Surdas, also known as Sant Kavi Surdas, was a blind poet, saint and musician who lived roughly during 15th-16th century India. Adequately, his name means ‘slave of melody’. As his fame grew, the Mughal emperor Akbar became his patron. Surdas is said to have composed a hundred thousand songs in his work ‘Sur Sagar’, that is, ‘Ocean of Melody’, out of which eight thousand are extant. ‘Sur Sagar’ is a loose exploration of the tenth chapter of the Shrimad Bhagwat Puran, though there is some controversy surrounding his dependence on this work; some scholars speculate that he was a more independent poet. Surdas is known for his devotional songs to Krishna, especially those concerning child Krishna, the personification of his flute, and the jealousy of Radha and the Gopis. Indeed, Surdas called himself a Dhadee (balladeer) of Krishna.
An illustration for 'Sur Sagar'

Activities

Do you think that being blind can, metaphorically speaking, open your eyes to other things? Why?

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Why do you think Surdas wrote so extensively about Krishna?

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If you were a poet, which classic Indian literary work would you draw your inspiration from? Why?

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