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Sahitya Akademi



Shri Vile Parle  
Kelavani Mandal

invite you to

# meet the author

Gulabdas Broker





with his wife in young days.

**W**hen Gulabdas Broker (b. 1909) published his first collection of short stories in 1938, one of the stories *Lata Shum Bole?* (What could Lata say?) created not a little furore. After 53 years, in 1991, the same story was selected for telecast on the national network in the serial '*Sambandha*' and the producers of the serial had to spend many a sleepless night. As in 1938, in 1991 too, the story was considered to be too frankly outspoken about man-woman relationship.

During the past fiftyfive years, Broker has published a large number of short stories. Although many of his stories lay bare unexamined corners of human sexuality, it is not that Broker has confined himself to this aspect. Many of his stories deal with the life and mind of educated urban middle class, including loving and affectionate mothers, children dreaming and living in their own world, and people offering selfless devotion and sacrifice in order to uphold values of life. In 1986 Broker's collected stories were published in four volumes containing 148 stories. And even at the advanced age of 84, Broker still keeps writing stories, though not as frequently as he used to. His latest collection of 21 short stories, '*Nastik*' was published in 1992.

In addition to short stories, Broker has

published poems, plays, literary criticism, travel accounts, and essays, but first and foremost, he is a short story writer. And it is as a story writer that Broker is known, not only to his Gujarati readers, but to the many people outside Gujarat and India as well. Broker is well known in the country and beyond, not only through many translations of his works into various Indian and foreign languages, but also through his active participation in various national as well as international literary fora.

When Broker came on the literary scene, Gujarati short story was dominated by stalwarts like 'Dhumketu' (Gaurishankar Joshi), 'Dwiref' (Ramnarayan Pathak), and Jhaverchand Meghani. Dhumketu was extremely popular with his romantic and idealistic stories. Pathak's stories were more cerebral than emotional and often tinged with subtle humour. Meghani excelled in depicting the life of rural Gujarat. It would have been suicidal for Broker to follow any of these masters. Although he admired them and their stories, Broker charted a different course for himself. His stories were chiefly confined to the urban middleclass life – the life he knew best. And Broker was more interested in depicting the mental state of his characters, rather than their obvious external qualities or actions and reactions. Conceived in a style that is simple, direct, and to the point, Broker's stories try to encompass the multifaceted human relationships with their constantly changing hues and tones.

Born at Porbunder, Gujarat on September 20, 1909, Broker had his initial education there and then moved to Bombay from where he cleared his school leaving examination. He then joined the prestigious Elphinstone College, graduating in 1930. But before graduation, Broker married Sumanben in 1927, and since then, they have been living happily with two



sons and two daughters. Broker lost his father at the age of ten and hence in his personal life, was more influenced by his mother, sister, and elder brother. Born with a silver spoon in his mouth, Broker joined his family business of broking on the Bombay Stock Exchange in 1933 and retired in 1964 in order to devote all his time to literature. Like many other writers of his time, Broker, in his personal life, has been influenced by Mahatma Gandhi. An active participant in the freedom movement during 1929-1932, he was imprisoned for sixteen months. And it was while in prison that he wrote his first story. But as a writer, Broker does not wear on his sleeve his Gandhian ideas and ideals.

The first story that Broker wrote while in prison saw the light of day much later. It was only after a few years that he gathered courage to take it to Ramnarayan Pathak, a highly respected Gujarati litterateur, critic, and editor. Pathak not only liked Broker's story, but readily offered to publish it in his prestigious monthly '*Prasthan*.' Thus it was with a bang that Broker entered the literary scene of the day, and ever since then, he has consistently remained in the forefront of Gujarati literature. To quote Dr. K.M. Munshi, "Broker's contribution to the Gujarati short story is both qualitative and quantitative. His stories present a wide range of characters and situations covering the daily lives of modern Gujarati man and woman. No situation is too ordinary and no character too lowly for his art. He has a sure touch in depicting pregnant situations."

Broker has published two full length plays — *Dhumraser* (1948) and *Mananam Bhoot* (1967) and a considerable number of one act plays collected under the title *Jvalanta Agni* (1955). *Dhumraser*, based on his own short story and written in collaboration with a leading playwright Dhansukhlal Mehta, has been staged successfully many a time. Written in the background of the independence movement, the play tries to unveil some of the unfathomable recesses of the human mind. *Mananam Bhoot* too, concerns itself with the ghosts of pride and prejudice haunting its protagonist's mind. Many of his one act plays were written for the radio and hence may appear to be more verbal than visual. However, many of them have been staged successfully.

Broker's travel account, published under the title *Nava Gaganni Neeche* (1950) mainly concerns itself not with the tourist spots of Europe, but with various individuals he met during his visit to these countries. Broker has also published literary criticism, some poems and translations. However, during the past few years, he has been concentrating more on writing what can be loosely termed as essays, where autobiographical reminiscences, pen-pictures, travelogues, and his views on life and letters are all rolled into one.

A voracious reader, Broker is quite familiar with the latest trends and fashions not only of Gujarati literature, but of the Western literatures as well. He has always encouraged young and



with Dr. Umashankar Joshi and Chatrabhuj Narsi



with Mansukhlal Jhaveri

up coming writers of talent. But in his own writings, Broker has never tried to imitate their trends and fashions. No doubt, over the years his style and technique have changed to an extent, but Broker has consistently insisted on being true to his own self throughout.

Recipient of many literary honours and awards, Broker has been associated with a number of literary and cultural organisations including the National Sahitya Akademi, Bharatiya Jnanpith, Gujarati Sahitya Parishad, Gujarat Sahitya Akademi, P.E.N. India, Vile Parle Sahitya Sabha, Vile Parle Kelavni Mandal, and many

more. In 1973, he was elected the President of the 27th Sammelan of the Gujarati Sahitya Parishad and in 1992 was awarded *Padmashri* by the President of India. Over the years, Broker has travelled widely not only within the country, but has also visited the U.K., U.S.A., and many countries in Europe as an invitee. Even at his advanced age, he loves to travel, meet people, and talk to them. Reading and writing come next. Though he holds the realm of letters close to his heart, his first and foremost concern is life and love for the humankind. And it is because of this concern for life and love, that his writings enrich his reader while also entertaining him.

#### A Select Bibliography

##### SHORT STORIES (Total 12 volumes)

LATA ANE BIJI VATO Bombay:  
R.R. Sheth & Co., 1938, 1957, 1958,  
267 P. 18.5 cm.

VASUNDHARA ANE BIJI VATO  
Bombay: Shishta Sahitya Bhandar,  
1940, 1954, 1966. 283 p. 18.5 cm.

UBHI VATE Bombay:  
R.R. Sheth & Co., 1944, 1947, 1956,  
1972, 244 p. 18.5 cm.

SOORYA Bombay:  
Jeevan Sahitya Mandir, 1950, 1952,  
1959, 180 p. 18.5 cm.

MANASNAM MAN Ahmedabad:  
Gurjar Grantharatna Karyalaya,  
1962, 224 p. 18.5 cm.

PREM PAIPARATH Bombay: Ashok

Prakashan, 1974, 256 p. 18.5 cm.  
BROKERNI SHRESHTHA NAVLIKAO  
Bombay: Ashok Prakashan, 1957,  
1965, 1973, 1979, 1981, 1987,  
Navbharat Sahitya Mandir, 1992  
1965 p. 18.5 cm.

NASTIK Bombay: Navbharat Sahitya  
Mandir, 1992, 284 p. 18.5 cm.

##### TRUE STORIES

PUNYA PARVARYUM NATHI  
Ahmedabad: Bharati Sahitya Sangh,  
1952, 1955, 1973, 1983  
162 p. 18.5 cm.

HARINO MARAG Ahmedabad:  
Sastum Sahitya Vardhak Karyalaya,  
1956, 85 p. 18.5 cm.



## PLAYS

DHUMRASER (Jointly with Dhansukhlal Mehta) Ahmedabad: Rekha Prakashan, 1948, 1956  
64 p. 18.5 cm.

MANANAM BHOOT Bombay: Chandra Prakashan, 1967  
103 p. 18.5 cm.

## ONE ACT PLAYS

JVALANTA AGNI Ahmedabad: Ravani Prakashan Griha,  
1955, 225 p. 18.5 cm.

BROKERA PRATINIDHI EKANKI Ahmedabad: Abhinav Prakashan,  
256 p. 18.5 cm.

## POEMS

VASANTE: Bombay: Chandra Prakashan, 1964, 100 p. 18.5 cm.

## LITERARY CRITICISM

ROOPSRISHTIMAM Bombay: N.M. Tripathi Private Ltd., 1962  
496 p. 18.5 cm.

ABHIVYAKTI Bombay: Chandra Prakashan, 1965, 376 P. 18.5 cm.

SAHITYA, TATVA ANE TANTRA Bombay: Chimanlal Literary Trust,  
1977, 152 p. 21.5 cm.

## TRAVELOGUE

NAVA GAGANNI NEECHE Bombay: Navbharat Sahitya-Manidr, 1970,  
1976, 423 p. 18.5 cm.

## REMINISCENCES

GAYAM VARSHO, RAHYAM VARSHO

Bombay: Navbharat Sahitya Mandir,  
1987, 474 p. 18.5 cm.

SMARANONE SATHVARE Bombay: Navbharat Sahitya Mandir, 1993  
245 p. 18.5 cm.

## BOOKS TRANSLATED (Total 6 books)

BICHARAM SUNANDABAHEH (World's best short stories) Ahmedabad: Gurjar Grantharatna Karyalaya, 1954, 265 p. 18.5 cm.

BHUTAVAL (Ibsen's 'Ghosts') New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi,  
1960, 126 p. 18.5 cm.

VICHHEH (Henry James's novel 'The Americans') Bombay: Vora & Company, 1967  
457 p. 21.5 cm.

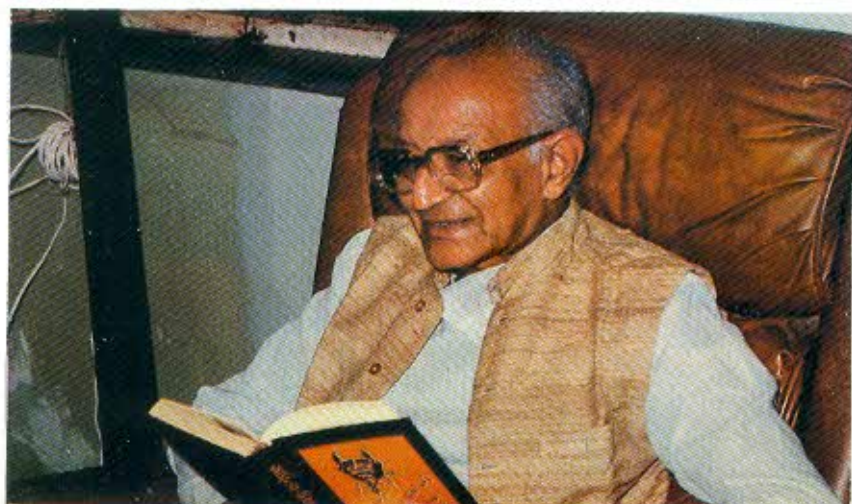
Edited 11 books

Broker's works translated into Hindi, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Sindhi, English, German, Austrian, Swiss, Hungarian, and other languages.

## BOOKS ON BROKER

SAMVAD (Edited by Ramprasad Bakshi and others) Bombay: Gulabdas Broker Sanskritik Trust,  
1974, 295 p. 21.5 cm.

GULABDAS BROKER by Amritlal Yajnik Ahmedabad: Kumkum Prakashan,  
1983, 88 p. 21.5 cm.



## A CHRONOLOGY

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| <p>1909 September 20: Born at Porbandar, Gujarat</p> <p>1927 Married Suman Sundarji Kapadia</p> <p>1929 Member, Executive Committee, Bombay Provincial Congress Committee</p> <p>1930 B.A. (English and Gujarati), University of Bombay</p> <p>1932 Arrested in Civil Disobedience Movement and sentenced to jail for sixteen months</p> <p>1933 Joined the Bombay Stock Exchange</p> <p>1938 First book of short stories <i>Lata Shum Bole?</i> published</p> <p>1951-53 Edited <i>Ekanki</i> (periodical, jointly with Jayanti Dalal)</p> <p>1954 <i>Dhumraser</i> (play) received First Prize from the Government of Bombay</p> <p>1956 Nominated to the Advisory Board for Gujarati, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi</p> <p>1959 Visited Frankfurt, Germany, as a delegate from India to the First International P.E.N. Conference</p> <p>1962 Visited U.S.A. on invitation from Study Missions International and the Government of U.S.A.</p> <p>1964 Invited to All India Writers Seminar, Kottayam, Kerala</p> <p>1966 English translation of short stories <i>Of Life and Love</i> published</p> <p>1966 Translations of short stories published in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland.</p> <p>1969 Kumar Chandrak awarded</p> <p>1972 Awarded First Prize for travelogue <i>Nava Gaganni Neeche</i> by the Government of Gujarat</p> <p>1973 Elected President, 27th Sammelan of the Gujarati Sahitya Parishad</p> <p>1975 Guest of Honour, Vishwa Hindi Sammelan, Nagpur</p> | <p>Member, Award Samiti for Gujarati, Bharatiya Jnanapith</p> <p>1982 Nominated to the Executive Committee, Gujarat Sahitya Akademi</p> <p>1983 Elected member to Executive Committee, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi. Honoured by the Third Vishwa Hindi Sammelan, New Delhi</p> <p>1984 Nominated to the Selection Board, Bharatiya Jnanapith</p> <p>1986 Honoured as a freedom fighter by the Indian Writers Union at Kanyakumari</p> <p>1988 Inaugurated 61st Akhil Bharatiya Marathi Sahitya Sammelan, Thane, Maharashtra</p> <p>1989 Honoured by Sharad Pawar, Chief Minister, Maharashtra, on completing eighty years.</p> <p>1990 Chief Guest, Indira Gandhi Rajbhasha Award Bestowal Function, New Delhi</p> <p>1991 Received Balaraj Sahani National Award for the year 1990-91</p> <p>1992 Awarded <i>Padmashri</i> by the President of India. Received Suo Moto Freedom fighter's Pension from the Government of Maharashtra</p> <p>1993 A documentary film made on life and letters by Unit-3/ Combines</p> |
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with Dilip Kumar.