



Rahim Das's Dohas: A Source of Moral Guidance for Students in the 21st Century

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Abstract: *In the fast-paced, competitive world of the 21st century, students face numerous moral and ethical dilemmas that challenge their integrity, resilience, and empathy. Rahim Das, a revered poet from the medieval bhakti movement, provides timeless moral guidance through his dohas (couplets), which emphasize humility, patience, compassion, and wisdom. This paper explores the relevance of Rahim's dohas in shaping ethical character and fostering emotional intelligence among students today. By analyzing particular dohas, the research highlights how these teachings can guide students in managing interpersonal relationships, handling adversities, and developing a balanced approach to success and failure. Through this study, the aim is to demonstrate that Rahim Das's dohas are not just literary relics but a valuable source of moral education that holds enduring significance for personal growth and ethical grounding in contemporary student life.*

Key words: *Rahim das, dohas, 21st century, students, moral education, personal growth, adversities, ethical character, moral guidance, bhakti movement, humility, wisdom.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

Abdul Rahim Khan-i-Khana, commonly known as Rahim Das, was a prominent poet, scholar, and nobleman in the court of the Mughal Emperor Akbar during the 16th century. Born into a distinguished family with deep connections to both Afghan and Mughal nobility, Rahim's upbringing exposed him to a blend of Persian, Indian, and Islamic traditions. This rich cultural background profoundly influenced his outlook on life and is reflected in his poetic works. Although Rahim held significant political and military roles under Akbar, he is most celebrated for his literary contributions, particularly his dohas - short, rhyming couplets that express timeless wisdom in a simple yet profound manner.

Rahim's dohas address a range of human values, including humility, compassion, patience, and the importance of inner strength. Written in a style that is accessible to all, regardless of social or educational background, his verses blend ethical and philosophical teachings, transcending religious and cultural boundaries. Rahim's teachings have been cherished in Indian literature and remain widely recited today, offering insights that resonate with people across generations. His works, while created in a historical context, continue to hold relevance in the 21st century, particularly for students seeking guidance in a world marked by constant change and challenges.

2. OBJECTIVES / AIMS :

- (i) To analyze the moral and ethical values embedded in Rahim Das's dohas and their relevance for today's students.
- (ii) To explore how Rahim's teachings can aid students in developing emotional intelligence, resilience and ethical grounding.
- (iii) To assess the role of Rahim's dohas in guiding students on handling interpersonal relationships and conflicts in a balanced manner.
- (iv) To examine the impact of Rahim's dohas on fostering a positive approach toward success, failure, and personal growth among students.
- (v) To demonstrate the applicability of Rahim's wisdom as a tool for moral education that transcends time, p



providing students with ethical direction in contemporary life.

3. Problem Statement and Recognition of Research Gap

The core issue addressed in this research is the insufficient examination of the lessons embedded in Rahim Das’s dohas and their relevance in providing guidance for students in the 21st century. Although there is a considerable body of research on guidance for the students in the 21st century, the specific teachings of Rahim Das’s dohas have not been thoroughly explored. This creates a significant research gap, prompting several key questions: How can Rahim Das’s dohas be applied to the modern students of 21st century? What valuable lessons can students of 21st century learn from these dohas to have a balanced and purposeful life? How can these lessons influence the decision-making, values, and practices of 21st century students working towards sustainability goals? By understanding the teachings in Rahim Das’s dohas, 21st century students can gain insights into ethical behavior, inclusivity, resilience, sustainability, and other key factors that support ethical and moral development. This study aims to bridge the existing research gap by conducting a thorough analysis of Rahim Das’s dohas and exploring their relevance to modern world. By identifying key themes and messages in these dohas, the research will provide valuable guidance to students of 21st century helping them overcome challenges and contribute meaningfully to the achievement of sustainable development goals.

4. METHODOLOGY :

The research methodology for this study involves a qualitative approach focused on analyzing Rahim Das’s dohas and their interpretations. A thorough compilation of dohas was collected from Rahim Das’s original writings and relevant scholarly commentaries. A thematic analysis was conducted to uncover common themes, values, and teachings within the dohas. These themes were then explored in relation to provide guidance for students in the 21st century.

5. Analysis and Interpretation:

Here are some Dohas of Rahim Das for 21st century students-

Serial No.	Dohas / verses and Their Meaning	The Recurring Themes, Messages, and Values, Present in Rahim Das’s Dohas	Actionable Insights for students of 21 st century
1.	Rahiman paani raakhiye, bin paani sab soon; Paani gaye na ubre, moti, manus, choon. Rahim stresses the importance of water(symbolizing humility and life). Without it, everything becomes barren. Just like water is essential for survival, humility is essential for true prosperity.	This doha teaches us to value and retain humility and respect, as they are foundational to our inner worth and relationships with others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Value humility and adaptability; they’re as essential as water for growth. Nurture relationships and inner qualities- once lost, they’re hard to regain.
2.	Samaye paye phal hot hai, samaye paye jhari jaat; Sada rahe nahi ek si, ka Rahim pachितात. Rahim explains that fruits ripen in their own time, and seasons change as time passes. Just as nature follows its own timing, there is no need to worry when things don’t happen immediately.	The theme of this doha is the importance of patience and acceptance of life’s cycles. Rahim emphasizes that everything in life happens at its own pace, whether it’s success, failure, joy, or sorrow. Just as fruits ripen and fall according to time, life’s situations evolve and change naturally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have patience and trust in the process
3.	Rahiman dekhi baden ko, laghu na dije dari; Jahan kaam aaye sui, kaha kare talwari.	Respect all roles and people, understanding that each person has a unique value.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid arrogance, as sometimes even the “small” or humble have



	Rahim advises that we should not underestimate or disregard those who may seem small or insignificant. Just as a needle can perform tasks that a sword cannot, every person has their unique value and purpose, no matter their status or size.		<p>qualities that the “big” may lack.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize diversity in strengths, realizing that every skill, person, or tool has its own importance
4.	<p>Rahiman dhaga prem ka, mat todo chatkaye; Toote se phir na jude, jude gaanth par jaye.</p> <p>Rahim compares the thread of love to a delicate string. If it is broken abruptly, it cannot be restored to its original form. Even if the broken thread is tied back together, a knot remains, symbolizing how relationships, once damaged, may never be the same again.</p>	This doha emphasizes the themes of love, relationships, and forgiveness. It conveys the values of patience and understanding, highlighting that love, like a delicate thread, must be handled with care.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate openly to prevent misunderstanding and preserve bonds. Practice empathy and patience; small conflicts can leave lasting marks
5.	<p>Jo Rahim uttam prakriti, ka kari sakat kusang; Chandan vish vyapat nahi, lipte rahat bhujang.</p> <p>Rahim explains that a person of noble character remains unaffected by negative influences, much like sandalwood(chandan) does not absorb poison even when serpents cling to it.</p>	This doha highlights the strength of good character and integrity. Just as sandalwood remains pure despite being surrounded by venomous snakes, a person with a strong and virtuous nature will not be tainted by harmful surroundings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build inner resilience, so your character becomes a shield against harmful influences. Choose your values and principles wisely, so that external pressures don't sway you
6.	<p>Aisi vani boliye, man ka aapa khoye; Auran ko sheetal kare, aaphu sheetal hoye.</p> <p>Speak in such a way that you let go of pride; your words should bring peace to others and, in turn, to yourself.</p>	The value reflected in this doha is the power of gentle, thoughtful words in fostering harmony and peace, both within oneself and in the relationships with others. By choosing peaceful language, we contribute to a more compassionate world.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice humility in communication. Choose words wisely.
7.	<p>Rahiman vipda hun bhali, jo thode din hoye; Hit anhit ya jagat mein, jaan pade sab koye.</p> <p>Rahim highlights the hidden value of facing difficulties. He suggests that short-term challenges, though uncomfortable, reveal the true nature of people around us. When hardships come, we can discern who genuinely supports us and who does not. These experiences help us understand the difference between friends and foes, making us wiser and stronger in navigating relationships.</p>	Challenges are essential to learn life's true lessons. Embrace obstacles as they help you understand who truly supports you.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embrace challenges; they reveal true strengths and teach resilience. Approach every setback with patience and learn from each experience – it's essential for personal growth.



8.	<p>Rahiman chup ho baitheye, dekh dinan ke pher; Jab nika din ayihen, banat na lagihen der. Keep quiet during the bad times because when the good time comes it will come in plenty.</p>	<p>The idea conveyed here is that by channeling our energy into what is most important, we create lasting positive outcomes, while scattering our attention on too many things can lead to failure.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistency leads to growth • Avoid overextending yourself
9.	<p>Rahiman reeti sarahiye, jo ghat gun sam hoye; Bheeti aap pai daari ke, sabai piyaavai toye, We should praise the behavior that is like that of a pot and a rope. Both the pot and the rope take risks to provide water to others. When the pot goes into the well, there is always a possibility that the rope might break or the pot might crack.</p>	<p>The theme of this message is selfless service and humility. Just like the pot and rope risk themselves to fetch water for others, true virtue lies in helping others without fear of personal loss. Even when faced with potential risks, one should humbly continue to serve, prioritizing others' needs over one's own safety or pride. This symbolizes dedication, resilience, and compassion in the act of giving.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value collaboration and teamwork • Accept risks for growth and learning
10.	<p>Rahiman kathin chitaan tain, chinta ko chit chait; Chinta dahati nirjeev ko, chinta jeev – samet. The poet Rahim says to free oneself from harsh worries and gain control over one's mind because a funeral pyre burns only the lifeless body to ashes, but worry consumes and turns a living being into ashes.</p>	<p>Poet Rahim teaches us the importance of freeing ourselves from excessive worries and controlling our minds. He emphasizes that while a funeral pyre burns the lifeless, worry burns the living, leaving them mentally and emotionally drained. For 21st century students, this highlights the need to focus on mindfulness, self-discipline, and managing stress to achieve their goals and lead a balanced life.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultivate emotional resilience • Focus on what you can control
11.	<p>Rahiman nij man ki vyatha, man hi rakho goye; Suni ithilahain log sab, banti na laihain koye. Rhiman, express the sorrow of your heart, but keep it within yourself. When others hear it, they will laugh, and no one will share your burden.</p>	<p>This couplet by Rahim conveys that one should keep their inner sorrow hidden, as sharing it may only lead to superficial reactions from others, without genuine support. Rahim emphasizes that people often laugh or show indifference to others' pain, and rarely offer true understanding or help. Thus, it's better to bear certain struggles quietly within.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid seeking validation • Develop inner strength
12.	<p>Bade badai na karen, bade na bole bol; Rahiman heera kab kahe, lakh taka mero mol. Great individuals do not boast or praise themselves. Just like a diamond never claims its high value,</p>	<p>This doha emphasizes the value of modesty, suggesting that true worth is self-evident and does not require self-praise.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value self-worth over external validation • Strive for substance over appearances



	truly valuable people remain humble and let their worth speak for itself.		
13.	<p>Ek sadhe sab sadhe, sab sadhe sab jaaye; Rahiman mulahin sichibon phule phale aghay.</p> <p>If you focus on one thing with dedication, you can achieve everything; but if you try to accomplish everything at once, you may end up achieving nothing.</p>	The idea conveyed here is that by channeling our energy into what is most important, we create lasting positive outcomes, while scattering our attention on too many things can lead to failure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistency leads to growth • Avoid overextending yourself
14.	<p>Dheere - Dheere re mana, dheere sab kuchh hoye; Maali sinche sau ghada, ritu aaye phal hoye.</p> <p>Take it slow, dear mind, everything happens in its own time. Just as a gardener may water a plant with hundreds of pots, only when the season arrives will the fruit ripen.</p>	This doha by kabir teaches the importance of patience and trusting the process. It reminds us that, just as a gardener's watering doesn't make fruit ripen faster, our efforts will bear results only when the right time arrives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistency over quick results • Faith in process
15.	<p>Jo baden ko laghu kahen, nahin Rahim ghati jaahi; Girdhar Murlidhar kahe, kachhu dukh manat naahin.</p> <p>Rahim says that if great people are referred to in smaller or humble terms, they do not take offense. Just as Krishna, the one who lifted the mountain(Girdhar), is also called Murlidhar(the one who holds a flute), but this does not diminish Krishna's greatness in any way.</p>	The theme of this doha emphasizes humility, self-assurance, and the idea that true greatness is beyond superficial labels. It teaches that a person's value is inherent and should not be influenced by others' judgements or titles. This message encourages people to stay grounded and unperturbed by praise or criticism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build inner confidence • Focus on actions, not labels

6. RESULTS:

The analysis of Rahim Das's dohas highlights several key lessons relevant to the students of 21st century. These include the values of building inner confidence, avoid seeking validation and accept risks for growth and learning. Rahim's dohas stress the importance of showing compassion to others and acting with integrity and moral awareness. Rahim's teachings encourage students to cultivate virtues such as empathy, humility, and resilience, which are essential in a fast-paced, interconnected world. His focus on self-discipline and balance aids students in managing stress and staying grounded amidst technological distractions. Overall, Rahim Das's dohas provide valuable guidance for developing strong character, emotional well-being, and a sense of social responsibility, all of which are crucial for personal and academic success.

7. CONCLUSION:

The findings suggest that Rahim Das's dohas offer profound insights for the students of 21st century aiming to achieve sustainable development. In an era characterized by rapid technological advancements, materialistic pursuits, and increasing societal pressures, his dohas provide profound moral and ethical teachings that help students cultivate character, empathy and wisdom. By emphasizing values such as humility, patience, compassion, and the importance of relationships, Rahim Das's couplets inspire students to lead balanced and purposeful lives. They not only encourage academic excellence but also foster emotional intelligence and social responsibility, equipping students to navigate challenges with resilience and contribute meaningfully to society. Thus, Rahim Das's teachings remain an invaluable resource for shaping the holistic development of young minds in the modern world.



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