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**TRANSLATION OF CHAPTER NO. 1 OF 'KONA' WITH A CRITICAL  
INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEMS FACED WHILE TRANSLATING THE TEXT**

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## ❖ Introduction:

Labhshanker Thaker (Born on 14<sup>th</sup> January, 1935), the prestigious **Sahitya Akademy Award Winner**, is a conspicuous author of the Modern Era of the Gujarati Literature. He has contributed most of his works during the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. **Chandrakant Sheth**, referring to his unique literary contribution to the Gujarati Literature, avers...

**“Labhshanker possesses such a personality in the field of Gujarati Literature as must be taken note of.”**

Labhshanker Thaker has keen interest in both the treatment of physical ailments and literature. His first poetic work was published in the famous periodical for Gujarati poetry, **‘Ramakadu’**, and it helped him to achieve the first award in literature. Labhshanker Thaker’s works have the hallmark of influences of **Umashanker Joshi, Sundaram, Rajendra Shah, Nirjan Bhagat, Ushanas, Jayant Pathak, Makarand Dave, Prajaram Raval, Pannalal Patel, Anton Chekhov, Samuel Beckett, Eugene Ionesco, Harold Pinter** and so on.

As a novelist, Labhshanker Thaker holds a high position in the Gujarati Literature. His first novel **‘Akasmat’ (1968)** is a highly romantic love-story. In the same year, he wrote one of the most unconventional novels, **‘Kona?’**. It is based on the philosophical aspects like existentialism. It is divided into two parts. The **first part was written and published in 1968**, whereas the **second part was written and published in 1993**. It is an innovative and iconoclastic novel in many senses. He has also penned the novels like **‘Champak Chalisa’ (1993), ‘Anaap-Sanaap’ (1994)** and **‘Pivari’ (1994)**.

Lastly, let us quote Radhe Shyam Sharma’s views on his literary genius...

**“His style is both traditional and experimental simultaneously. His imaginative powers and the use of the novel form of simile clearly hold the stamp of his personality. He is the one, who has not only influenced and inspired his contemporary, but also has motivated the future generations.”**

Labhshanker Thaker has contributed works of all different genres like...

- **The Anthology of Poems** like **‘Manas ni Vaat’, ‘Tolan, Awaj, Ghonghat’, ‘Samay Samay’** etc.
- **The Collection of Plays** like **‘Ek Undar and Jadunath’, ‘Kahe Koyal Shor Machaye Re’** etc.



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- **The One-Act Plays** like 'Mari Javani Maza' and 'Bathtubma Machhali'
- **The Essay Collections** like 'Ek Minute', 'Suraj Ugyo Kevadiyani Fanase' etc
- **The Child Stories** like 'Tadkano Papad', 'Kaankhau Rakshas' etc.
- **The Critical Analysis** of 'Inner Life', 'Malela Jiv' etc.

❖ **Critique of Labhshanker Thaker's novel 'Kona?' ('Who?'):**

The **first edition** of Labhshanker Thaker's novel '**Kona**' came out in **1968 A.D.** The character portrayal of **the protagonist of the novel Vinayak** and the events delineated lead the reader to think the work to be a part of the tradition of the Theatre of Absurd and Existentialism.

The major characters like **Vinayak, Ketki** and **Aniket** are experimental and untraditional figures. They are against the conventional mentality of the age old society. They are not so perfect as were described in the earlier novels by the novelist like Govardhan Ram Tripathi.

Moreover, so far as the modern techniques of writing are concerned, the novelist has not admitted any new stream. The novelist has shown everything in the very simple, straight forward and free flowing style. All the incidents in the novel have some motive behind them. The novelist has powerfully drawn different mental conditions and the internal conflicts of the characters. The internal conflicts give birth to the dramatic twists. Besides, the conflict between the human being and the society in which he lives is also shown wonderfully. The specialty of the novel is that that the reader immediately feels that his own identity and character are drawn by the author. There is a continuous development from the beginning to the end of the novel. The psychology of the characters is also shown wonderfully by the novelist.

What is more, the novel is not a stereotypical novel like the ones by the contemporary of Labhshanker Thaker. The novel is filled with a lot of ironical incidents. The variety of characters and their conflicts and sufferings lead us to know the modern society in general. Moreover, Labhshanker Thaker is the pioneer in the depiction of reality, psychology, sensuous desire, and man-woman relationship. He has made innovative experiments in the field of novel writing. He takes out the Gujarati Novel from the traditional cocoon.

❖ **Translation of Chapter No. 1 of 'Kona':**

And Vinayak alighted from the bus. He kept on watching the gradually vanishing scooter and the pink sari of Ketaki at a distance. Appalled, he stood at the step of the bus without even a single movement. He tried to raise his foot but there was no energy in his leg to move even a single inch. All powers were



annihilated. Ketaki was sitting as a pillion rider on the scooter and going in front of his eyes. And the person who was riding the scooter was his neighbor Aniket.

Has Ketaki, his beloved wife, proved to be completely unfaithful? Must she have gone for loitering with the neighboring young man? When Vinayak might be going to his office, during that time Ketaki may always....

Vinayak felt as if he were swooning. He went inside the bus stand and sat on the bench. His life – Ketaki – is having fun with the other man? And I? I do my job with golden dreams! Planning to take departmental examinations. I increase my income so that I can give her all the sensuous pleasure. And Ketaki does not care of all these at all? Can she be so frivolous that she can surrender to the other man in this way?

Then what about my aspirations and hopes in this situation? Should I leave everything? Should I kick out that unfaithful? I do not want this worldly pleasure, illusive love-life or married-life. Had this accidental discovery not taken place, I might have been doing hard work for a long time to fulfill the innocent fantasies. Till what time?

Suddenly, Vinayak's eyes stopped at the front step. A couple was coming out of an ultra-modern hotel. They had a three years old baby with them. These damn fools are going to live like this only! His wife really looks filled with purity of character and righteous qualities...It might be that that this kid may not be by her husband...or it might be a wrong notion of mine. Maybe, this kid is by her husband only...and this lady might not have ever transgressed the morality and never ever had the extra marital affair...but...but what? But there is no meaning of such a life. Why is there no meaning of such a life? This couple is happy and pleasant. They have one kid. There is a glow of joy on their faces. What problem do you have if these two live in happiness? Their lives are not futile. Their lives have happiness in them. But only your life...Yes, only your life has been completely ruined. Your wife proved to be disloyal. What can you do now? But why did she prove to be unfaithful? What may be the reason behind it? I am not at all ugly by looks. Even my physique is also toned up. There is no deficiency in giving sexual satisfaction to my wife. Why did she wish to love another man even though I love her too much?

Bus reached the bus-stop and stopped. I think I should sit in the bus and go home. Vinayak got on the bus and occupied a corner seat.

What will I do reaching home? I will not be able to behave as I do daily. Daily, I used to reach home and kiss Ketaki. Today, nothing like that sort can be done. I am feeling an intense passion from within. I felt like kicking Ketaki out of home by holding her hair. But is it appropriate to cause self-humiliation publicly? Then...? I feel like peacefully but in clear words telling Ketaki to go to her father's abode. Your presence



has now become intolerable for me. Or should I call up and ask her parents to come and hand over their daughter? Now, I no longer have any relation with her after the marital life of half a year. Bring her away. And no one ever dare come to me.

But what will be there after doing all this? Ketaki has already gone. Wherever she has gone...but how about you? With what zeal do you want to live? Will you do a job? Will you appear for the departmental examination? Will be able to proofread? You have a longing to get a sofa-cum-bed for the bed room. Will you go to the shops to see the samples of it?

I do not feel like doing anything. There is nobody else except me in my family. Then why should I do such toil? Do you want to re-marry with someone? No, now I do not wish to marry at all. I have lost my trust from love, woman, human beings and even their sentiments. With what interest would you live in such a situation?

At present, I do not feel any interest. I have been completely exhausted and emptied. I feel as if I melted in the bus itself. I lose my sense, melt and get evaporated. I do not wish to have my senses – I do not wish to have my own self – I do not wish to have anything. Let there be such a situation as make me feel as if I did not exist at all. But...How...?

How should I commit suicide – should I get crushed under train? Or should I drown into ocean? Or should I end my life by consuming poison?

Ketaki proved to be unfaithful...so does it mean that I must commit suicide? Does it mean that I should squash all my happiness and end my own self? Should I do all this only because Ketaki proved to be unfaithful? She will live her full life with fun and frolic. Anyone can replace Aniket – be it Niranjana, or Aniruddh, or Shrikant, or Tuhin, or Anal, or any servant, or any butler. Is it really the true prime way for happiness? Are we supposed to run for the life time after this sort of crude and mean materialistic pleasure? Why does man come to this world to live? A man does performs many tasks – he studies, eats, thinks, writes poetry, quarrels, invents, loves, dances, does a job, builds a house, brings home garland for the wife, lifts the child lovingly, gets photographed, goes on a picnic. The birds and the animals do not do all this. They do not have to obey any rules and regulations. There is neither sentiment nor shock in their lives. Does it mean that shock is associated with sentiment? Because sentiment remains as it is only. Does it not get embodied? Man gets hurt and a real ugly animal gets angry. That animal longs only for materialistic and sexual pleasure. Till today, man has fed the sentiment. He has loved, awarded love and elevated it. He has spent innumerable words in depicting it. Can all this be madness? Are the sentiments, thought, longing for love not the essence of man? Can they not develop in man? Can there be no such examples where we can find complete development of all these things? Or will there be the stories of Ketaki everywhere? No, it is impossible.



Why have I got frustrated? There cannot be anecdotes like Ketaki everywhere. My faith should not sway from the woman or human being. Man has been in love with sentiments for many years. He craves for it in his life. It is not proper to believe that this element cannot be removed. There must be some truth in the examples of Christ and Buddha.

❖ **Problems while Translating the Text:**

1. It is never easy to translate some typical expressions in the SL. For example, the expression in Gujarati with doubling of the adjectives cannot be easily translated into English. “Door Door” in Gujarati cannot be translated into English like “Far Far”. Instead of that, one has to use a matching expression to that of SL.
2. There are so many unfinished questions – whether to complete them or to leave them as they are is a crucial question. One has to be creative and re-format the original structure with the meaning getting clear and tone remaining the same. Sometimes, one has to keep the same structure, as it is.
3. Some derogatory, disgusting and despising expressions in SL like “Salao” is difficult to be translated in the TL.
4. There are some problems with incomplete statements.
5. The expressions like “Dhool-Dhaani” can at the most find an equivalent in TL like “Ruin”.
6. Simplicity in vocabulary and sentence structure is a must.
7. Here, the author has written declarative statements ending with question marks, while in TL operator does have a specific position, so it cannot take a different position.
8. The expression in SL like “To...?” is not usual in TL.
9. One has to avoid the archaic terms in TL.
10. There are also problems with conjunctions with which many sentences start in SL; it is very unusual and inappropriate in TL.
11. One has to complete the sentence in TL with appropriate meaning and reference.
12. In SL, there are also the sentence structures with the combination of declarative and interrogative patterns. One has to devise a special pattern for the same.
13. Lastly, the external climatic disturbances or diversions create impediment in the smoothness of translation.



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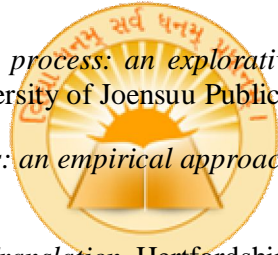
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