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VIPRA DAMODAR.

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VIPRA DAMODAR.

By

SREE SREE SANKAR DEO

The Great Religious Reformer
and Poet of Assam.



Rendered into English verse

By

Benudhar Rajkhowa B. A.



With an Introduction

By

Durgeshwar Sarma B. A., B. L.

Assam Civil Service



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INTRODUCTION.

We are born with the idea that the material world has no real existence and all what we see* around us is only a creation of our mind. As a necessary corollary to such a conception, we have been asked, times without number, to think that material poverty and material prosperity can never be two separate conditions in life : because both are phantoms without real existence. A man may feel rich only with a few morsels of grain, and he may as well feel poor even when he is rolling upon gold. The difference in the two conditions exists relatively as long as we are steeped in this material world ; but once we come in contact with the Great One, we cease to feel the effects of matter upon us either by its want, or by its overflow. Such was the case with Bipra Damodar : being overpressed with poverty, under the advice of his wife, he proceeded to Dwaraka to lay his grievances without reserve before the Supreme Lord, and after spending a night with Him, he returned home to find it transformed into a land of plenty. But the change made no difference to Bipra Damodar. For there was no change, not in the sense we popularly understand it ; the real transformation was in Bipra Damodar's mind brought about by the magnetic touch of the Great Lord he felt during his stay with the Lord only for a single night. The whole world is ours, all the happiness is ours only if we know how to attain it. Lord Krishna Himself tells us (Gita, 9—22) :—

“To those who worship Me and Me alone without a second thought and yet united with Me, I assure full resources (spiritual and temporal).”

DURGESWAR SARMA.

Vipra Damodar.



CHAPTER I.

1.

Vipra Damodar, a Brahmin,
Pure as the white sea-sand,
Lived free from guile and free from sin,
The best man in the land.

2.

He was poor and sad was his fate,
He had no rice to eat ;
The Lord Krishna was his dear mate,
In the *guru's* retreat.

3.

His wife came, oppress'd with feeling,
Her steps were heavy, slow ;
She spake with her sweet lips trembling,
In accents, sad and low :—

4.

“I was born under the ill star !
Ah, listen to my word,—
There liveth in Dwaraka far
Thy friend Krishna the Lord.

5.

“He is the great merciful Self,
Lakshmee’s ever-dear mate !
He will give nice cloths and pelf,
If He knoweth thy state.

6.

“He giveth him who at His feet
His mind and heart doth lay ;
Balk me not, success thou wilt meet,
Throw not my word away.”

7.

The Brahmin thought this advice sane,
Made up his mind and said,
“I have certainly much to gain
From this visit sacred.”

8.

He said, “Get some *sandesh*, go,
For presentation to the King ; ”
She went and brought some *chira*, lo !
Four handfuls by begging.

9.

She tied it in a tatter'd sheet,
To him she pass'd it on ;
He left to see dear Krishna's feet
To Dwaraka anon.

10.

Wistful to see Krishna anon,
The Brahmin lightly went ;
Pass'd the three gates and came upon
The harem resplendent.

11.

Sixteen thousand palaces shone,
Like the Vaikuntha fair ;
'Twas Krishna's inmost seclusion,
The Yadus couldn't come there.

12.

The Brahmin enter'd a house neat,
Him on way none dared chide ;
The Lord was on a golden seat,
With Sabya by His side.

13.

Krishna saw him, got down the board,
Hurried with all His charms ;
Of the three worlds the Overlord
Embraced him with both arms.

14.

The Lord's figure in joy did shake,
His tears fast trickled down ;
He caused His good old friend to take
The superb golden throne.

15.

The High Lord wash'd the Brahmin's feet,
His head touch'd the water ;
He smear'd him well by His hands neat ;
With sweet scents instanter.

16.

The Lord burnt incense then and there,
Worshipp'd him all the while ;
Sabya, Krishna's consort so dear,
Fann'd him with a sweet smile.

17.

In wonder to and fro did run,
The men of the recess ;
"The beggar Brahmin must have done
Deeds of merit countless."



CHAPTER II.

1.

Hari laugh'd, held him by the hand,
Recall'd the good old days ;
Described the story to his friend
Of their life's early stage :—

2.

“The wife of the *guru* one day
Bade us fetch firewood best ;
We tuck'd up our dress, prompt and gay,
Hied to the deep forest.

3.

“We collected bundles of wood,
Each took one on shoulder ;
Walk'd back in a leisurely mood ;
Then came down a shower.

4.

“The storm and the thunder did frown ;
The earth seem'd a wide sea ;
And suddenly the sun dropp'd down ;
No way out we could see.

5.

“Indescribably we suffer’d ;
Alas ! no way we found ;
From hand to foot we shiver’d ;
We walk’d, walk’d round and round.

6.

“The journey greatly troubled us all ;
The grim night pass’d away ;
Upward the sun slowly did crawl,
And there appear’d bright day.

7.

“Came out the *guru*, revered, old,
In morose, gloomy mood ;
Found us all shivering in cold
In a part of the wood.

8.

“He became sad, and spake thus mild—
‘For me you suffer’d rough ;
Spent the night in the forest wild ;
My debt you have paid off.’

9.

“‘I am pleased at your behaviour ;
Here you now take this boon—
Do master all the abstruse lore.’
And we became wise soon.

10.

“Oft we suffer’d much in that land,
Remember these wholly.”
The Brahmin, folding palms of hand,
Spake to Krishna slowly :—

11.

“Thou Eternal, the One, the Prime,
Fulfill’d is my life’s goal,
As together we liv’d some time,
Friends in the *guru’s* hall.

12.

“Salvation, virtue, wealth, desire
Are his who prayeth Thee!
Thou read Thine own *shastras*, O Sire,
'Tis a grand mystery !”

CHAPTER III.

1.

Hrishiksha, the All-knower,
Said in a good fashion—
“Give me thou bringest whatever
Toward presentation.

2.

“The good man’s flowers and water
Me do instantly bind ;
Precious things o the vile boaster
Leave no trace on my mind.

3.

“Give me thou bringest whatever,
O my beloved mate.”
The Brahmin got flush’d instanter
With feelings delicate.

4.

To present so trifling a thing
The Brahmin had heart naught ;
Shame did thrust its down-headed sting ;
Thereupon the Lord thought :—

5.

“Unto me did he always bow,
With desire of wealth ne'er ;
He's come to see me even now
To please his partner dear.

6.

“I will give him wealth orient,
Not attainable of men.”
The Lord got out the mean present,
Searching his person then.

7.

Open'd the bounle the great Sire,
And said “Ah, 'tis so nice !
Pleaseth me with the world entire
These handfuls of fried rice.”

8.

He took a morsel of the food ;
Ate it, unperturb'd, calm ;
'Gain took a morself the Lord good,
When Lakshmee seized the palm.

9.

Lakshmee gave a hint with her eye,
That one morsel could give
All the great wealth and power high
That one wish'd to achieve.

10.

Hari dropp'd the morsel of fare,
Laugh'd heartily the while ;
The poor Brahmin stay'd the night there,
In a right royal style.

11.

A nice bed-stead was laid apace
With a mattress cozy ;
The Brahmin sept and found the place
The paradise rosy.

12.

He left the place on the morrow ;
Took his leave, still and mute ;
The Lord embraced him with sorrow ;
Gave the parting salute.

13.

The Lord walk'd out with him some way,
Sent him with word winsome ;
He got no wealth, nor did he say
Why did he at all come.

14.

“To the *bhakats* the Lord is kind,
And to the Brahmin, see !
The Lord, the All-highest I find
Loving a worm like me.

15.

“ He offer'd me His golden seat,
And wash'd my feet anon ;
Lakshmee fann'd me with her hand neat,
And my fatigue was gone.

16.

“ The Lord Almighty, whose good feet
Giveth treasure unseen,
With a raving smile did eat
My food, dingy and mean.

17.

“ I 'm sure, He gave me not treasure,
Lest Him I might forget,
If I who am a great pauper
At once rich did I get.”

18.

Slow and sad, he wended his way ;
He came near his region ;
Lo ! untold superb cars there lay
That shone forth like the sun.

19.

Ah ! 'twas a ponoramic scene !
The birds sang melody ;
Beautiful and great lakes were seen,
With plants blooming, gaudy.

20.

Men and women in good order
Stroll'd along, gay and free ;
The poor Brahmin cried in wonder,
"Whose palace this might be !

21.

" 'Tis not my house, where am I come !"
He could say no more word.
People muster'd strong with a hum ;
Music play'd in concord.

22.

The Brahmin's wife then walk'd on slow
In a royal fashion ;
A thousand maids did her follow
In a fine procession.

23.

With an ethereal garb on,
The good lady came there ;
Hath Lakshmee stepp'd out in person
From her stately tower ?

24.

She advanced and saw her husband ;
Tears flow'd in sudden thrill ;
She closed her eyes with her trim hand,
And for a while stood still !

25.

The lady bow'd to her consort,
Embraced him mentally ;
Ah ! she stood there in superb port,
An angel really.

26.

The couple met amidst high cheer,
They came to the recess ;
Rejoiced greatly in their new sphere,
Clad in exquisite dress.

CHAPTER, IV.

1.

The rafters were gold brilliant,
Marble stone deck'd the floor,
The posts were superb adamant,
Crystal glass made each door.

2.

The household things were made of gold ;
Rare bedsteads fill'd the hall ;
The beds were soft as foam, behold !
Unknown gems shone in all.

3.

Canopies were skilfully set
With garlands of pearls, see !
Sounding the musical anklet,
The girls like nymphs walk'd free.

4.

Shining chandaliers were seen there,
There was not a dark spot ;
More wealth came to the happy pair
Than what Indra had got.

5.

The Brahmin reflected thiswise—
“ 'Tis the Lord's gift so kind!
To him a mean thing is a prize,
Given with heart and mind.

6.

“The good Lord ate with great pleasure
One morsel of my rice,
And he gave me all this treasure,
So abundant and nice.

7.

“Let me always call in this earth
The Lord as my friend dear ;
I'll be his slave in ev'ry birth,
Let *Maya* come not near.”

8.

Enjoy'd the wealth the Brahmin fain,
With his wife beloved ;
Slowly he gave up things mundane,
His soul to God he led.

9.

Vishnu, the unconquerable,
Is conquer'd by the good ;
He knew this and made his mind stable
On God in pious mood.

10.

He made Faith his best, life-long mate ;
He found *Maya* and won—
At last attain'd the blissful state,
With the Lord became one !

11.

Krishna is the One, the Lord High,
The rare gem of the neat ;
To him fulfilment cometh nigh,
Who hath faith at His feet.

12.

The man hath his true devotion
Augmented ev'ry day,
Who heareth with fix'd attention
This charming, divine lay.

13.

Sankar sayeth, Let men now chant
The Lord Krishna's fair fame ;
In Kali Age, all talk is cant,
Save the Lord's holy Name !

14.

For the Vaikuntha endeavour,
Life is fast dwindling sure ;
Give up all *Maya*-bound matter,
Shout Krishna's Name, so pure !

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