



# PHILOSOPHY AND SPIRITUALITY IN THE SELECT ORAL TEXTS FROM AWADH

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## ABSTRACT

*The present paper offers some cultural texts collected from Awadhi orature. The purpose of the work is to sensitise the readers to the rich storehouse of knowledge in the margins. The study of the texts of folklore and oral tradition appears as a potent mechanism to reconstruct ancient beliefs, customs, and rituals and to know the mystic tradition of our ancestors. A close reading of folklore can help us gain a better understanding of the culture from which we came. The present paper offers a record of select oral texts and their English renditions with a comment.*

**Key Words:** *Folklore, Awadh, Philosophy and Spirituality*

## INTRODUCTION

The study of oral texts and folklore is still struggling to find a forward vision in academia. It is generally marginalised in academic chambers, but it has a lot to say. The cultural texts, offer an alternative version of life. Postmodernism has focused on the study of local histories and marginality, and we find different alternative modes of looking at things. In this context, I find it appropriate to cite, Martha Rosler, who states that, "it is only on the margins that one can still call attention to what the 'universal system' leaves out." (qtd. in John Tagg, 'Postmodernism and the Born-Again Avant-Garde'4).

I have collected some cultural texts from the Oratures and Folklore of the Awadh region in Uttar Pradesh. I understand that folklore can be used as a mechanism to reconstruct ancient

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beliefs, customs, and rituals and to know the mystic traditions of our ancestors. A close reading of folklore can help us gain an understanding of our ancestors' culture. The present paper does not aim at providing any theoretical analysis. Its aim is to offer a glimpse of cultural texts collected from Awadhi orature . It should sensitise the readers to the rich storehouse of knowledge in the margins.

### **Cultural Text 1**

*Gat kaisann kaisan banaay dehev man kai  
Katnev punn se mila ev sarira  
Apan aatma ma bhagwan kai dera ,  
Chhiti hiyan hai , jal ,agni hai ,  
Gagan hiyan hai , hiyan sameera  
Gat kaisan kaisan banaay dehev man ka  
Katanev hu punya se mila iv sarira ,  
Gat ho kaisi kaisi banaay dehev ihki,  
Katnev punn se mila ev sarira  
Apan aatma ma bhagwan kai dera.*

**The following is the English translation of the preceding text:**

What a state you have made of conscience!  
Of so noble deeds this body is attained,  
In our conscience there is Almighty's abode.  
Your body is composed of Panchbhootas.  
*Chhiti , Jal, Pawak, Gagan and Sameer,*  
What a state you have made of conscience!  
Of so noble deeds this body is attained,  
But what a plight you have made of it.  
This body has accomplished noble deeds.  
It is the abode of the Almighty God.

This cultural text comments on the loftiness of human life , which is a result of noble deeds in different chakras of life. It is the result of good Karma . The human body is made of the Panchbhootas; *Chhiti* (the earth ) , *Jal* (water ) , *Pawak*(fire), *Gagan*(sky) and *Sameer*(air) but the human being has forgotten its importance , and has been involved in the deeds of lack of thoughtful conscience.

### **Cultural Text 2**

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*Apanen thaauri par apan aatima ,  
Kaahe badhayav tum doori bittan beeta,  
Jagannath se laga lastaga , din raati din ,  
Ishwer se eiv baat karat hai ,  
Kaahe bhooli gayev baatan ka itta !  
Rishi muni boli gaye bol har taraf ,  
Sagre muluk ke , sag jug kere khaatir.  
Aapan dharti au aapne andar thauri .  
Sab kuchh , sab kuchh sab milihain aapne andar,  
Kahav sunav sab panen se ,  
aur sunav tatolav sab apanen ma.*

**The following is the English translation of the preceding text:**

*Our soul is safe in our own home.  
For what reason have you kept your distance?  
An association with the Almighty is seen,  
all through the night and day.  
The soul communicates with the Almighty,  
Why have you forgotten the facts so much!  
The saints have spoken of this fact far and wide.  
For the whole nation, for the world across  
Our earth is important and so is our own conscience.  
Everything one should get within one's self.  
Communicate this with all the creatures there,  
And then get everything within yourself.*

This cultural text speaks of the relationship between the soul and the oversoul. People are forgetting the close bond that exists between the two, and in place of the realisation of the self , they keep on wandering in the wilderness of thoughts and assumptions in the world. It shows the mystic rendition of folk lore and the life and values concerned.

### **Cultural Text 3**

*Paanch darab hain Chhiti , jal pawak ,  
Apane urr ma gagan , sameer ,  
In sab se hai mili kai hum sabkai  
Bhagwan se mila sareer .  
Panchbhoot kahi ge vigyani ,*

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*Gyani ei kai naam ,  
Hum yahika hi guru maan lain  
Eiv ishwar kera dhaam .  
Rahai sadaiv dhara parkashit  
Bhagwan kere intajam se ,  
Rahai ek Ishwar kai mahima ,  
Kaam karai niskaam se.*

**The following is the English translation of the preceding text:**

Our body is made of these five substances.  
The five eternal essences are:  
earth , sky, and air within .  
In a proper proportion of all these,  
We got our bodies as blessings of the over-soul .  
The wise men call this Panchbhoota.  
Let's take this as our Guru ,  
in the name of Almighty God.  
The whole earth sees light ,  
as the blessings of God.  
Let the blessings of the Almighty remain so,  
and we keep doing our work with selflessness.

Again, this cultural text talks about the Panchbhoota, the five eternal essences of this cosmos. It focuses on the importance of our body, which is an abode of the eternal soul. The body observes all potential and keeps signalling the good or bad. Human beings can live a meaningful life on this Earth by understanding it as Guru.

#### **Cultural Text 4**

*Birawa paalav , pankshi chiriya,  
Sab apne bhai bandhu sunav  
Sabke jera ma bhagwan hain ,  
sab ishwar ker vardaan sunav .  
duniya kere kan kan ma  
bahgawat naam anant suno ,  
jauni looki se hum parkashit ,  
wahi se jagat anant sunav .  
sari dhara par tej chamkta*

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*Ahkleshawar kera naam suno,  
gahav anant anadi roop ka,  
Kaunav na aaur prayatn karau .  
Birawa paalav , pankshi chiriya,  
Sab apne bhaiv bandhu sunav  
Sabke jera ma bhagwan hain ,  
sab ishwar kere prayatn sunav .*

**The following is the English translation of the preceding text:**

*The fauna and flora are all here.  
All these observe eternal fraternity.  
They cherish the eternal soul within,  
and here remains the Almighty's blessing.  
In all the particles of the earth ,  
There is the eternal name of God.  
The flame that lights me, hey listen,  
It does the same for the entire world.  
The aura of the Almighty shows  
Throughout the universe,  
Concentrate on His omnipotent and omniscient form.  
And do not move to other courses.  
The fauna and flora are all here  
All these observe eternal fraternity.  
They cherish the eternal soul within,  
and here remains the Almighty's blessing.*

We find that the narrator focuses on the eternal fraternity of fauna and flora. Everyone on this earth cherishes the eternal soul within, and it all remains intact as the blessings of the Almighty. Every particle on this earth is lit by the Almighty God , and therefore, there is a common bond of fraternity and oneness in this universe .

### **Cultural Text 5**

*Idhar udhar dola bhatka man ,  
ant samay pachhitawa ,  
inse poochhis , unse poochhis  
sabse poochhis ,*

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*bharam na oo meti pava .  
Idhar oo dola,udhar oo dola  
kheda kheda fira oo sab tak  
kahun na shanti pava .  
jab oo aapan man ma jhankis ,  
man ma santi pava.  
Kheda kheda fira oo sab tak  
kahun na man sukh pava .  
The conscience has deviated this way or that ,  
and had complete repentance in the end.  
interrogated this or that and everything  
but couldn't remove the disillusionment .  
He went this way, that way, and kept chasing her.  
but couldn't find peace anywhere.*

**The following is the English translation of the preceding text:**

In the form of a Bhajan , this text also focuses on the importance of one's own self. Our soul observes eternal light under the system of the over soul.

### **Cultural Text 6**

*Gahe rahav jatan se ho prabhu kaa naam,  
Naav wahi hai , thav wahin hain ,  
Wahi khevaiya , wahi patvaar.  
Gahe rahav jatan se ho prabhu kaa naam.  
Ekav chhin jab bisar oo jayihain ,  
Kahoon ma milihai chhanv,  
Re man sun, kahoon ma milihai chhanv.  
Gahe rahav jatan se ho prabhu kaa naam.*

**The following is the English translation of the preceding text:**

*Hey remember carefully the name of Almighty ,  
He is the boat and the destination too,  
He is the ship's sailor and helmsman.  
Hey, hold it so tight, in the name of the Almighty ,  
Even for a moment, if he moves ,  
There will be no solace anywhere.  
Hey there, conscience.*

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*Solace is found nowhere.*

*Hey, hold it so tight , the name of the Almighty .*

This cultural text states the sacred state of chanting the name of the Almighty. He is the source of the journey of human beings on earth, and he sails it, acts as a rudder, and takes us safely to the designed destination. Human beings should exercise the utmost care to be associated with the glory of God.

The cultural texts in Orature offer a rich storehouse of popular belief and faith. Many times, it is seen that the religious beliefs of common folk are more inclusive and deep. They believe in the eternal goodness and fraternity of the cosmos. Orality is the symbol of culture and identity . Citing Jayalaxmi, Phurailatpam, we can state that, "orality is often considered a symbol of culture and identity." Oral tradition has been preserved through the ages. It may take the form of not only the narrative genres like myths, legends, anecdotes, jokes, fairy tales, ballads, epics, proverbs, and riddles, but also folk painting, folk costumes, folk theatre, etc." (Jayalaxmi, 2010/09/11). It is the need of the hour that we explore such cultural texts in different regions. The study of such texts will help us establish unity among the various people living in the same country, as well as provide us with a sense of cultural pride.

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