

## KOEL

Puran Singh

I

- A. Work in a small group and answer the following questions briefly:**
- 1. Which is your favourite bird? Why do you like it for?**  
– For its colour, melodious voice, beautiful appearance, usefulness or something else?

## KOEL

Koel! what lightning fell? what singed thy wings?

What keeps thee fresh, yet charred?

Concealed in the mango-leaves, thou singest!

Thy high-pitched strains wake in my soul a  
thousand memories!

5

Why so restless that thy spark-shedding notes  
go forth kindling fire?

Lo! The roses are on fire which winds and  
waters catch!

The shades of mangoes burn!

10

What a rain of sparks art thou, O little Bird!  
Koel! what lightning fell? what singed thy wings?

**B.1. 1. Write 'T' for true and 'F' for false statement:**

1. The Koel is called the black cuckoo.
2. The Koel sings in the apple - leaves.
3. The song of the cuckoo brings a thousand memories.
4. The poet does not become restless to hear its voice.
5. "Thy wings" means "your wings".

**B.1.2. Answer the following questions very briefly:**

1. Who wrote the poem Koel?
2. What do "thy" and "art" stand for?
3. What wakes thousand memories in heart?
4. What happens with the shades of mangoes?
5. "O little Bird!" Why has 'B' in 'Bird' capital here?

II

The Fire of Love has charred my wings, and  
made me anew

I am restless! Where is my Beloved?

15

The sight of mango-blossoms fires me all the more!  
The greener the garden, the brighter burns my heart!

My flaming soul asks, "Where? where is my Beloved?"

"Speak! speak! why are thy leaves so still?" 20

**B.2. Answer the following questions very briefly:**

1. What charred the wings of the Koel?
2. Why is the Koel restless?
3. What fires the Koel?
4. What burns her heart?
5. What does the flaming soul of the Koel ask?

**GLOSSARY AND NOTES**

**lightning** (n) : flash of light

**charred** (adj) : burnt and became black

**conceal** (v) : to keep secret, to hide

**pitch** (n) : the standard degree of acuteness of a sound that makes it a high note or low

**strain** (n) : a melody

**shed** (v) : to throw off

**kindling** (v) : to set on fire

**thy** (pro) : your

**art** (v) : are

**thou** (pro) : you

**singest** (v) : sing

**C.1. LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS**

1. In response to the speaker's question." What singed thy wings?"

The Koel replies, "The fire of love has charred my wings." What does the Koel's answer suggest? Can love burn like fire? Is this

burning a positive thing or a negative one? Explain.

2. Why does the poet call the Koel “a rain of sparks”? Explain.
3. Why is the Koel restless? Is she able to win over her restlessness? If no, Why?
4. Why is the Koel praised? How do you feel when you hear its voice?
5. Do you think that the Koel symbolises true love?

## C.2. GROUP DISCUSSION

**Discuss the following in groups or pairs:**

1. Nature always soothes our aggrieved soul.
2. We always look forward to meeting whom we love.

## C.3. COMPOSITION

1. Write a paragraph in about 100 words on each of the following:
  - (i) A caged bird finds it difficult to sing.
  - (ii) The cuckoo’s voice.
2. Write a letter to your friend describing how a koel though black in appearance stands for the sweetness of the soul.

## D. WORD STUDY

### D.1. Dictionary Use

Look up a dictionary and write two meanings of the following words- the one in which it is used in the lesson and the other which is more common:

kindling,  
flame,

spark,  
char,

strain,  
wing

D.2. What words do you use for 'they', 'thou', 'thee', 'singest', and 'art', in modern English?

D.3. Write the synonyms of the following words:

keep

little

speak

conceal

freedom

sight

### E. ACTIVITY

Do a project work on five singing birds which are found in your locality.

### F. TRANSLATION

Translate unit 1 of 'Koel' (text before the questions in box) in Hindi or any other language that you know.

Koel! what lightning fell? what singed thy wings?

What keeps thee fresh, yet charred?

Concealed in the mango-leaves, thou singest!

Thy high-pitched strains wake in my soul a  
thousand memories!

\*\*\*