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VAISHNAVA LYRICS

VAISHNAYA LYRICS

Done into English Verse

**By Surendranath Kumar, Nandalal
Datta, and John Alexander Chapman.**

1923

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PREFACE

IT is always well to tell the truth. The truth about this volume of arhymed versions of Vaishnava lyrics is this. I am in charge of a large library in India. There came a day when my masters were changed. They used to be Secretaries to the Government of India. On the day I speak of the members of the Legislative Assembly became my masters. If the many things were to be done for the library that I wished done, the members of the Legislative Assembly must be made more interested in it, and one way to that end—this was my thought—was to make them more interested in myself. So, knowing that nothing that an Englishman can do draws him more certainly to the hearts of Indians than his showing an interest in one or another part of the rich heritage of India, I got my friends Babu Surendranath Kumar and Babu Nandalal Datta, who are also my colleagues, to furnish me with literal translations of a few Vaishnava lyrics in the poetical English prose that so many Indians have at command. These prose versions I set to work to turn into rhyme. That the rhymes should appear in print somewhere was part of the plan ; but my utmost hope at the beginning was that the Editor of the *Calcutta Review* would publish them. So, being so unambitious, and being at that time heavily over-worked I did,

my part as well as work can be done that has to be despatched, not aiming at any high perfection, as fidelity in all points to the originals, and leaving unascertained, among many other things, whether the work had already been done. It was not until I had finished my rhyming labour, the conception of which had grown so much that now a little book was the design, that I made enquiries as to that last, with a view to decide what by way of preface should be added ; and it was then that I learned of ' Vidyapati: Bangiya Padabali. Songs of the love of Radha and Krishna translated into English by Ananda Coomaraswamy and Aran Sen with introduction and notes and illustrations from Indian paintings' (*London, 1915*). I cannot do better, I feel, than refer those who desire information regarding the Vaishnava poets to Mr. Coomaraswamy's Introduction to that volume and to the books to which he refers his readers. It only remains for me here to state more explicitly that for all departure in our versions from fidelity to the original poems I alone am responsible. My aim has been to make, if possible, a volume of verse that would give pleasure to some of those who would read the Maithili and Bengali, if only they could.

To me the lyrics are utterly charming. Indeed, if I have been working at them for a day or two, and have a head full of echoes of them—such things as 'clinging

scarf of blue, 'What more have I to tell thee?'— I have to wait until I have forgotten them to be sure that there is love-poetry as fine in other languages. They will possibly never be as charming to those who have not lived long in India as they are to those of us who have. We know the people, and we know the setting, and that must count for a great deal. I have seen sunshine in the eyes of Indian children; I have known Indian children smile—oftenest boys; for the little girls are more shy—and have felt a catch at my heart, because there was a poetry there that I knew I should never be able to express. I have known an old, old man salaam, touched by some casual kind word—nothing so very kind—and he has done it in such a way that hours after I have had to stop to consider how the strange aroma got into my soul. I have seen enough of the Radhas of my own day to know intimately what Krishna's Radha was like. Not only to look at: I know inside her. Not that Englishmen have much opportunity of getting to know Indian girls: we give an Indian in a fortnight more chance of getting to know English girls than I have been given in twenty years of getting to know the girls here. But it somehow is that a minute may tell a volume. Going rapidly in a tonga along the road to Srinagar in Kashmir, thirteen years ago, I passed a young Indian mother on a donkey. The husband was leading it. Their babe

was in the mother's lap. It was as the flight to Egypt, The mother was very beautiful, and, to keep it from blowing away, she had tucked a small inch of the end of her sari into a corner of her mouth, and that ipade the picture just so much more charming. I could have asked what more there could be to learn. Another time it was a girl in a tent. An Indian lady had taken me to a wedding. At the moment some ceremony was being performed in the zenana, and it, of course, I could not be allowed to witness. The tent that I was in was empty, I thought, but turning round I found myself face to face, at some distance, with an Indian girl. Seeing me, she turned, and left the tent. Her figure was very graceful; her hair, very black, hung in masses down her back; her feet, bare and very small and pretty, were stained on the soles lightly with lac. It was those red, twinkling feet that I watched chiefly, as she walked away, and for long afterwards, in dreams of the day, they trod upon my heart. So, when I had to write:

' Make her come soon again ; for then
 My heart will eascd be of pain,
 The pain of the fierce burning heat,
 Kindled by those sweet, painted feet,'

I felt that that was something that I knew about.

Then there is the setting. The Plains of India are not wild and beautiful. Wordsworth might never have

•

felt at home. But I have felt at home. There have been evenings in the dry hot weather, when the light was so pure, the clouds so white, the grasses and reeds so green, the bamboos so feathery and graceful, the palms so still, the tamarind trunks and boughs so black, the horizons such a sweep, that I have felt it all descending like a benediction. The pain is only that no words can express it. For human love, not for such consuming passion as the Brontes are concerned with, but for a little of love's bread and wine, and betel nuts, and blue saris, and flute playing, and the scent of a body rubbed with camphored sandal paste—for that is there anywhere in the world a more perfect getting ?

A word now as to how the lyrics arise, to put it so. Krishna, waiting for Radha to come to the bower, speaks about her to a companion, or speaks about her to himself, and is overheard by a companion ; or he gives a message to be taken to Radha; or a companion, watching Krishna and aware of his feelings, will describe them. Each of these speakings is written as a separate lyric. Then the same originate on Radha's side. It is like reading the letters of lovers who are always longing to meet, and are sometimes on the point of meeting, but things prevent; or they do meet, but have soon to part, with their longing very little satisfied, and the longing to meet begins all over again. We are left

unsatisfied too ; for we are told very little of what they say and do, when they do meet.

There are lyrics that express the feelings of Krishna after seeing Radha for the first time, or Radha's feelings after seeing Krishna so: there are lyrics that tell of longing that may never be satisfied: there are lyrics belonging to the time when the lovers became engaged, to put it so: there are those that tell of their lovers' quarrels; and there are those that sing the triumph of early wedded life. The lovers are never allowed to grow old. It is the happy ending of: the novel, or that a little farther on, for we have been to Krishna and Radha's wedding—it is that endlessly varied and repeated. And how the poetry of such times can be expressed—do not the lyrics show that ? Consider the last in this little collection. How the passion and the triumph and the joy break through the old mortal covering of worn-out imagery, the 'descants/ the 'arrows,' the 'darts, the 'south breeze,' the 'moon-face.' When I was a City clerk among City clerks in London suburbs, and we lived girl-starved lives, then such a breath from a happier world, a world of happy, playful love, not the terrible love of our erotic literature—then such a breath would have been sweeter than anything on earth. To bear with one as one went in search of a purer air—but how little pure?—among the sodden clay fields about Harrow: even to bear

with one, when one went, in search of strength against temptation, into the churches of Willesden Green or Hampstead, and their atmosphere of hassock dust.

'I feel my life and maidenhood well spent,
And peace reigns in the world's ten-quartered tent.'

One might not have known where the ten-quartered tent was, but there would have been the assurance that it was somewhere.

The references given at the foot of the lyrics are to Mr. S. C. Ray's পদকল্পতরু, published by the Vangiya Sahitya Parisat, and to Mr. Nagendranath Gupta's বিজ্ঞাপতি ঠাকুরের পদাবলী, another publication of the Vangiya Sahitya Parisat, where the originals are to be found.

I have to acknowledge the courteous permission of the Editor of the *Modern Review* to include eight lyrics published in that Journal

23rd March, 1923.

J. A. CHAPMAN.

PROLOGUE

AN INDIAN CHILD

HER eyes were beautiful and glad,

With a quick light within,

Like sunbeams on the brightest sea,

As back I drew her face to me,

With hands beneath her chin,

Meaning to kiss, but One forbade.

Suddenly came the thought they had,

Who brought to Christ that day

The little children whom He blessed :

And then I said : ' The thought will rest

Within me, on my way,

Of eyes so beautiful and glad.

Perhaps the kiss, too sweet, had been

An elfin wand to touch

Into a woman that dream-child,

With mouth that never would have smiled,

And I have longed too much

For kisses on a face unseen.

RADHA

Go away, Radha, go away, my girl:

I know that long dark hair without a curl,
Those almond eyes, that subtle nutbrown hue,
Those red-stained feet, that clinging scarf of blue,
And that deep heart that beats beneath the breast
That Krishna's happy fingers often pressed.
Go away, darling ; it is a land where night,
Opening lotus-petals, pink and white,
Under starred skies, and silent as they of sound,
Makes your sweet body supple, soft, and round ;
Where sunshine makes the day a philtered cup.
It is in vain your men-folk shut you up,
Since I have seen the child, and have the sense
To feel the rapture, wine-drugged, sharp, intense,
That you would give, grown, Radha, a maiden, ripe,
Listening, with oft-kissed ear, for Krishna's pipe,
If you heard this, my singing, and came to be
Mistress of mine, and loved and worshipped me.
Stay away, Radha, stay away all night,
Too fair, like lotus-petals, red and white ;
Make it more thick, the clinging scarf of blue ;
Wrap it well round you, hide the whole of you ;
Never make sound behind the shuttered wall ;
Let me see brick, and think that that is all.
Yet still I'll know that you are ripe within ;
And, could I reach you, I would sin the sin,

THE LYRICS

W H E N Kaliya was punished, on that day
In Braja many a tender maid
Gathered in the Kadamba shade
On Yannina's bank, and they
To my eyes were like a garland made
Of lightning moveless, passing not away.

Friend Suvala, since then I know not right
Which is the day and which the night.

Among the damsels there were three or four
Jewels of loveliness, but one was more.
Her charms into my heart went straight and deep,
And from my eyes love's fumes removed sleep.
On her is all my meditation.
I knew not once that so much pain
Could come of separation.
Day by day I weaker grow—
Govindadasa saith: 'But know,
Of new love thus doth everyone complain.'

Padakalpataru. Vol. i, p. 31.

IV

STATELY, with elephant-gait, the Maid
Departed, and she smiled a smile,
Turning back to look a while,
Cupid, with the magic bow,
Who enchants the world with it,
Spell-bound watched the Maiden go.

With her hands she covered soon
Her lovely face, and 'twas as if
Kama the autumnal moon
Had covered with an offering,
Champaka flowers on a string.

As, when the autumn wind has blown
The veiling clouds away, are seen
Sumferu hills, so I was shown,
Quickly, of her bosom half;
But in a moment it was gone,
Covered by the flowing scarf.

Make her come soon again ; for then
My heart will eased be of pain,
The pain of the fierce burning heat,
Kindled by those sweet, painted feet.

Now Vidyapati says: ' Young thing,
my mind
Is restless till again that Maid I find.

Padakalpataru. Vol. I, p. 42.

V

BUT , my Friend, I could not see
**Radha well. As lightnings be
 In dense thundercloud was she.**

**Pain she gave me and distress.
 Her scarf, a little out of place,
 Showed a portion of her face—
 Only part, a half—no, less.**

**On her face a smile. In part
 Love's vibration in her eyes
 Seen. Then stunned me Kama's dart,
 When I saw her bosom rise.
 Half revealed to me her breast,
 Half uncovered ; hid the rest.**

**Fair ; each full-grown breast a cup
 Golden, closely prisoned up,
 In the kanchala dwelling.
 The kanchala plump and swelling.**

**Charming her necklace, like the loop
 Of Kama ; but the pearly troop
 Of her teeth I scarce discerned.**

**'Oh, with what misery he burned,'
 Saith Vidyapati. ' While she spoke
 To her friend, desire awoke
 To see her well. Such longing filled
 Him watching, and could not be stilled.**

Padakalpataru. Vol. i, p.

VI

IT is a room, and in it the Maiden seated:

Here on **her** body a jewel, and there repeated.

She with her friend anon the talk began,

And love the theme on which the talking ran.

How many jewels her teeth's white lustre dropped,
Before the laughing, before the talking stopped !

Listen, my Friend, I feel abashed to tell
Even to you the thing that then befell.

My mind, like a wild elephant, the Maiden bound
To hillocks, two, sweet-heaving, soft and round.

Then, with coy glances, the Maiden hid her breast;
Glances like arrows—my soul can find no rest.

First she her hands round her own body laced ;
Then, at me glancing, the Maid her friend embraced.

Says now Govinda : ' Nandanandana so
Rocks on the cradle of love, rocks to and fro.'

Padakalpataru. Vol. i, p. 42.

VII

BECAUSE her eyes can nothing see but Syana,
Nor her ear to other call be true
Than his name, her body she is robing
Darkly*, and with flowers dark and blue*
She will make a garland, and the jewel
On her bosom will be blue*.
And she says, ' My maiden, come, embrace me,
Thou that art a dark* one too.

She is a noble damsel—is she tranquil ?
Canst thou doubt one, Madhava, whose heart
Thou hast charmed, so that the thought of Syama
Will not out, nor once give up its part ?
The folk about her seem so mean, degraded:
Her lotus-face like lotus-flower is faded.

Tears down trickling wash away the pigment
From her eyes. For her herself to free
From Manmatha's influence were easy
As for her to go across the sea.
Sleepless, Syama, her nights are ever sleepless.
Syama, lies not the remedy with thee ?

Says Chandidasa, but will it long console her ?

¹ Soon will you be united with Nandakishora.'

Padakalpataru. Vol. I, p. 31.

* These because they are dark, and because Krishna is dark.

VIII

AND every danda a hundred times will see
Radha come out, but return immediately.

Heavily breathing as one whose heart grows fonder,
She looks to the kadamba forest* yonder.

Why is the Maid so changed ? The elders may
Be stern; but does she care for what they say?

Surely by evil spirit she is possessed ;
Her scarf is not in place; she cannot rest.

Now she puts on her ornaments, and then
She takes them off; then puts them on again.

Daughter of kings, and in the prime of youth
Is Radha, and a virtuous wife in sooth.

Why to her longing does she give such scope ?
What is her wish ? what her desire, her hope ?

I cannot understand her wiles. 'Tis clear
The Maid is asking for the moon. 'But hear
What Chandidasa saith, and don't upbraid.
'Tis Kaliya who hath bewitched the Maid.'

*Padahalpataru** Vol. I, p. 27.

* Because she first met Krishna there.

IX

How should Radha's body singly stand

Darts showered by Love's own never-resting hand ?

In my dreams I travelled to a distant land,
And Kanu was with me, and held my hand.

O whispering black bee, whisper in his ear
The pains that night and morning I endure :
Tell him my prayer—that, I being gone from here,
He pour of water the oblation pure.

'Now Raja Siva, husband of Lakshmi Devi,
Knoweth that sentiment,' Vidyapati sayeth.

Vidyapali No. 648, p. 389.

X

ONLY a Lover can understand

The beat of the Loved one's heart.

For me the charms of the world depart:

I lie in my Love's one hand.

Over the household work I start,

And ever my soul is making moan,

And none can prevent it. On my life,

Among the folk, or here alone,

I feel like a tinker's* wife.

In the house the elderly people heap

Abuse on my head all day :

Bitter as death are the things they say

From morning till time to sleep.

And my Beloved it is always

That maketh them do such bane.

There is no soul to take my part;

None knoweth the aching of my heart;

To whom should I then complain ?

Chandidas saith: 'The happy way

Is boldly all your love to say.'

Padakalpatara. Vol. i, p.

* *Thief's wife in the original.*

XI

FOR the fragrant sandal tree—and serving
It, I thought desire would be fulfilled—
I mistook him; but simtil tree merely,
Thorny, fragrantless, he proves to be.
Madhava, though where I dwell he dwelleth,
Hath become enamoured of another.
I, a damsel lovely, so accomplished—
I have lost my pride and all my beauty.
Friend, the lotus¹ thrown into the basket,
Made of bitter nim² leaves, withereth,
And the wild rice⁸ groweth sweet and blooming.
It hath chanced my Love this day is coming
After days spent with her—oh, so many !—
But how meet whom now my heart distrusteth ?

Vidyapati saith in song: ' O Maiden,
He, thy swain, in proper season cometh.
Maid arise, and let thy heart be joyful;
For thy swain, for lo ! thy swain, there cometh,'

Vidyapati No. 426, p. 26a

1. Herself. 2. Signifying separation. 3. The rival.

XII

IN my pride I built a palace,
And my Lover was to hold me there
In his arms, like wine within a chalice,
All the night long that the moon made fair.

When the cuckoo called with his voice
Unto his mate, I clad myself in robes
Whose colours were to make my Love rejoice,
And so these ornaments and pearly globes.

Someone unknown hath lured my Love away :
Broken my palace—who could think such sin ?
How shall I live the whole night through till day,
Outside the joy all others pant within ?

These betels spiced and camphored—unto whom
To give them now ? and ye, Malati flowers,
Wreathed to make glad my Lover in this room,
How shall I breathe throughout the lonely hours ?

Why do I not die quickly ? Is there still
Hope in these breasts that only feel their woes ?
' Patience, my Lady; soon you have your will!'
So saying, Narottama Dasa goes.

Padakalpataru. Vol. i, p. 234.

XIII

NAY, since thou flutest, flutest, flutest so,
The damsel doth but yearn the more, the more ;
And how should she make her feelings not to show,
Now thy beauty's charm is revealed unto the core ?

Like the waning moon in the day-time glare
She looks, because she keeps awake night after night;
And sorrow that is more than any heart could bear
Pales her with grief, and her breathing ceases quite.

Everybody says that if you meet her now,
For Gokul 'twill be good, 'twill be good, it will;
And Jndnaddsa saith; 'Nay, Syam, but hearkea thou:
Thy name is panacea for her every ill.'

Padakalpataru. Vol. i, p. 33-

XIV

JATAKI, Ketaki, and Kunda all,
With blossom of Mango are sweetly scented.
That one the best we call
Which by the black bee is the most frequented.

All scent the air :
All honey bear;
So it is only by the test
That we can tell which is the best.

Say that to Kanu, say,
Dear Friend, in thy sweet way.

Or will he never come again to me,
Who am unworthy, even as the bee
Visits not honeyless flowers ? Who plays
A losing game, the good to him doth seem
As evil, and defeat o'ertaketh him,
With ridicule from all who pass that way.

Vidyapati. No. 497, p. 305,

XV

LISTEN, my friend. His love doth take away
My life. It was indeed an evil day
When first my eyes saw Kanu; for from then
Is nothing else within my heart. I run
After the fire of love. I stop, and then
I run again.

With water you may quench another fire,
But not one that was kindled by desire.
Try to put that flame out, and you will see
It burn with double vigour. A forest fire
Is lit up in the wood, but not in me
Is such a flame to see.

But touch my body, touch it with your hand,
O my sweet Friend, and you will understand.
The fire of separation comes thereout,
Of severance from Syama. Like a brand
Flaming with fire that never could go out
Is all my heart about.

At severance from Syama ever weeping ;
And longing for him in my heart still keeping-
Keen pain while I draw breath 1
' But listen, Lady,' Chandidasa saith.
' If you accept the stigma with delight,
The pain will vanish quite.'

Padakalpalaru Vol. i, p. 45.

XVI

IN a lonely place apart
Radha sits in pain of heart.
She will not listen to anyone,
In meditation deep remaining ;
To the clouds that veil the sun,
Dark*, her eyes are ever straining.
' I have no appetite for food', she said,
' And like a devotee am wearing red.'

Soon she unfolds the tresses of her head,
Unbraiding them, and now she looks awhile
At the dark flowing locks* ; then with a smile
She gazes at the heavens, and, stretching out
Her arms to the dark clouds*, she says a word,
Not understood, nor even rightly heard.

Now at neck of peacock* and of hen*
She gazes long; and Chandidasa then
Says at the little poem's end:
' These are signs by which to know
The Maiden's love for Kaliya, her friend.'

Padakalpataru. Vol. I, p. 25.

* At these because they are dark, and because Krishna is dark.

XVII

W H A T has the fire burnt to the ground but this,
The cottage that I set up for my bliss ?

For all my pumping of the nectar-sea
Nothing but bitter venom comes to me.

The thing I cannot tell, sweet Friend, is what
May be preparing for me in my lot.

Cooling and soothing was the moon to be—
Like to the blazing sun it scorseth me.

I climbed a mountain to be up on high—
Under a depth of water now I lie.

Fortune I sought, and, oh, how poor I am.
I lost so easily the precious gem.

I banked the sea, and built a town thereby—
The gem is gone, and all the sea is dry.

I sought the cloudy heavens to quench my thirst,
And in return the thunderbolt has burst.

Saith Chindidasa now: ' The love of Syama
Is in thy heart, left as a shaft of Kama.'

Padakalpataru. Vol. i, p. 139.

XVIII

WAS it a cup of poison that he left,
Which, milk and nectar mixed,
Once slipped my lips betwixt,
But now of all its sweetness is bereft ?

Full of a draught so bitter, bitter, bitter,
How shall I now be glad and full of cheer ?
The fire one kindles among straw and litter,
Easy it is to see, easy to hear;
But there are flames that never are illumed :
By such a fire my being is consumed.

Fanned by each breath,
How shall that flame be quenched in such a
drought ?

' Nay.' Chandidas soon saith,

⁴ One touch of Kanu, and it goeth out !'

Padakalpataru. Vol. I, p. 157.

XIX

**OH , love, oh, love—so love is sweet, say men ?
Why is my loving full of venom then ?**

**So no more among talkers will I roam,
But to my loveliness make love at home.**

**Being thus calmed, shall I not win the whole—
So to be reconciled with my own soul ?**

**Saith Chndidds, the twice-born : ' Nay ; for your
Beauty will win him. Oh, but that is sure I'**

Padakalpataru, Vol I, p. 163.

XX

GREATLY tired and sore at heart,
Radha's messenger wayfaring,
To her eyes the tears start,
Kdnu's cruel answer bearing.
In a voice that sobs did choke :
' O my Lady,' thus she spoke,
' The hopes of Kanu that inspire
Thy loving breast have all been spent
Upon a stone, and thy desire
Has no prospect of fulfilment.
The tortures of thy soul love-laden
I did tell, and that thou art
An anxious and a troubled maiden;
But his answer how impart ?
His words like to a red-hot bar
Burning fiercely, so they are.'

These sad tidings in a trice
Made Radha's soul and body part
In a faint, and they did pierce
Paramdnandasa's heart.

Padakalpataru. Vol. I, p. 122.

XXL

O MADHAVA, the accomplished, hearken thou—
If thou wouldst see the damsel, hasten now.

She has lain down upon a bed of leaves:
The dart of Love has hurt her, and she grieves.

The breeze, the moonbeams, and the sandal paste—
All these to her seem like a burning fire.

She is sustaining life, that would expire,
For one more look at thee—so haste, oh, haste !

She muttered half a word, and then was dumb.
What may have happened since ?—oh, come; oh, come I

Kinu, the gallant, deep in amorous art,
Who is there who should better know his part ?

So saith Narottdma Dasa.

Padakalpataru. Vol. I, p. 207.

XXII

FRIEND, more hope is none to-night
Of seeing him; for fast
Waneth night; and with it goes,
All my hope at last.
Let them say: now Radha throws
In Jamuna new leaves bright
For the bed, and sandal paste,
Scented water, betels too,
Necklace, precious stones—oh, haste,
Cast them in—and other new
Thousand things for love's delight.

Find thou means that I o'ercome
My grief—but, Friend, oh, find thou some.
Why my life departs it not,
Kanu lost, not Kanu got ?
Cursed art thou, Fate; curst be
Thy dispensation, since to me
Fell this night without him spent.

Valarama made a third,
Coming running, and he heard
Darling Radha thus lament.

Padakalpataru. Vol. I, p. 238.

XXIII

IS then Radha now the evening's single,
 inauspicious star,
Or the moon when early days of the month
 of Bhadra are ?

One of them I resemble—canst thou tell me which,
 O Friend,
That my Lord a look, when smiling, unto me should
 never send ?

What faults caused his displeasure—canst thou
 tell me that, my dear ?
He did find me aye obedient, nor did ever harsh
 word hear.

As the lotus of the water ever doth unto the moon,
So, with my love, whene'er we met, I tried
 to please him soon.

Says Vidyapati: ' My good Lady, King Siva has the
 handsomest face.
Lakshmi Devi's husband rivals Kama even
 in personal grace.'*

Padakalpataru. Vol. I, p. 122.

* This compliment to the poet's patrons is without relevance
to Radha's plaint.

XXIV

WITHIN a bower that flowers clambering cover
Krishna thinketh of his beloved Radha,
Anxiously, as every waiting lover.

' Stibala, tell me.' Krishna now is saying,
' Have her elders, think you, stopped her coming,
Or is it anger, and therefore this delaying ?

' Or has she of a sudden towards her people
More loving grown, or is it the heat that hinders—
know not if it augurs good or evil.

How passes she the time, the tender Maiden ?'
' O All-accomplished,' Subala now sayeth,
'Shekara says you soon will meet the Maiden.

Vidyapati. No. 255, p, 155.

XXV

THE night is already waning.

What may the Maid have met
In ways by snakes infested,
And by other dangers set ?
God bring, all safe and unafraid,
Unto the bower the timid Maid.

May she encounter nothing
To trouble her sweet heart,
'Neath cloudy sky, o'er miry ground,
While we are still apart.
In darkness of the night so deep
One steps, but stumbles as in sleep.

But here is the little Maiden.
She comes, she comes! Oh, say
Were you, then, all unmindful
Of the dangers of the way ?
'Love conquers every danger quite,
Says Vidyapati, and says aright,'

Vidyapati No. 256, p. 155.

XXVI

TAKE thy nupuras off, I say,
Young lady, and thy mekhala.
Put on a yellow sari. Stay
Idle no more, nor make thee, Sweet,
Ridiculous thereby. It may
Be much too late, if more delay,
To reach where thou wast asked to meet
Thy lover. Go and see him now.
He waits for thee, sweet Maid, and thou
Shalt pleasure have of him no doubt.

Daub thy body all about
With fragrant sandal paste, and tint
Thy lashes with collyrium black.
Still is dark ; the moon doth lack.
Meanwhile should it rise and drink
The darkness off, then people seeing
Thee, of thee would evil think,
And would evil speak, agreeing.

Vidyapati saith : 'Murari
Is incarnate—Maiden, hear me—
In his shape who doth so love thee,'

Vidyabati. No. 240, p. 145

XXVII

THE Maid adorns herself to-day:
 There is a tryst to bide.
She goes, but often on the way
 She starts and looks aside,
Trembling with shyness and with fear :
The doors are shut, but folk may hear.
With her blue sari covers she
 Herself, and in her heart
Full many pleasant hopes agree
 To stay, nor soon depart.
In one love-laden happily
'Tis surge and swell as of the sea.
The way that she has to go is found
 By clever comrade dear.
The Maiden's eyes are on the ground,
 In shyness, not in fear.
So on she goes, in love to make
The air all scented in her wake.
As golden creeper moves to seek
 The young tamala tree,
And finds it in the end, though weak,
 Moving persistently.
And clasps it in a close embrace,
So she hath found the trysting-place.

Vidyapatl No. 257, p. 156.

XXVIII

RADHA with vermilion the sun
on her forehead traced,
And the stars with scented earth,
and the moon with sandal paste.

The expectation of finding
her lover that she had,
At the tiy sting-place, when the hour came,
was making the Maiden glad.

In an arrow imitated,
and as the arrow fair,
Like the Love-God's floral dart,
the Maiden dressed her hair.

O Madhava, I watched her dress herself,
with' - clever friend,
To help, and a look of compassion
she knew to send at the end,

She adorned her hair with Champaka,
and with fresh leaves from the bud
Of Ketaki, and her body with powder
of musk she rubbed.

Cleverly thus **by** the sign of the leaves,
and by the sign of the flower *
The Maiden indicated when she wished
the trysting hour.

Says Vidyapati: 'Hear me,
O unclouded spirit, bright,
As Rupanardiyana knoweth,
comes the darkling, new-moon night,'
Vidyapati. No. 248, p. 150.

* **Flowering at night and hence indicating an hour of the night.**

XXIX

You must bide tryst tonight,

Darling, the moon is full;

So I have come. With the light

Your complexion will mingle, and who

Will be able to tell which is which ?

Never seen was the like of you,

The non-pareil, in this great

World, yet to light you prefer

The darkness your looks dissipate.

Your liking for dark, so strange,

To your own complexion opposed,

Is a thing that, dear, you should change.

Radha her friend understood;

Then forth to the trysting-place,

With love her guide through the wood.

Then said Vidyapati: ' Right.

The beautiful Maiden met

Her love in the moon-lit night,'

Vidyapatu No. 310, p. 188.

XXX

ALL her hair with Kunda flowers she covers.
and her necklace rests
With the camphor-scented sandal paste she daubed
upon her breast.

Love inspires her soul so eager. The moonlight is a
brilliant white;
So that Radha's heart is yearning Hari for
to meet to-night.

Dressed in sari white, and being all herself as
white in face,
She is undiscovered, seen not, going to the
try sting-place.

In the moonlight indistinguishable, as a figure is of tin
In quicksilver, nothing hinders that her heart's
desire she win.

That they watch her, her superiors, hath no place
within her mind.
' Glory-white, the Maiden cometh, in the bower
her love to find.'

So saith Govindadasa.

Padakalpataru. Vol. I, p. 197,

XXXI

THUS Radha her heart to her companion eased :
I will not mind though the elders should be displeased
I will be true to my word, and go to-night.

I shall rub my body all over with sandal scent;
I shall wear my pearls and my jewelled ornament;
With collyrium I shall paint my lashes. White

Will be my clothes, and I shall slowly go
To the trysting-place, though a thousand moons
should show,

Illumining earth and sky. I shall not prevent

The people from looking at me. I shall not hide
Myself, and however the others speak and chide,
I shall take whatever is said as a compliment

Paid to my love. ' O Maiden, courage great
Achieves success, and the great King Sivasfmha,
And his consort, Siirama,'
Says Vidyapati, ' your passion appreciate,'

Vidyapatu No. 309, p. 188.

XXXII

BEAUTIFUL as the moon she goeth
Tryst to bide. Her heart love showeth,
And joy her animated spirit knoweth.

Scented with camphored sandal paste, and 'neath
Her heaving breast of Malati flowers a wreath,
The bright moon lighting the woodland
up for miles,

Goes Radha, and speaking to her friend she smiles,
Showing her teeth as beautiful and white
As ever Kunda flowers were. And right
The pearls around her neck, the gold
Upon her arms. She comes, made bold,
Unto the bower. Even so inspired by Kama,
By love, Andntaddsa goeth to Sydma.

Padakalpataru. Vol. I, p. 229.

XXXIII

MALLIKA in plenty and Malati are blown,
And the bees to hover over them, and to hum are flown.
Lo, where the maiden Radha goeth forth to bide
Tryst. She feareth greatly, and looketh from

side to side,

As forth she goeth, a maid to plunge in the sea of
love her own.

She goeth with a companion to the trysting-place
to meet

Her Love, with beauty-enhancing, noiseless jewels.

On her feet

She hath nupur, and on her brow the vermilion mark ;
with scent

Of sandal rubbed, and painted lashes ; veiled ;
and she who went

Treading the Siris flowers so soft under her feet
with pain,

Goeth o'er thorns and gravel now, and doth not
once complain.

So love new dispensation makes, and even opposing
ends to meet.

Radharamana understands not what with that love
does not beat.

Padakalpataru. Vol. I, p. 181.

XXXIV

THE night is dark; the sky is overcast.
Only the lightnings flash in the sky's ten corners,
And down the rain pours, thick and cold and fast;
Yet Radha, the darling, now with maidens few,
Hasteneth to the grove to meet her Lover;
And she is muffled in clinging scarf of blue.
Since Love, new wakened, maketh strong the weak,
Radha hath kept the tryst, but not her Lover.
Him, therefore, Jnanadasa goeth to seek.

Padakalpataru. Vol. I, p. 222.

XXXV

IN the bower waits Radha for her lover,
And she shivers, for it is bitter cold.
The breeze bloweth away the blue sari,
The blue sari in which she would her body fold.

Oh, how suffereth she, the sweet maiden I
Palace, and soft bed she left, and the comfort there,
Unto the trysting-place for Kanu's love come hither;
But where is he now, where, where ?

She cometh in and goeth out, expecting
Kanu each moment: anxious is her breath.
Now she sitteth, now standeth, in expectation—
' Painful it is,' Sivaramadasa saith.

Padakalpataru, Vol. I, p. 213

XXXVI

So the Maid speaketh, looking at the trees :
' How the twigs do quiver in the gentle breeze !'
Startled anon, she looketh wistfully;
Then ' Krishna is coming! Mddhava !' says she.
' At your tricks again ! Hiding there behind
The tall tamala tree—but is it really kind
To keep a Maid waiting whom you swore to please ?'

So the Maid speaketh; for it was not he:
' What can the meaning be ? Is it done to tease ?
Nay, I will walk about; indeed I cannot stay.
I wonder if Krishna can have lost his way.
If the jingling music of the mipur I could hear,
Then I should know that he was really near.'

Govindaddsa, the poet, singeth so
Of Krishna and a Maiden long long ago.

Padakalpataru. Vol. i, p. 214.

XXXVII

**SHE, the Maiden, gazelle-eyed, could not come to
meet thee;**

For as she was leaving **to** haste to the trysting-place,
The moon, with silvery beams, came up, and from
earth's face

Drove darkness, and she was shy. What more have
I to tell thee ?

Floral darts sore torture her: the Maiden is nearly
dead.

Heavy the, necklace of pearls that round her throat
she twists,

And troublesome annoyingly grow the bracelets on her
wrists.

She languidly leaning against her friend in profusion
tears doth shed.

She cannot rest, though her bed is spread with tender
leaves new-grown.

She faints in the breeze, and cannot bear the balmy
sandal paste.

Before forlorn, for thy love forlorn, she expireth with a
moan,

GovIndadisa says: 'O Hari, to the Maiden's bower
haste.'

Padakalpataru. Vol. I, p. 122.

XXXVIII

MY dear, leave thou thy anger.
The bed is strewn with flowers.
Thy anger costs too dearly ;
For precious youth is ours.

If this night we suffer
In anger thus to go,
So much of time for ever
Is lost; and do we know

What in our life to-morrow
May fall ? O angry one
Wind blows, light flickers , stars
From the pale heavens run.

Like to a Kimshuka flower
Thy face appears to me,
With, seen upon it,
Radha, a black bee.

Vidyapatu No 365, p. 223.

XXXIX

SMILE and look, O Radha; look and smile to me.
Wouldst thou kill the life in one who loveth thee ?

**The moon, nectar-giving, cooleth the worlds through
space.**

**Why dost thou burn me with the same moon-shaped
face ?**

**Who would not be pleased, seeing dust turned to
gold?**

**'To wish to touch her foot's dust—is that to be too
bold?'**

So saith Jnanadasa.

Padakalpataru. Vol. I, p, 345.

XL

HIS face as the moon gives pleasure,
Yet I turned away my sight.
The moonlight has now no measure :
It scorches my eyes to-night.
His own sweet words I would not hear:
The humming bee now jars my ear.

The touch of his hand I shunned,
Though soft as the springing corn :
The leaves for my bed all sunned
Are pricking me now in scorn.
Why did I let my anger grow ?
I fear that all his love will go.

Fresh and like nectar ever
Was his love that I put aside.
In my body, now he is never
With me, doth venom abide.
The garland he made I would not take:
My necklace now seems like a snake.

Govindadasa says: ' Their evil star
Makes Maids unkind, as often as they are.'

Padakalpataru. Vol. I, p.

XLI

IN the midst of thorns the flower bloweth.
The bee, though maddened by her odour, goeth
Not to her. He wandereth, the bee,
And strayeth everywhere ; but save on thee,
Except, O Malati, upon thy breast,
The bee, he doth not rest.

The full of luscious nectar Malati,
Beautiful, aye meets his eyes, and he,
Eagerly, even at risk of life, desireth
To drink the nectar, Malati, in thee.

On nectar doth his life depend, and thou
So full of it, hast kept it stored, apart
Within thyself. Art not ashamed now ?
Consider well, consider in thy heart—
If the bee die, who guilty of his death ?

" Long as he sippeth,' Vidyapati saith,
' The nectar thy lips give,
The bee so long will live.'

Vidyapati. No 84, p. 55.

XLII

W H E N the eleventh day should be, the eleventh of
the moon waxing,

He would come, he made promise, in the Vaisakh
month.

Then he went away. He touched my breasts heaving—
Sacred to him they were as images of Sambhu—•

Smilingly he spoke, and so I was a believing

Maid ; but the term of pledge is passed, and life to me
Is spent in the hope. In the pangs of such a separa-
tion

A woman could hardly live—then how should she live
to see

In the Vaisakh month fulfilled that pledge ? Counting
the moments

I passed the days, and the days counting I passed the
months;

Counting the months, the years. Now, when the hope
is over,

How can life remain ? It flowers, the mango tree ;

But I am full of grief, and the voice of the cuckoo
faileth.

The days of my youthful bliss will never now return.

He dwelleth afar. In the flower the nectar, by bee
untasted,

Drieth up. Kumkum and the sandal paste me burn.

And who is there that saith that the moonlight cometh
cooling ?

My love is afar—my love, and he hath forgotten me.
Dearly I learn true love from the false—I learn, forsaken.

But Vidyapati saith: ' Fair damsel, hear thou me.
Doubt not the love of thy swain. It is a chance hath taken

Him afar, but in thought he abideth still with thee.'

Vidyapati. No. 728, p. 435.

XLIII

N O W is the glad time, now is Spring;
The mango trees are blossoming ;
Among the blossom the bees are humming ;
Sweet from the south the breezes blow.
Tis only my Lover that is not coming,
And all my heart within is woe.

Think, Friend, oh, think of some device to bring
Madhava hither, now that it is Spring;
Then will these pangs my heart no longer wring.

Love in a body dwelt before ;
But is corporeal now no more.
With bow in hand he chaseth me,
And my lover forsaketh me.
Cruel is he: he points my heart
Straight to the aim of Love's winged dart.

The God of Love was burnt upon a pyre ;
The eyes of Hara scorched him with their fire;
But in the Ahira clan he comes again,
Born to harass the love-lorn with desire.

If I could catch you, I would bind,
O Fate, your feet and hands behind,
Then in a deep, dark well would throw you,
And quickly pay you what I owe you.

Why with beauty of lip and brow,
That her Beloved doth despise,
Did you this Maiden one endow ?
Beauty a blessing is, she cries,
To others, but to her is death.
Oh, hearken what the Maiden saith :
' My pangs increase from day to day :
I cannot bear such pain alway.'

Vidyapati. No. 655, p. 394.

XLIV

THE night is dark; clouds thunder overhead.

How will he come to me,

Who wait expectantly,

Wistfully seated on my prepared bed ?

What other thing, O Friend, could there be done ?

Love brought me all the way,

Taught not to fear or stay:

How without sight of him to endure till night is run ?

My dreams are gone: the lightning scorcheth sore

My heart; the thunder roll

Re-echoes in my soul.

But Jnanadasa sayeth : ' Your Love is at the door.'

Padakalapataru. Vol. I, p. 222.

XLV

NAY: if Radha listening spoke no word,
It was for very joy of what she heard.

Well her companion knew what she desired,
And how the little Maid should be attired.

In white, so that no prying eye should know
Whither the little Maiden meant to go.

She takes her hand, and like the wind they speed—
Oh, that was running rapidly indeed.

Rai to the bower came as the moon goes past,
Riding the air, and Kanu caught her fast.

Gently she spoke, and coyly turned away
At Kanu's touch,' and that was all the play.'

So saith VidyapatL

Vidyapatu No. 258, p. 156.

XLVI

IN a sari of the colour of the rain-clouds dressed,
In her right hand holding a white lotus pressed,
And betels in her left, she walked all the way—
I brought her to thee, Madhava, at thy request.

Thou hast kept her, O Madhava, far too long.
She came when it was time to sing the Gouri song.
The crows now are cawing : the horizon, lo !
And the moon grow pale—thou hast done a wrong.

Vidyaiatu No. 318, p. 305.

XLVII

OH , listen, Hari ; have patience ; oh, listen unto me.
The hour of love is over; the stars we cannot see.
The advent of the morning—listen !—the cuckoos hail.
And the lips of the moon—Hari—oh, see! they are
growing pale.

Both chakava and peacock now have sung their praise;
The village cows, forth wandering, are being led to
graze.

My lips, stained red with betel, now have lost their hue.
Time there is no longer for pleasure for us two.

'Truly it is not proper that thou shouldst keep
her still,'

Saith Vidyapati; 'and the folk of thee are speak-
ing ill.'

Vidyapati. No. 321, p. 196.

XLVIII

OH , what a happiness this night has been,
With my Beloved's lovely moon-face seen.

I feel my life and maidenhood well spent,
And peace reigns in the world's ten-quartered tent.

Home is now home; now, by his sight and touch
My body consecrated, is worth much.

Let a hundred thousand cuckoos their descants sing,
And hundred thousand moons the heavens ring.

Come the south breeze, and Kama's five arrows turn
Once into fifty thousand darts, then twice.

When, in his presence my body again shall burn,
I shall regard it as consecrated thrice.

Says Vidyapati: 'O Lady, fortunate are you,
And may your love prosper which is ever new.'

Vidyapati. No. 812, p. 50.

GLOSSARY

- Ahira, a cowherd.
Anjana, collyrium.
Bhadra, August—September.
The moon in this month is regarded as inauspicious.
Braja, the village where Krishna and Radha lived.
Chakava, the ruddy sheldrake.
Chakora, Greek partridge.
Champaka flowers, fragrant yellow flowers of the *Michelia* genus.
Danda, a period of twenty-four minutes.
Ganga, Ganges.
Gokul, Gokula, the village where Krishna spent his boyhood.
Gopi, cowherd.
Goun song, sung during the evening.
Hara, epithet of Siva, third member of the Hindu Trinity.
Hari, epithet of Vishnu, of whom Krishna is regarded as the *avatara*, or incarnation.
Jamuna, the river Jumna,
Jataki, jasmine.
Kadamba, tree that flowers during the rainy season.
Kaliya, epithet of Krishna, *i.e.*, the Black One.
Kama, the Indian God of Love,
Kanchala, corset worn by Indian ladies of yore.
Kanu, epithet of Krishna.
Kanai (the Black One), changed by endearment to *Kanu*.
Ketaki, the screwpine flower.
Kimshuka, tree that has large red flowers in early spring.
Kumkum, a ball made of sealing wax, filled with red powder.
It is thrown by holiday-makers at each other at such festivals as the Holi.
Kunda, small white flower of the jasmine type, slightly fragrant.
Lakshmi Devi, consort of King Sivasimha, the patron of Vidyapati.
Malati, creeper that has white and sweetly scented flowers in the rainy season.
Mallas, anklets worn by Indian ladies.
Malhka, sweetly scented flower of the jasmine type.
Manmatha, epithet of Kama.
Mekhala, ornamental chain worn by Indian women on the hips.
Murari, epithet of Vishnu, and also of Krishna, as Vishnu's *avatara*.
Nandakishora, Nanda's son, *i.e.*, Krishna.
Nandanandana, Nanda's son, *i.e.*, Krishna.
Narayana, epithet of Vishnu and Krishna.
Navamallika, Mallika.
Nim, the Margosa tree. It has a bitter essence.
Nupur, jingling anklet worn by Indian ladies.
Prayag, Hindu name of Allaha-

- Radharamana, Radha's lover, *i.e.*, Krishna.
- Rai, Radha.
- Rupanarayana, another name of King Sivasimha.
- Sambhu, an epithet of Siva.
- Sari, the cloth, six yards long, that forms an Indian woman's dress.
- Sekhara, a title of Vidyapati.
- Shekhara, Sekhara.
- Shyama, Syama.
- Simul, the silk-cotton tree : it is large and thorny, and bears flowers of no fragrance.
- Siris flowers, fragrant white flowers growing on a spreading tree found wild in most part of India.
- Siva, third member of the Hindu Trinity.
- Sivasimha, King of Mithila, the patron of Vidyapati.
- Subala, Suvala.
- Sumeru, mythological hill, the abode of gods.
- Surana, another name of Lakshmi Devi, consort of King Sivasimha.
- Suvala, friend of Krishna.
- Syam, Syama, (the Dark One), epithet of Krishna.
- Tamala, the palmyra palm.
- Todalas, anklets worn by Indian ladies.
- Vaisakh, April-May, the first month of the Hindu year.
- Yamuna, Jamuna.

