Nature, classical, banished, exile etc.

## **PAPER**

Kalidasa's poem "Meghaduta" is a superb example of love poetry in traditional Indian literature. Its traditional lyric poetry was originally composed in Sanskrit. It consists of 122 stanzas. It is one of Kalidasa's most famous literary works. It is divided into two parts, Purvamegha (previous cloud) and Uttamegha (consequent cloud). This significant piece of literature is an illustration of richness that showcases Kalidasa's talent and knowledge. It highlights Kalidasa's contribution to the environment as Meghaduta. This literary work is environment-based, and each stanza addresses a different ecological topic. The poem explores a passionate relationship between a husband and wife even after their separation. Various agents of nature intervene to unite lovers while Gods attempt to stifle human love and feeling and punish them by exiling them.

The changing nature of the seasons has an impact on how people think about love. Monsoon season, often known as the rainy season, offers freshness to the environment and profound affection between lovers. The clouds' movement from one area of the sky to other causes rain and sends a message of love to lovers and those who are dear to them. Loved ones anticipate their love with tremendous anticipation. In "Meghaduta," the lover and his devoted wife are in a committed relationship. But a crisis quickly arises in their relationship. Yaksha's employer, Kubera, the Hindu deity of riches, was dissatisfied because he failed to uphold his responsibility to safeguard the lotus garden assigned to his care. Yaksha destroyed every lotus in the garden as he was involved in love with his bride, Airavata, the elephant of Indra.

Yaksha is unconcerned with anything that happened before him.

When Kubera learns of this, he is enraged and punishes Yaksha for his transgression. Yaksha is exiled for a year from Alaca, the city of Yakshas, to Ramagiri Mountain in Central India.

Yaksha is thus cut off from his house and his beloved wife. Even if Kubera physically separates Yaksha from his beloved wife, their love is unbounded. In whatever situation, their love is unwavering because its genuine source of inspiration lies in their heart.

"Megha," or the cloud, feels sympathy for them because of their miserable situation. Yaksha ultimately gets "Megha," to agree to tell his wife how much he loves her. The Himalayan Mountains' "Megha," travels from south to north toward Mount Kailasa's Alaka to represent Yaksha's exile-related emotions and circumstances. The woman in love understands that even if her husband lives far away, he never forgets about her. He continues to become closer to his adored wife. They hope to meet soon. This message of peace elevates the poetry in the modern era.

Here, inanimate natural objects are shown as living things. The poet has chosen the cloud, or "Megha," to serve as his poetic emissary or love messenger. The entire story of love, separation, suffering, and union is told in Kalidasa's "Meghaduta." The narrative centres on a Yaksha and his devoted wife.

The poem's first lines are what cause Yaksha's emotional breakdown:

“Where Ramagiri’s shadowy woods extend,  
And those pure streams where Sita bathed, descend;  
Spoiled of his glories, severed from his wife,  
A banished Yacsha passed his lonely life;  
Doomed by Cuvera’s anger to sustain,  
Twelve tedious months of solitude and pain.”

(Page-23, Verse-1-6)

The soul of Yaksha remains passionate in exile. His craving is further intensified in the lines:

“Long on the mass of mead-reviving dew, the heavenly exile fixed his eager view;  
And still the melancholy tear surpress’d,  
Though bitterest sorrow wrung his heaving breast.”

(Page-24, Verse-15-18)

In Ramagiri Ashrama, Yakṣa has spent his time restlessly and consoled himself by remembering the sweet memory of the days past. The sweet memory of love acts as a soothing balm in the heaviest breast of Yakṣa in exile. He is well aware that his wife eagerly waits for his return. Lovelorn Yakṣa decides to send the message of his return to his beloved wife. He makes a prayer to the “megha” or cloud to carry this message to his beloved wife: “The Yakṣa thus the cloud majestic prayed.” (Page-25, Verse-36)

Yakṣa considers “megha” or cloud as his friend and confidant as he confides

“Hail! Friend of Indra, counselor or divine, Illustrious offspring of a glorious line;

Wearer of shapes at will; thy worth I know, And bold entrust thee with my fated woe.”

(Page-25, Verse-37-40)

The “megha” travels a long way to reach the city of Alaka to deliver the message to Yakṣa’s wife. Yakṣa is very much confident that the “megha” or cloud will do it. The “megha” or cloud only can help him in his distress:

“Thou art the wretch’s aid, affection’s friend! To me unfortunate, thy succour lend; My lonely state compassionate behold, Who mourn the vengeance of the God of gold.”

(Page-25, Verse-43-46)

Yakṣa has given the “megha” a wide and vivid description on the way to the city of Alaka. The “megha” travels a long way to the city of Alaka. When the “megha” reaches the city of Alaka, Yakṣa’s beloved wife is eagerly waiting looking forward the way of her husband Yakṣa’s return. The pain of their separation makes her sick. Lovers are true in their love. This restlessness increases as consciousness in Yakṣa’s mind and forces him to describe the passion of love. He has completed eight of the twelve months of his exile.

Yakṣa brings back pleasant recollections of the times he spent with his devoted wife and believes that as his life partner, she has taken up half of his soul. She learns about her husband’s sincere and devoted love. This lyric poetry shows how Yakṣa suffers the agony of separation after having been exiled from Alaka. The graphical descriptions of nature and topographical details of ancient India have been shown in the lyric by Kalidasa.

There are a number of poems which deal with the environmental themes but this lyric of Kalidasa namely, “Meghaduta” is entrenched with the environmental theme from the beginning to the end. Literature plays an important role to ameliorate the environmental crisis. It conveys a message to human beings that living with nature and extracting limited resources is the only source to live in harmony and peace. Nature has been the theme of earlier writings, but serious concern of ecology seems to be lacking in the earlier works.

There are lots of ecocritical concerns in the midst of this poetry. The study of Meghaduta from an ecocritical perspective begins with the depiction of the landscape. Kalidasa’s “Meghaduta” has defined the path of cloud from Ramagiri to Alaka city through Yakṣa’s instruction to cloud. This lovely journey pictures nature, as Himalaya, Rajhansh, Kailash Mountain, birds, animals, flowers, trees, lakes, forests, rivers, stars, moon, sun, clouds etc. These elements represent beauty of nature and physical environment. The journey of cloud encompasses nature from sky to earth. It involves the phenomena of natural environment like the changing seasons.

The wandering of Rama while in exile serves as an inspiration for the cloud's fictitious odyssey. Kalidasa goes in the opposite way because he is fully informed of the Monsoon wind direction. Kalidasa has done a fantastic job in describing Avanti and its surroundings. The poet was born in Ujjayini, the Avanti nation's capital. He therefore uses his own experiences to relate this geographically ideal segment.

Kalidasa's understanding of the genesis, make-up, and progression of the monsoon cloud is likewise highly excellent. Clouds are made up of four ingredients: water, wind, electricity and smoke. The last destination of the cloud is believed to be the celestial city Alaka in the Himalayas. This indicates that the poet is also familiar with the final destination of Monsoon. The Yaksha advises the cloud to collect water from few big rivers such as Reva and Vetra.

Kālidāsa mentions that clouds are across its journey and get rejuvenated. On the other side, the cloud is also instructed to rain over dryer river such as Vananadī . So, the poet has clear concept of the river systems of Avanti and their seasonal flow. Various times, the Yaksha instructs the cloud to gain height to move faster. This indicates that the poet knew the fact that the Monsoon winds accelerate with the increase in height.

The Cloud Journey of Ramagiri to Alkapuri represents the relationship between men and nature. The writing of Kalidasa expresses the basic idea of human culture which is interconnected to physical world. Kalidasa stresses on environmental justice to a large extent.

The poet makes us aware of the necessity of forests for the development of the human society in terms of the social, historical, economic and cultural aspects. Eco-criticism is an authentic and recently developing literary theory. The protection of the environment is very important for human and non-human society. Indian Ancient Poet Kalidasa has defined the importance of environment for human being.

The poem also suggests that human beings are an integral part of nature. Yaksha's wife fosters Mandar tree which shows how people care for trees. She makes peacocks dance with clapping of her hands with jingling of her bracelets. It suggests that how people interact with animals and birds. This value system and ethics are suggested in the poem. The poem reforms modern sensibility of people to take care of flora and fauna.

Literature is the medium to reflect the current problems of society. The development of science and technology has taken the world to the summit of progress. But the lives of humans are in danger. Eco-criticism alerts the society through literary works to sensitize these problems. At present, the world suffers from the problem of the global warming. We see slogans like 'Save environment and trees'. The population of birds and animals is decreasing. Although at periphery, this poem sounds like a purely love poem, Kalidasa gives indirect suggestion to preserve nature and to take care of birds and animals. There is a latent inspiration for afforestation. Only forests promote rainfall and help to maintain ecological balance.

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