# *Malhor:* A Type of Work Song in Western Uttar Pradesh, India[1]

## By

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In Western Uttar Pradesh, India, sugar cane is a major cash crop, and the process of converting the raw cane into the crude sugar called *gur,* is one that involves many men in cooperative labor during the winter sugar harvest season. The sugar presses, owned jointly by groups of cultivators, are located outside the village. At these presses, called *kolhūs,* groups of cultivators gather, providing their labor on a cooperative basis and bringing teams of bullocks to turn the huge press. In the area where this research was done, these cultivators include members of Brahman, Jāt, Raya Rājpūt and other castes. Members of certain service castes also work at the sugar presses: Camārs (traditional leatherworkers) put the fuel into the large pit oven used to boil the sugar cane juice; Dhīvars, the water-carriers or basketmakers in this area, prepare *gur* from the cooked juice. These workers formerly did their tasks as part of the reciprocal economic exchange of the *jajmānī* system;[2] now, however, they work, at least in part, for cash wages. One farmer sits under a plank, joined to the iron press, which is turned

    2. See William T. Wiser, *The Hindu Jajmani System,* Revised Edition (Lucknow, 1959) and Thomas O. Beidelman, *A Comparative Analysis of the Jajmani System* (New York, 1959).

by the bullocks. One tends the large earthen pot, placed in a hole in the ground, which receives the fresh juice. Behind the press itself, another collects the discarded sugar cane fibers. Groups of men, each made up from four or more peasant families, take twenty-four hour turns in this venture, which occupies them throughout the four long winter months.

In order to remain alert through the nights the men sing a particular type of song, called *malhor, palhāvā* or *gāhā*. This kind of song is a short couplet, complete and independent within itself. Anyone may sing; the songs are sung solo, but generally all present take a turn sometime during the night. As one of my informants put it, "Whenever you are in a really colorful mood, with five or six young men around, you begin to sing *palhāvās*." The style of singing is loud and energetic. The best singer is the one with a strong voice and the force to bring emotions to the surface, and these are the qualities that are admired by the enthusiastic audience. Each singer is urged by the others to "beat out" the tune with remarks such as:

| | |
|---|---|
| *bahot jor ka: rahgya:* | That was really very forceful! |
| *hã: ka: dh de dharti: ka baḷ* | Beat out all the strenght you find in the ground! |
| *pahlai: pahlha:ve geren̩ de*[3] | /Everything else later,/ first let him sing *palhavas!* |

Each evening the singing begins with one or more invocational songs. Following these, malhors of any of the other types are sung. While in the background the man prodding the oxen makes a loud "burr-burr', and the man near the *kolhū* shouts for another bundle of sugar cane, while another farmer shouts for a change of bullocks and the Dhīvar is urged to empty the full pot, a singer raises his voice strong and high, and his song echoes for miles through the cold night air:

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *dhan* | *kheṛe* | *ke* | *bhu:miya:* | *dhann* | *basa:vanha:r* |
| bravo | hamlet | of | a local god | bravo | founder |
| *dhan* | *kheṛe* | *ke codhari: kheṛa: basai* | | | *gulja:r* |
| bravo | hamlet | of headman hamlet be settled | | | beautiful, flowery |

    Praise to the hamlet and its god,
    Praise to the one who founded it,
    Praise to the headman of the hamlet,
    May your hamlet be prosperous and beautiful (like a garden).

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    3. The colon is used here to indicate vocalic length, and corresponds to the horizontal line above the vowel (ā, ī, ū) used for the same purpose in the body of this paper and customarily in the transliteration of Indian languages.

Since several groups may be working simultaneously in widely separated fields, two or more singers in different groups may alternate in their singing. Particularly certain pairs of *malhors* which consist of the theological questions and answers or which are linked by their subject matter, may be sung in this way.

2. *koṇ   jagat   mãi   ek   hai   koṇ   jagat   mãi   doy*
   who   world   in   one   is?   who   world   in   two?
   *koṇ   jagat   mãi   ja:gat:       koṇ   rahya:       paṛ   soy*
   who   world   in   is awakke?   who   remained   lying   slept?

3. *ra:m   jagat   mãi   ek   hai , canda:   su:raj   doy ,*
   Rama   world   in   one   is , moon   sun   two ,
   *pa:p   jagat   mãi   ja:gta:   , dharam   rahya:       paṛ   soy .*
   sin   world   in   is awake , *dharma*   remained   lying   slept .

Who is one in the world?  Who are two?
Who is awake in the world, who is sleeping?
God is one in the world, Sun and moon are two.
Sin is awake in the world, *dharma* is sleeping.

In structure, the *malhors* can be divided into three parts. First are the words used for tuning, which are not counted in the meter, and which are frequently drawn out long and musically ornamented. Such words are "e-jī", "are" (simply exclamations), *bīrā* (brother), or *kahī* (somewhere). One or more of these words precedes the main body of the song. This part of the *malhor* tells a simple story, asks some questions, or expresses some philosophical thought. It consists of two lines, in a standard metrical form, called *dohā*, which is described below. The final part of the *malhor* is the refrain, which consists of a standard phrase:

...*meri:   ba:vaḷi:   malhor*          ... [this is] my silly nonsense

Although our informants modestly protested their ill-training in the refinements of poetic meter, and called their *malhors* simply *tukbe se mila:ṇe*, "putting a little rhyme together", the recorded songs are almost perfect examples of the traditional literary Hindi meter called *dohā*. This is perhaps the oldest meter in Hindi poetry. It is first used by Kālidāsa in his fifth century play *Vikramorvashī* in the language of Apabhramsha, or Old Hindi, which according to most authorities was the language of the common people of that time, as opposed to the language of the elite classes. *Dohā* soon achieved the popularity in

Apabhramsha which *shloka* meter achieved in classical Sanskrit, and which *gāthā* enjoyed in the Prākrit language. Each of these meters consists of two (equal) parts, and as Sanskrit writers made extensive use of *shloka* even in non-literary writings like those on medicine and grammar, Hindi writers used *dohā* for the same purposes. Through the medium of *dohā*, a single thought is expressed in one couplet. Many anthologies are available, collections of independent *dohās*; among them collections of the *dohās* of Kabīr, Bihārī, Tulsīdās, Rahīm and Vrind are very much in vogue among Hindi-speaking people. With the exception of Bihārī, these poets wrote ethical *dohās*, but Bihārī used this form to convey feelings and emotions of every kind. Tulsīdās used *dohā* meter in his famous *Rāmcarit-mānas* (*the Holy Lake of Rama*), more popularly known as *Rāmāyana*. The same tradition of using *dohā* along with the *caupāī* meter in a literary epic occurs in modern times in Dvaraka Prasad Misra's *Krisṇāyana* (*Life of Krishna*). In folk poetry *dohā* meter is commonly used as an introduction to a new subject or a new song. The singers of *sāng*,⁴ a Hindi folk opera, introduce their performance with one or more couplets in this meter and almost all *bhajan* or devotional singers and singers of ballads begin in the same way. *Dohā* is without doubt the most popular meter in both classical and folk poetry in the Hindi-speaking area.

As its name suggests, *dohā* or *dohara* (two-fold), is a meter divided into two equal hemistichs. Each hemistich consists of 24 *mātrās* or instants. A *mātrā*, which literally means quantity or weight, is defined by the time comsumed in uttering a "short" vowel, that is the vowels /a/, /i/, and /u/, and the terminative juncture. The vowels /a:/, /i:/, /u:/, /e/, /ai/ and /o/ are considered "long" vowels, and are counted as two *mātrās*. Furthermore, when a short vowel is preceded by a non-semi-vocalic consonant cluster, it counts as two *mātrās*. In poetry, the long vowels /e/ and /o/ are often contracted in pronunciation and are therefore counted as one *mātrā* only. They may even be replaced by /i/ and /u/ respectively.

The 24 *mātrās* of each hemistich are grouped into two parts, the first containing 13, the second containing 11 *mātrās*.

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4. Ved Prakash Vatuk and Sylvia Vatuk, "The Ethnography of *Sāng*, a North Indian Folk Opera", *Asian Folklore Studies* XXVI (1967), p. 37.

Each hemistich must end in a short vowel and rhyme. The following example will illustrate the metrical form:

4, *pa:tta*  *ṭuṭṭya:*  *ḍa:l(a)*  *tai*  *, le*  *ga'i*  *pavan(a)*  *uḍa:y(a)*
  2  2    2  2    2  1    2     2     1 1   1 1   1  1 2   1
  leaf     broke    branch  from , taking went  wind      flying

*ab(a)*  *ke*  *bichaṛe*  *na:*  *milãi ,*  *du:r(a)*  *paṛãige*  *ja:iy(a)*
 1  1    2  1  1 2    2    1 2   2     1 2 2   2   1
 now    of  separated not  meet , far     will fall having gone

> The leaf fell from the branch,
> The wind blew it away,
> "After this separation we will never meet again,
> Far far away I will go."

[For the purpose of indicating clearly the *mātrā* count, the short /a/ following a final consonant has been included in the transliteration of this example, thus *pavan(a)*, rather than *pavan*, etc.]

With the exception of the invocational verses, the *malhors* in this collection fall into three categories, in terms of their subject content. The first category is that of the theological riddle, an example of which has been given above, and another of which may be found in the Appendix, Part II. This type of *malhor* occurs in pairs, the first *malhor* containing the riddle question, the second its answer. There are few of this type in my collection. A second category includes those *malhors* which tell of an event or situation in human life; the majority of those deal with love problems (notably the situation of separation from the beloved), but many are statements of a philosophical or ethical nature; others refer to such things as the delicacy of kinship avoidance relationships. An example of this type is:

5. *kagge*  *cuṇ cuṇ*  *kha:iye*  *tan*  *ka:*  *sa:ra:*  *mã:s*
   crow   selected eat      body of  whole  meat

   *do*  *naina:*  *nat*  *kha:iye*  *paiya:*  *milan*  *ki:*  *a:s*
   two  eyes  do not eat     darling meeting of  hope

> O crow, you may eat the whole meat from my body
> Choosing whatever you wish
> But I pray to you not to eat my two eyes
> There is still hope of meeting with my lover.

In some *malhors* of this type, traditional stories from the Epics and the Purāṇas are related, or incidents from the popular Epic literature are referred to:

6. *ikali:*  *lakaṛi:*  *na:*  *jalai ,*  *na:y*  *uja:ḷa*  *hoy*
   single  stick     not  burns  not  light    be

| *lachman* | *bi:ra* | *ma:rkai* | , *ra:m* | *akela:* | *roy* |
|-----------|---------|-----------|----------|----------|-------|
| Lakshmana | brother | having(been)killed | , Rama | alone | weeps |

A single stick will not burn,
There will be no light.
A brother like Lakshmana having been killed,
Rāma weeps alone.

Further examples may be found in the Appendix, 11–51.

The third category consists either of secular riddles (not to be confused with the theological riddles discussed above), or of apparent nonsense rhymes, with no discernable meaning. *Malhors* of this type have in fact a deep philosophical meaning, beyond that of "nonsense" or the "answer" of the secular riddle. Such a meaning refers to basic religious or philosophical premises shared in the culture; the tradition of expressing significant thoughts about life and the nature of the world in the guise of nonsense is an ancient one in India, and will be discussed more fully below.

| 7. | *ba:bal* | *mera:* | *bya:h* | *karde* | *aṇja:ya:* | *bar* | *lya:y* |
|----|----------|---------|---------|---------|------------|-------|---------|
|    | father   | my      | marriage | do     | unborn     | groom | bring   |

| *aṇja:ya* | *bar* | *na:* | *milai* | *tera:i* | *mera:* | *bya:h* |
|-----------|-------|-------|---------|----------|---------|---------|
| unborn    | groom | not   | found   | *yours*  | mine    | marriage |

Father arrange for my marriage
Bring me an unborn groom
If you can not find an unborn groom
Let there be a marriage between *you* and me.[5]

The Appendix, 52–59, provides further examples of this type.

These three categories of *malhors*, while not distinguished as such by the folk, seem to be traceable to three diverse traditions in the folk and literary poetics of Hindi and Sanskrit. The three words used—interchangeably—by the folk for this type of song, are clearly also evidences of the merging of these somewhat separate traditions into the distinct folksong genre of the *malhor*. A discussion of this phenomenon sheds considerable light on the extensive cross-fertilization of folk and literary traditions which has often been referred to with respect to

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5. Here the father is *Brahman*, the self is *ātman*, marriage is union. If no other unborn (and thus immortal) entity is found, then inevitably the soul (*ātman*) must be absorbed by the Supreme Soul (*Brahman*).

India as well as to other "peasant" societies.[6]

The tradition of the first type of *malhor* is represented by the word *palhāvā*, which appears to be a derivative of the Sanskrit *pravalhikā*, meaning "riddle". Sanskrit riddles, which appear first in the Rigvedic period, and a number of which are contained in the Mahābhārata, represent the earliest evidence of this still persisting tradition. The theological riddles closest to the *malhor* riddles are found in the Yakshprashna of the Mahābhārata. Here the *yaksha*, a demigod, asks Yudhisthira, eldest of the Pāṇḍava brothers, to solve riddle-questions in order to bring his dead brothers back to life. These questions, and their answers, are contained in a pair of *shlokas* (which corresponds in Sanskrit to the *dohā* of the *malhor*.) The first *shloka* of the pair contains four questions, the second four answers:

> Who is heavier than earth?
> Who is higher than the sky?
> Who is faster than the wind?
> Who is stronger than man?
>
> Mother is heavier than the earth,
> Father is higher than the sky,
> Mind is faster than the wind,
> Worry is stronger than man.[7]

A comparison of this verse with the Example 2 and 3 above and 9 and 10 of the Appendix will demonstrate my assertion that the latter represent a continuation by the folk of this more than two-thousand-year-old literary tradition. It is preserved by the folk not only in the *malhor*, however, but in other folk usages as well. Similar questions are asked by a shaman in this area of a patient believed to be possessed by a ghost. The worship of yakshas (demi-gods) is performed mainly by this type of question and answer. In fact, the word *brahmodaya*, used in Sanskrit for Vedic ritual riddles, has its counterpart in the folk language as "Yaksha question".[8]

The second word for the *malhor* is *gāhā*, which is derived from the Sanskrit *gāthā*. The word *gāthā* was used during the

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6. Robert Redfield and Milton Singer, "The Cultural Role of Cities," *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 3:53–73 (1954); McKim Marriott, "Little Communities in an Indigenous Civilization," In: Marriott, ed., *Village India*, (Chicago, 1955) 171–222.

7. *Mahābhārata*, Vana Parva

8. Vasudev Sharan Agraval, *Prithivī Putra* (Agra, 1960), p. 340.

Vedic period for a verse which did not belong to the main body
of the Vedas. The *gāthā* singers were called *gāthin*, and they
could be said to correspond to the modern folk minstrel singers,
as against the literary poets. The parts of the Buddhist *Jātaka*
Tales which were in poetic form were also called *gāthās*. *Gāthā*
in the Prākrit came to mean both the subject matter of an in-
dependent couplet, and the meter in which it was phrased. The
best example of this kind of literature in Prākrit is Hāla's
*Gāthā Saptashatī*. *Gāthā* is also used in Hindi to mean ballad.

It may be relevant to mention that in the Hindi and Pan-
jabi speaking area, the word for riddle, short poetic ballad and
story is the same. In the Hariana area, near Delhi, when some-
one asks another to solve a riddle, he says "open the fruits of my
story", (*gāhā*).[9] It is perhaps more suitable to translate *gāhā*
as riddle story. The *karma* (or action) of a person is followed
by the fruit of his action; anyone who knows the answer to
*karma's* fruit can solve the riddle of life. As *karma* is the story
of this life, whose fruits are unknown, so is the *gāhā* riddle a
story.

The *gāhā* represents a secular tradition from very early
times, and forms the great body of the modern *malhors*, a
predominance which is illustrated in the texts from this col-
lection. It is interesting to examine these song texts as means of
cultural expression. The majority are love verses—most of the
rest are statements about the nature of the world, framed in
homely language, philosophical in intent, but not obscure in
formulation. An interesting feature of the love verses is the
fact that they describe the love situation almost invariably from
the point of view of the woman. Such a manner of expression
would seem inappropriate in songs which are composed and
sung exclusively by men. Of their male authorship there is little
doubt: the songs are sung only in the setting described, where
women have no role in the work to be done, and where an adult
woman would under normal circumstances never spend the
night. Further evidence of male authorship is the use of the
*dohā* meter, a structural characteristic of male songs in Hindi
folk poetry, never found by me to occur in women's songs in the
Hindi-speaking area or among Indians in British Guiana (where

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9. Shankar Lal Yadav, *Hariyāna Pradesh kā Loksāhitya* (Allahabad,
1960), p. 436.

I have made an extensive folksong collection). The use of this meter appears to be one of the distinctive features of men's versus women's songs in the Hindi folk tradition.

Love songs of this type do not simply *describe* the feelings of a woman in love—they are generally framed in the first person, with feminine verb forms where appropriate:

8. *soti:     thi:  roti:      uṭhi:  , malati:  thi:  do     ā:kh*
   sleeping  was  weeping  got up , rubbing  was  two   eyes

   *supne   mãi  pi:tam   mile , kar   na    saki:  do     ba:t*
   dream  in    beloved  met , do    not   could  two   talks

   > I was sleeping, crying I woke up,
   > I rubbed and rubbed my eyes,
   > In a dream I saw my darling,
   > But could not talk to him.

It is possible to speculate about the possible reasons for the placing of love verses in the mouths of women, although a definitive explanation is difficult to find. One element may be the culturally characteristic notion of the insatiability of the desires of the woman—the notion that a woman's lust is uncontrollable, and that it is she, not the man, who is "by nature" the aggressive partner, the seducer to the love act. Related to this is of course the idea that a woman is untrustworthy, and easily swayed to betrayal by the force of her desires. Proverbs collected in this area on the occasion of this field research illustrate the same point, for example:

   *joru:  jora      ki*
   wife   strength  of

   *ni:  to    or   ki:*
   not  then  else  of.

   > Woman is yours, as long as you control her.
   > Otherwise she will run away with someone else.

Consistent with this notion would be a feeling that it is the woman who is more susceptible to love's pangs, and that therefore such emotions are most appropriate when expressed in woman's voice.

Perhaps more pertinent then this, is the emotional lift that a lovesick woman's yearnings give to the man who can imagine himself to be their object. Thus the manner of framing these verses may be seen as serving as a kind of ego-gratification for the male. To put such sentiments in a man's voice would demon-

strate his weakness—no real man should let the emotions of love and desire overcome him. Though he may freely express—in song and in the casual banter of his equals—the pleasure he derives from sex, and though he is expected to boast of his sexual exploits (no matter how imaginary), it is inappropriate for him to admit discomfort and longing in the absence of the love object. To do so would make him an object of pity rather than of admiration. Such a view is again consistent with the image of woman as weak and dependent on the male for satisfaction, not only sexual satisfaction, but satisfaction of all her material and social needs.

Another significant element of the love *malhors* is that they most commonly describe love not within but outside of marriage. It is not the husband but the lover (*yār*) to whom the woman's yearnings are expressed, whom she tries to attract through jingling ornaments with whom she plans secret meetings. Such romance, in a culture which stresses perhaps more than most the sanctity of the marriage bond and provides the strongest social sanctions against pre-marital and extra-marital love, is clearly appealing to the young and old men, who compose and sing the *malhor*.

But, again, consistent with a dominant theme in Indian literary expression, the *malhor* rarely expresses the joy of union in illicit love. It is rather a lament in the face of hopeless separation. A number of examples may be found in the Appendix.

The other *malhors* which we have grouped according to the category of *gāhā* are those which express philosophical truths, commentaries on the nature of life. The themes expressed are many, but certain notions, consistent with the higher philosophy of Hinduism, but not unique to it, continually recur. Man has come to the world, sent by God—whatever worldly pleasures he may enjoy, whatever worldly goods he may possess, are his only by the will of God. Humility before God and one's fellow man is the greatest virtue. Position, wealth and power are double-edged swords—if not used with wisdom and generosity, they may be the cause of one's downfall. *Māyā*, the illusory sensation that the world and its goods and pleasures are lasting and significant, veils man's understanding of the ultimate truth. *Māyā*, which blinds man to the realization of the true value and purpose of his existence, must be overcome. Man is meant to wor-

ship God, and to worship God is also to worship one's fellow beings, particularly those near and dear: the parents, and, for a woman, the husband. The examples in the Appendix illustrate the expression of these ideas, and reveal the tendency to place philosophy in terms of the ordinary natural phenomena and household objects of the peasant's daily existence.

The third word used for these songs (and the word which occurs in the refrain of all) is *malhor*, derived from the Sanskrit root *malh*, which means "intoxicated with joy." The related word *malho* is used in the dialect of this area in the sense of crazy or nutty, but is used only affectionately. *Malhor* suggests the utterances of mad intoxication. In this tradition we would include those songs which seem on the surface nonsensical —which describe a donkey climbing a palm tree or a daughter giving birth to her father. Here also would be included the secular riddle used as a song. Both types of *malhor* contain an essentially philosophical content, which is to be uncovered by the listener.

Such a manner of expressing philosophical truths is related to an ancient tradition of "divine madness." In Vedic times Aitasha Muni is said to have enjoyed such a state, in which he uttered whatever came into his mind. These poetic utterances, which like the *malhor* have a deeper meaning than the ordinary person would detect, are aclled *Aitasha Pralāpa* (The Ravings of Aitasha) and are collected in the Aiheya Brāhmana. The *turīya avasthā* in yoga philosophy is described as the age when nothing matters and the mind is totally free or divinely mad. Similar in some respects is the Tantric tradition, in which the search for truth leads to unorthodox uses of sex and intoxication. The Hindi poet-saint Kabīr (1440-1518), who has clearly influenced considerably the folk poetic tradition of which the *malhor* is a part, spoke of the state of complete union of the soul (*ātman*) with God (*brahman*) as *gūnge kā gur*, "the sugar of the dumb", who can only express his joy by uttering nonsense. In the *malhor* we find evidence of the absorption of this pattern of thought. The very closing formula of all types of *malhors* is an antithesis which in fact denies all that has been said: "This is my silly nonsense." In the same tradition it is perhaps fitting to close with the words of the greatest of Urdu poets, Mirzā Gālib (1789–1869), when he said:

> *bak*　*raha:*　*hũ:*　　*janũ:*　*mẽ*　*mãi*　*kya:*　*kyͼ*
> *kuch*　*na*　　*samjhe*　*xuda:*　*kare*　*koi:*
>
> Whatever (nonsense) I am uttering in my craze
> May God will that no one understands.

# APPENDIX

## ADDITIONAL TEXTS

9. *koṇ tapasvi:*　*tap*　　*karai,*　*koṇ*　*uthi:*　nit　　*nha:y*
   who ascetic　penance　does　　who　risen　daily　bathes

   *koṇ ratan*　*ras*　　*u:ɡḷe,*　*koṇ*　*ratan*　*sab*　*kha:y*
   who jewel　juice　emits　who　jewel　all　　eats

   > What ascetic does penance (subjecting himself to heat)?
   > Who bathes daily, having arisen?
   > Who emits essence of jewels?
   > Who consumes all jewels?

10. *suraj*　*tapasvi:*　*tap*　　　*karai,*　*birma:*　nit　　*uth*　*nha:y*
    sun　　ascetic　　penance　does　　Brahma　daily　risen　bathes

    *indar*　*ratan*　*ras*　　*u:ɡḷe,*　*dharti:*　*ratan*　*sab*　*kha:y*
    Indra　jewel　juice　emits　Earth　　jewel　all　　eats

    > The ascetic sun subjects himself to heat,
    > God Brahma (the Creator) bathes daily, having arisen.
    > Lord Indra emits essence of jewels,
    > Goddess Earth consumes all jewels.

11. *devi:*　　*ke*　*darba:rmẽ* , *ghaṇṭan*　*ki:*　*ghanghor*
    goddess　of　court　in　　, gongs　　of　resounding
    *mor*　　*papa'iya:*　*ku:kte*　　, *koyal*　*karti:*　　*sor*
    peacocks　wag-tails　are cooing , cuckoo　is making　sounds

    > Gongs resound in the court of the Goddess.
    > Peacocks and wag-tails are cooing and the cuckoo is calling.

12. *devi:*　　*bhavan*　*suha:vana:* , *hariyal*　*pi:pal*　　*la:r*
    goddess　temple　pleasant　　, green　　pipal tree　row

    *paṛai*　*pãja:ḷi*　*pa:t*　　*ki:* , *jhullai*　*ra:jkãva:r*
    hangs　swing　　leaves　of　, swings　prince

    > The temple of the Goddess is pleasant and beautiful,
    > There is a row of green pipal trees.
    > A swing made of leaves hangs (from a branch),
    > The prince swings on it.

13. *satguru      mera:   su:rma: , karai  la:kh    mãi  coṭ      ,*
    true teacher  my      hero   , does   100,000  *in*   charge ,

    *goḷe    ma:rai gya:n     ke , dhaye      bharam ke koṭ  .*
    bombs   hits   knowledge of , shattered illusion of forts .

    My venerable teacher is a real hero,
    He charges among hundreds of thousands,
    He throws grenades of knowledge,
    And shatters the forts of illusion.


14. *ma:re     tai  la:gi:        nahi: , bans            naḷi:  mãi*
    blowing   by   takes effect  not   , bamboo/lineage pipe   in
      *phũ:k*
      blowing/puff

    *guru:   bica:ra:  ke     karai     , celle hi:      mãi cu:k .*
    teacher poor      what   should do , pupil (emphatic) in  lack .

    Blowing air through a bamboo pipe
    Is of no use;
    What can a teacher do
    If the pupil himself is deficient?

    In order to ignite a fire or to cause a fire to burn more brightly, it is usual
to blow through an iron pipe. A bamboo pipe is a poor substitute because the
joints hinder the passage of air, and because bamboo is extremely combustible.
By analogy, a teacher who attempts to kindle the fire of knowledge in the heart
of a pupil of intellectually inferior lineage (*bans*) will meet with failure.


15. *ra:m   na:m  ki:  lu:ṭ  hai , lu:ṭi    ja:y     so    lu:ṭ*
    Rama   name  of   loot  is  , looted  can be   that  loot

    *ek    din   aisa:  hoyaga: , jã:ge    pira:ṇi:  chu:t*
    one   day   so     will be , will go  soul     left

    The name of God is being looted,
    You, loot, whatever you can,
    There will be a day,
    When the soul will leave you.


16. *ra:m   ra:m   to  sab  kahai , dasrath       kahai na   koy*
    Rama   Rama   so  all  say   , Dasharatha    says  not  someone

    *ek   ba:r dasrath       kahai , to    dukh  ka:he ku:  hoy .*
    one  time Dasharatha     say   , then  pain  what  for  be  .

    All recite the name of Rama,
    No one recites the name of Dasharatha,
    If once the name of Dasharatha is remembered,
    What for would there be misery?

    Reference here is to important characters in the Ramayana, a traditional
literary epic. Dasharatha is the father of Rama, the hero of that epic. The
point of the verse is that one ought really to honor the *father*, the living God,
rather than the son.

17. *ra:m   bharose   baiṭhke , sab   ke   mujare     lay⸴ ,*
    God    faith     sitting  , all   of   salutation take ,

    *jaisi:  jiski:   ca:kri: , vaisa:  usko  dey .*
    as     whose   service , so     him   give .

    Having faith in God.
    Accept the salutations of all,
    As is the service of one /to you/,
    So you repay him.

18. *ra:m    ra:m   reṭte     raho , jab    tak   ghaṭ   mẽ   pra:n ,*
    Rama   Rama   reciting   keep , when   till   heart   in   soul  ,

    *kadhi:to di:na:  na:th    ke , bhanak  paṛaigi:  ka:n .*
    sometime-poor    master   of , sound   will fall   ears .

    Keep repeating the Lord's name,
    As long as you live,
    There will be surely coming a time
    When your call will reach the Lord's ears.

19. *ra:m       badha:ye       sab baḍhe , bal    kar*
    Rama/God   made to prosper  all prosper , force  having used
      *badhya:    na koy*
      prospered   not anyone

    *bal   karkai     ra:van badhya: , chan    me di:na: khoy.*
    force  having used Ravana prospered , moment  in   gave  lost .

    With God's will all prosper,
    No one prospers by using force;
    Ravana prospered having used force,
    But lost everything in one moment.

20. *ke      guma:n tannai karya: , jah    kankar karai guma:n*
    what! proud    you    did    , where pebble does   proud

    *kitne     marai apṇi: a:i  , kitnu     ku le  gya: ma:n .*
    how many die   own   come , how many to  take go   proud .

    What! if you have pride, oh man,
    Where every pebble is full of pride
    How many have died when death came?
    How many were killed by their own pride?

21. *ma:ya:  mari:  na   man   mare , mar    mar   gaye   sari:r ,*
    illusion died   not  mind  died , dying  dying went   bodies ,

    *da:sa:    trasna: nahi mari: , kah    gaye da:s kabi:r .*
    wretched  craving not died  , saying went slave Kabir .

    Neither *maya* died nor was the mind satisfied,
    Even if bodies have died, one after the other,
    Wretched cravings don't die out,
    So said /the poet/ Kabir, slave of the Lord.

The main point here is that man continually seeks illusory materialistic gain, rather than trying to understand the true reality of this life. The word *maya* in folk usage refers not only to the philosophical concept of illusory reality, but also to wealth. A recurring theme in folk literature is that it is *dharma* (duty) and *karma* (action) which will go with a man after his death, not his wealth. Therefore, while not denying the necessity to enjoy life, it is said to be futile to crave for excessive wealth.

22. *na:m   ka:m   tap           ru:p     dhan    , ja:ti:   kul   bal*
    name   deed   mortification   beauty   wealth , caste    clan  power
      *gya:*
      knowledge

    *a:ṭh   ci:z   ka:   ba:vaḷe   , mat   ki:je   abhima:n* .
    eight   things   of    ignorant , don't   do     pride    .

    Never be proud of these eight things,
    Oh ignorant man,
    Name, deed, mortification, beauty,
    Wealth, caste-clan, power and knowledge.

23. *kit      boye    kit     u:paje , kaha:   lada:vai   la:d*
    where   sowed   where   grew   , where   fondle      love

    *kudrat   ka:   bya:ra:   nahi: , kaha:   khida:de   ha:d* .
    God       of               not   , where   scatter     bone .

    Where was a man conceived, where was he born,
    And where was he loved and fondled?
    Who knows about the ways of the Lord,
    Where is He going to scatter the bones?

24. *baṛa:   bhaya:   to   kya:   bhaya: , jaise   peṛ   khaju:r*
    big       became   so   what   became , as      tree   date

    *panchi:   ko   cha:ya   nahi: , phal   la:ge   ati   du:r*
    bird       to   shade    not   , fruit   grow    very   far

    What does it matter if you became big,
    Like a date palm,
    The bird gets no shade from it,
    And the fruits are so high.

## MUSICAL NOTATION

This transcription has been made from the recorded version of one of the *malhors* in my collection by Mrs. Lillian Lehman. The *malhor* tune is not rigidly fixed, but all the *malhors* from this region are recognizable as variations of a single tune. This example is typical.



25. *ni:ci:  teri:  jhū:paṛi: , gaḷ  gadhiyū:  ku:  pā:s ,*
    low    your   hut       , neck donkey    to   leash ,
    *karāige  soi  bharāige , tam  kyū:  bhae   uda:s .*
    will do   so   will fill , you  why   became sad   .

    Your hut is on low ground,
    The donkeys about it have leashes around their neck,
    Do not let that make you sad,
    As they sow so they will reap.

26. *ni:kki:   bi:   phi:kki  lagai , bin      mokke   ki:  ba:t*
    excellent even  vapid    seems , without occasion of   remark
    *jaise ban     ras               juddh  mā̃i , ras*
    as    bravery poetic sentiment war    in   , poetic feeling
    *siga:r          na   suha:t*
    ornamentation   not  pleases

    Even an excellent remark sounds vapid,
    When uttered out of place,
    As love songs are appalling in war time
    When poems of breavery are in order.

27. *ambar  mā̃i ta:re khilai  , thal  mā̃i khilai    babu:l*
    sky    in   stars blossom , land  in   blossoms  acacia
    *gori:      ka: jobbaṇ khilai   , khilai    kamal ka: phu:l*
    fair maiden of  youth   blossoms , blossoms  lotus of  flower.

    In the sky the stars blossom,
    Acacia blossoms on the earth,
    A fair maiden's youth blossoms
    Like the blossoming of the lotus flower.

28. *ratan   katori:   ghi:*           *jaḷai  ,  cuḷlhai   jaḷai   kasa:r*
    jewel   bowl     refined butter   burns , hearth   burns   Kasar

    *ghū:gat   mãi   gori:*        *jaḷai   , ya:ṇe   hõ   bharta:r*
    veil        in     fair lady   burns , young   is   husband

    Butter burns in the jewelled bowl,
    Kasar* burns on the hearth
    Behind the veil burns the fair lady,
    Whose husband is /too/ young.

    * A mixture of wheat flour, browned over a fire, with refined butter and sugar. It is often used for the purpose of ritual distributions.

29. *kallar*        *sukki:   kã:gaṇi: ,   ḍheru:   sukke   dha:n,*
    barren land   dried     a grain  ,  piles     dried   paddy,

    *gori:*         *sukki:   ba:p   kai , keḷe     kaisi:   gobh.*
    fair maiden   dried     father   ta  ,  banana   like     sapling.

    In the barren land the *kāngnī* dried up,
    Piles of paddy dried up too,
    A young fair maiden (tender as) a banana sapling,
    Dried at her father's home.

    Reference here is to a young woman whose father has neglected to find a groom.

30. *mahal   jaḷai   ma:ḍhi:   jaḷai , bic      bic      jaḷai   dila:n*
    palace   burns   cottage   burns , middle   middle   burns   front hall

    *ghū:gat   mãi   gori:*        *jaḷai   , jiske   kant        nada:n.*
    veil        in     fair lady   burns , whose   husband   immature.

    The palace burns, the hut burns,
    And so does the front hall,
    In the veil burns the fair young lady,
    Whose husband is ignorantly immature.

31. *joban   tere   laḍua:   karũ:*           *, ras              badh*
    youth   thy   sweets   would make ,  sugar-cane juice   abundance
      *rã:dhu:   khi:r*
      cook        rice-pudding

    *not*        *jima:ũ*        *ba:maṇa: , sagi:   naṇad           ke*
    inviting   would feast   Brahman   true     husband's sister   of
      *bi:r     .*
      brother .

    I would make sweets out of you, oh youth,
    I would make rice-pudding of you, abundant with juice,
    Then I would invite the Brahman and feast him
    Who is no other than the brother of my very own *nanad*.

    In this verse a woman makes methaphoric reference of feasting the Brahman for attaining the goals of *dharma* (virtue, merit) and *kāma* (pleasure). Special sweets (*laduā*) and juicy rice-pudding (*khīr*) are the favorite foods of Brahmans according to local tradition. Reference is made to the husband by teknonymy,

as a woman never refers to or addresses her husband by name or as "my husband". The use of the phrase *nanad ke bīr*—"*nanad's* brother"—rather than "so-and-so's father", the usual manner of reference by a woman who has children, suggests a close relationship with the husband's sister, and an erotic-devotional relationihip with the husband, rather than a relationship which stresses his role as father of her children.

32. *jobbaṇ   tere   ka:rṇai , chọḍḍe   ma:i:   ba:p,*
    youth   your   reason , left   mother   father,

    *sa:ttaṇ   chọḍḍi:   sa:t   ki: , hiraṇa:   bargi:   na:r.*
    companion   left   company   of , deer   like   woman.

    O youth, for you,
    I left my parents,
    I left my childhood sweetheart,
    A deer-like woman.

33. *koṭṭhe   uppar   kọṭhaṛi: , usmãi   ghaṛai   suṇa:r*
    room   above   attic , that in   fashions   goldsmith

    *bičhuve   ghaṛ   de   ba:jṇe , ya:r   suṇai   jhanka:r*
    anklets   fashion   give   jingling , lover   listens   jingle

    In the attic above my room.
    A goldsmith works.
    "Fashion me a pair of jingling anklets
    Whose jingles my lover can hear."

34. *apaṇe   koṭṭhe   mai   khaḍi: , khaḍi:   suka:vu   khes,*
    own   roof   I   stood , stood   drying   hair,

    *ya:r   dikha:i:   de   gaya: , bhar   joggi:   ka:   bhes.*
    lover   seen   given   went , filled   ascetic   of   garb.

    I stood on my roof,
    Stood drying my hair,
    I saw my lover,
    Disguised as an ascetic.

35. *jobaṇ   ca:lya:   ru:skai                         , paṛ   liya:   lambe*
    youth   went away   having become displeased , fall   took   long
        *ra:h*
        path

    *kyukkar   pakarũ:   bha:jkai   , mere   gọḍḍũ   mãi   sat*
    how   should catch   having run , my   knees   in   essence
        *na:h.*
        not.

    Youth is running away, displeased with me,
    He is hurrying away on a long journey,
    How should I run fast and catch him?
    I have no strength in my knees.

36. *jobbaṇ  tha:  jab   ru:p    tha: , ga:hak    the   sab  koy,*
    youth   was   then beauty  was , customers were  all   some,

    *ba:la  ratan  gavã:y  kai , rahi:     nima:ṇi:  hoy.*
    youth   gem   having lost , remained helpless become.

    When I was young and beautiful,
    Every one desired me
    Having lost the gem of my youth
    I am just a poor soul.

37. *bhuḍḍe     pai  khetti:  kari: , boy    caṇe   ka:  sa:g*
    adobe-soil  on   farming  did  , sowed gram  of   green

    *jhuk    jhuk     toɽãi   ka:mni: , dhanna  caṇe  ke  bha:g .*
    bending bending break  beauties , blessed gram  of  fate. .

    They cultivated the adobe soil,
    The chana was sown,
    Lovely women bend over and pick greens,
    How I envy the fortunate chana.

38. *pri:t karai  to    aisi: karai , jaisi: lamb  khaju:r   ,*
    love  does   then such  does  , as     tall  date palm ,

    *caḍhai to    meva:       ca:khle , paɽai to    cakna:*
    climbs then  sweet dry fruit tastes     falls then  shattered

    *cu:r   .*
    pieces .

    Love is like the tall date palm
    Love grows in the way the palm tree grows, tall and long.
    If one climbs, one will enjoy the fruit—sweet and dry,
    If one falls, one will be shattered to pieces.

39. *sa:mmaṇ  a:vaṇ   kan gaye , bi:te    ba:ra:  ma:s    ,*
    Shravan   to come tell went , passed twelve months ,

    *chapar   pura:ṇe ho    gaye , taɽkan   la:ge  bã:s      .*
    thatched old     become went , to crack began  bamboos .

    He promised me that he would come in the month of Shravan
    Twelve months have passed since then.
    Thatched roofs have become old,
    And their bamboos are beginning to crack.

    The month of Shravan (July-August) is in the rainy season. It is con-
    ceived of as the most romantic period of the year. Traditionally, men who are
    employed away from the village will return during this month and a woman
    laments the long-delayed reunion.

40. *nadi: kina:re tokṇi:       , jhilmil jhilmil hoy*
    river on bank a brass jug , blink   blink   becomes

    *tam vhã: ho  ar  ham yahã: , milna: kis  bid hoy .*
    you there are and we  here  , to meet what way be  .

    On the bank of the river,
    My brass water vessel blinks (in the sunlight).

You are there far away and I am here,
I don't know how to meet you.


41. *sissi:*   *bhari:*   *gula:b*      *ki:* , *patthar*   *pai*   *dũ:*   *phoṛ* ,
    bottle   filled   rose-perfume   of , stone     on   give   break ,

    *kaho*   *tumha:re*   *pya:r*   *mãi* , *kha:na:*     *bi:*   *dũ:*   *choṛ* .
    say   your     love   in    , food/eating   even   give   leave .

    The bottle of rose-perfume,
    I would smash on a stone,
    If you said so, I would even give up eating,
    I love you so much.


42. *sissi:*   *bhari:*   *gula:b*      *ki:* , *de*   *bhejũ:*   *kis*     *ha:t* ,
    bottle   filled   rose-perfume   of , give   send    whose   hand ,

    *dhaṛ*          *hama:ra:*   *yhã:*   *paṛya:* , *dil*    *tumha:re*   *sa:t* .
    trunk of body   our/my   here   lay      , heart   your      with .

    The bottle is full of rose-perfume,
    With whom should I send it to you?
    My body lies here,
    But my heart is with you.


43. *jo*   *mãi*   *aisa:*   *jaṇti:*      , *pri:t*   *tare*   *dukh*    *hoy*
    if   I    so    had known , love   done   misery   be
    *nagar*   *ḍhidora:*        *pi:tti:*     , *pri:t*   *na*   *ki:je*
    city    drum-proclamation   had beaten , love   not   do
      *koy*      ,
      someone ,

    If I had only known
    That love brings sorrow,
    I would have proclaimed throughout the town
    That no one should love.


44. *jo*   *mãi*   *aisa:*   *jaṇti:*      , *ã:gaṇ*     *boti:*     *khaju:r*
    if   I    so    had known , courtyard   had sown   date palm
    *uspai*   *caḍhkai*      *dekhti:*    , *sa:jan*      *kitni:*
    on that   having climbed   had seen , lover/husband   how much
      *du:r*
      far

    If I had only known
    I would have sown a date palm in my courtyard,
    I would have climbed on it and seen,
    How far my lover was.


45. *pa:tta:*   *bola:*   *birach*   *tai* , *suṇo*    *birach*   *banra:y*           ,
    leaf    said   tree    to , listen   tree     king of the forest ,

    *abke*      *bichaṛe*    *nai*   *milãi* , *du:r*   *paṭãige*    *ja:y*
    now of   separated   not   meet  , far    will fall   gone

The leaf said to the tree
"Listen, oh tree, king of the forest,
After this separation we will not meet,
I will go far far away."

46. *bircha: bola: pa:t te , sun     pa:tte meri ba:t   ,*
    tree     said leaf to , listen leaf   my     saying ,

    *is    ghar  ki: yahi ri:t      hai , ek   a:vat  ek   ja:t .*
    this house of  this tradition is  , one  comes one goes .

    The tree said to the leaf,
    Listen, oh leaf, to what I say,
    This is the custom of this house,
    That one comes and the other goes.

47. *apṇe  koṭṭai  mai  khaḍi: , taḷai  khaḍya:  mera:*
    own   room's  roof I stood , below stood    my
      *jeṭha,*
      husband's elder brother

    *ḍha:i  pa:ṭ  ka: oḍhaṇa:   , mu: ḍhak lyũ: ak peṭ        .*
    2½    length of  head-shawl , face cover take or stomach .

    I stood on the roof of my room,
    Below stood my husband's elder brother.
    My head-shawl is made of only two and a half lengths,
    Should I cover my face or my belly?

    This verse refers to the traditional avoidance by a woman of her husband's
elder brother. By custom she is required to cover her face in his presence.

48. *ni:r  urai       sarvar parai     , amb  gaye  re  ḍu:b      ,*
    Nir  this side Sarvar that side , Amba went on drowned ,

    *imli: bãja:ra: le    gaya: , ca:rui  bichaṛe   khu:b*
    Imli Banjara take went , all four separated excellently

    Nir is on this side of this river, Sarvar is on that,
    Amba drowned (in the middle),
    Banjara has abducted Imli,
    What a way for all four to be separated!

    This verse recalls a well-known folk tale. See R.C. Temple, *The Legends of
the Punjab,* Vol. III (reprinted, Patiala, 1963), pp. 97–125.

49. *sa:s          maro  susara:      maro , bya:hataṛa: mar*
    mother-in-law die   father-in-law die  , bridegroom die
      *ja:y*
      go

    *mat   mariyo ek  ba:ḍhiya: , carkha:        diya: baṇa:y*
    don't die    one carpenter , spinning-wheel gave  made

    I won't care so much if my mother-in-law or father-in-law die
    Even my bridegrom may die,
    But may the carpenter not die, oh Lord,
    Who has made the spinning-wheel.

Reference here is to the economic importance of the spinning wheel. Its role in a woman's life is heightened by placing it above the lives of her husband and parents-in-law, who in this culture are the most respected and indispensible persons for a woman.

50. *calti:*    *ca:ki:*     *dekhkai*     *, rahe*      *kabi:ra:*   *roy*
    going   gristmill   having seen , remained   Kabir     weeping

    *do*     *pa:ṭu:*   *ke*   *bi:c*    *mãi* , *jinda:*   *bacai*     *na*   *koy*
    two     stones   of   between   in    , alive    remained   not   anyone

    Seeing the gristmill in action,
    Kabir* was crying,
    From between the two stones
    No one ever came out alive.

    * The poet and philosopher Kabir (1440–1518). The gristmill is the cycle of life and death from which none escape.

51. *ca:kki*    *calai*    *to*     *calaṇ*   *de*   , *pi:ssaṇ*   *de*    *sab*   *na:j*   ,
    gristmill   goes    then   go      let   , grind     let   all     grain ,

    *jo*     *sa:i:*   *ke*   *la:ḍle*   , *rahe*      *ki:laṛe*   *la:g*      .
    who    Lord   of   beloved , remained   peg      attached .

    Let the gristmill run,
    Let people grind the grain,
    Those who are beloved of the Lord,
    Will remain attached to the peg.

In answer to the previous verse (50), the poet says that none who show devotion to God should fear this inevitable cycle.

52. *jal*      *lanami:*   *thal*   *u:paji:* , *basi:*    *nagar*   *mãi*   *a:p* ,
    water    was born   land   grew   , settled   city     in     self ,

    *cambha:*   *to*       *mãi*   *yu:*   *suṇya:* , *beṭṭi*     *nai*   *bya:ya:*
    wonder    (emphatic)   I    this   heard   , daughter   by    born

      *ba:p*   .
      father .

    She was conceived in the water and born on land,
    She herself settled down in the city.
    I heard this very wonder:
    The daughter gave birth to her father.

This is a secular riddle, to which the solution is "brick". The last line refers to the fact that a house (in Hindi, masculine gender) is built from bricks (feminine gender). The theological interpretation of this verse depends on the metaphorical use of water to represent the concepts of *Brahman* and *ātman.* Free water represents Brahman, confined water *atman. Atman* is confined in the human body, thus "born on land".

53. *bina:*     *tol*      *ki:*   *ka:mani:* , *pa:ssū:*   *kai:*   *haja:r*      ,
    without   weight   of   fair lady   , ribs      many   thousands ,

| *bina:* | *bhed* | *puttar* | *huya:* | , *phurtan* | *kariyo* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| without | secret | son | was born | , immediately | do |

   *vica:r*    .
   thinking .

A woman weighing nothing
Has thousands or ribs,
No one knew and she gave birth to a son,
Please ponder it immediately.

Another secular riddle, to which the answer is "date palm". The phrase *binā tol kī kāmani* is a hyperbolic idiom commonly used in reference to a slim woman. The date palm gives fruit without conspicuous flowering, thus the point of the second line. In a philosophical sense, *kāmanī* is *māyā,* it weighs nothing, but creates thousands of illusions. The illusions of this world are created without the realization of the Self (ātman).

54. | *ki:ṛi:* | *caḍhgi* | *paha:r* | *pai* | , *khincan* | *ca:lli:* | *rel* | , |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ant | climbed | mountain | on | , to draw | went | train | , |

   | *khi:chkhā:c* | *kai* | | | *cal* | *paṛi:* | , *anjan* |
   |---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
   | having pulled | all strength together | | | go | started | , engine |

   | *hogya:* | *phel* . |
   |---|---|
   | became | fail . |

An ant climbed the mountain,
The train went to pull it down,
Somehow putting all its force together the train started,
But the engine failed.

This riddle and those that follow all point up the insignificance of the human being, and his ridiculous confidence in his own self-importance. The philosophical framework is again the illusion wrought by *māyā.* Man is represented by an ant, a donkey, and a dog in the various riddles here.

55. | *ki:ṛi:* | *mari:* | *paha:ṛ* | *pai* | , *khincan* | *cale* | *te* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ant | dies | mountain | on | , to draw | went | were |

   *cama:r*
   leather workers

   | *tha:ra:* | *sai* | *to* | *caras* | *baṇe* | , *jutti:* | *kai:* | *haja:r* | . |
   |---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
   | eighteen | 100 | so | bucket | made | , shoes | many | thousands | . |

An ant died on the mountain,
Leather workers went to remove it.
They made eighteen hundred leather buckets,
And many thousand shoes (with the ant's flesh).

56. | *ki:ṛi:* | *bya:i:* | *jhū:ḍ* | | *māi* | , *khi:s* | *diya:* | *maṇ* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ant | bore | clump (of bushes) | in | , new milk | gave | maund |

   *ti:s*    ,
   thirty ,

   | *ha:li:* | *pa:li:* | *chik* | *gaye* | , *khi:s* | *rahya:* | *maṇ* |
   |---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
   | ploughmen | cowherds | satisfied | went | , milk | remained | maund |

   *bi:s*    .
   twenty .

An ant gave birth in a clump of bushes,
Gave thirty maunds of new milk.
All the plowmen and cowherds drank to their fill,
Twenty maunds of milk remained.

57. *makoṛa:*   *calya:*   *susara:ṛ*        *ku: ,*  *pi:kai*          *no*
    black ant   went      in-laws' home    to   ,  having drunk  nine
      *man*        *tel ,*
      maunds    oil ,

    *ha:tti*      *ghoṛe*   *diye*   *bagal*   *mai ,*   *picchai*   *ba:ndhi:*   *rel*
    elephants  horses    gave     armpit    in   ,   behind      tied          train

    A large black ant set out for his in-laws' home,
    After drinking nine maunds of oil,
    He put elephants and horses under his armpits,
    And behind him he tied a train.

58. *gadhaiya:*   *caḍhi*   *khaju:r*   *pai ,*   *kha:ne*   *lagi:*
    she-donkey   climbed   date palm   on   ,   eating    began
      *ana:r*              ,
      pomegranate ,

    *bha:gva:n*   *tale*   *ku*   *utarya: ,*   *(koi)*      *lega:*
    fortunate    down    to    descend ,    (someone)   will take
      *jevar*      *ta:r*       .
      ornaments   remove .

    A little lady donkey climbed the date palm,
    And began to eat a pomegranate,
    "Oh fortunate lady, climb down
    Or some one will take your ornaments off."

59. *kutiya:*   *cali:*   *baja:r*   *ku: ,*   *bã:dh*   *gale*   *mãi*   *i:ṭ*       ,
    bitch       set out   market     to   ,   tied      neck     in     brick ,

    *sahar*   *ke*   *baṇiya:*         *nu*   *kahãi ,*   *laṭṭha:*   *legi*        *ak*
    city       of    shopkeepers    thus   say    ,   muslin      will take   or
      *chi:ṭ*  .
      calico .

    A dog set out to the market
    With a brick tied around her neck
    Shopkeepers of the city ask her,
    "What can we sell you madam, muslin or calico?"