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**Indian Poetry Containing "The
Indian Song of Songs," from the
Sanskrit of the Gîta Govinda of
Jayadeva, Two books from "The
Iliad Of India" (Mahábhárata),
"Proverbial Wisdom" from the
Shlokas of the Hitopadesa, and
other Oriental Poems.**

Edwin, Sir Arnold

Imprint

This book is part of TREDITION CLASSICS

Author: Edwin, Sir Arnold

Cover design: Buchgut, Berlin - Germany

Publisher: tredition GmbH, Hamburg - Germany

ISBN: 978-3-8472-1790-9

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INDIAN POETRY

CONTAINING

"THE INDIAN SONG OF SONGS," FROM THE SANSKRIT OF THE
GĪTA GOVINDA OF JAYADEVA TWO BOOKS FROM "THE ILIAD
OF INDIA" (MAHÁBHÁRATA) "PROVERBIAL WISDOM" FROM
THE SHLOKAS OF THE HITOPADEŚA, AND OTHER ORIENTAL
POEMS

BY

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FORMERLY PRINCIPAL OF THE DECCAN
COLLEGE, POONA
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BAY

EIGHTH IMPRESSION

LONDON

KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, TRUBNER & CO. L^{TD}

DRYDEN HOUSE, GERRARD STREET, W.

1904

[1]

THE INDIAN SONG OF SONGS.

INTRODUCTION.

OM!

REVERENCE TO GANESHA!

"The sky is clouded; and the wood resembles
The sky, thick-arched with black Tamâla boughs;
O Radha, Radha! take this Soul, that trembles
In life's deep midnight, to Thy golden house."
So Nanda spoke, — and, led by Radha's spirit,
The feet of Krishna found the road aright;
Wherefore, in bliss which all high hearts inherit,
Together taste they Love's divine delight.

*He who wrote these things for thee,
Of the Son of Wassoodee, [2]
Was the poet Jayadeva;
Him Saraswati gave ever
Fancies fair his mind to throng,
Like pictures palace-walls along;
Ever to his notes of love
Lakshmi's mystic dancers move.
If thy spirit seeks to brood
On Hari glorious, Hari good;
If it feeds on solemn numbers.
Dim as dreams and soft as slumbers,
Lend thine ear to Jayadev,
Lord of all the spells that save.
Umapatidhara's strain
Glows like roses after rain;
Sharan's stream-like song is grand,
If its tide ye understand;
Bard more wise beneath the sun
Is not found than Govardhun;*

Dhoyi holds the listener still
With his shlokas of subtle skill;
But for sweet words suited well
Jayadeva doth excel.

[3]

(What follows is to the Music Mâlava and the Mode Rupaka.)

HYMN TO VISHNU

O thou that held'st the blessed Veda dry
When all things else beneath the floods were hurled;
Strong Fish-God! Ark of Men! *Jai! Hari, jai!*
Hail, Keshav, hail! thou Master of the world!

The round world rested on thy spacious nape;
Upon thy neck, like a mere mole, it stood:
O thou that took'st for us the Tortoise-shape,
Hail, Keshav, hail! Ruler of wave and wood!

The world upon thy curving tusk sate sure,
Like the Moon's dark disc in her crescent pale;
O thou who didst for us assume the Boar,
Immortal Conqueror! hail, Keshav, hail!

When thou thy Giant-Foe didst seize and rend,
Fierce, fearful, long, and sharp were fang and nail;
Thou who the Lion and the Man didst blend,
Lord of the Universe! hail, Narsingh, hail! [4]

Wonderful Dwarf! – who with a threefold stride
Cheated King Bali – where thy footsteps fall
Men's sins, O Wamuna! are set aside:
O Keshav, hail! thou Help and Hope of all!

The sins of this sad earth thou didst assail,
The anguish of its creatures thou didst heal;
Freed are we from all terrors by thy toil:

Hail, Purshuram, hail! Lord of the biting steel!

To thee the fell Ten-Headed yielded life,
Thou in dread battle laid'st the monster low!
Ah, Rama! dear to Gods and men that strife;
We praise thee, Master of the matchless bow!

With clouds for garments glorious thou dost fare,
Veiling thy dazzling majesty and might,
As when Yamuna saw thee with the share,
A peasant – yet the King of Day and Night.

Merciful-hearted! when thou earnest as Boodh –
Albeit 'twas written in the Scriptures so –
Thou bad'st our altars be no more imbrued
With blood of victims: Keshav! bending low –
[5]

We praise thee, Wielder of the sweeping sword,
Brilliant as curving comets in the gloom,
Whose edge shall smite the fierce barbarian horde;
Hail to thee, Keshav! hail, and hear, and come,

And fill this song of Jayadev with thee,
And make it wise to teach, strong to redeem,
And sweet to living souls. Thou Mystery!
Thou Light of Life! Thou Dawn beyond the dream!

Fish! that didst outswim the flood;
Tortoise! whereon earth hath stood;
Boar! who with thy tush held'st high
The world, that mortals might not die;
Lion! who hast giants torn;
Dwarf! who laugh'dst a king to scorn;
Sole Subduer of the Dreaded!
Slayer of the many-headed!
Mighty Ploughman! Teacher tender!
Of thine own the sure Defender!
Under all thy ten disguises

Endless praise to thee arises.
[6]

(What follows is to the Music Gurjjarī and the Mode Nihsāra.)

Endless praise arises,
O thou God that liest
Rapt, on Kumla's breast,
Happiest, holiest, highest!
Planets are thy jewels,
Stars thy forehead-gems,
Set like sapphires gleaming
In kingliest anadems;
Even the great gold Sun-God,
Blazing through the sky,
Serves thee but for crest-stone,
Jai, jai! Hari, jai!
As that Lord of day
After night brings morrow,
Thou dost charm away
Life's long dream of sorrow.
As on Mansa's water
Brood the swans at rest,
So thy laws sit stately
On a holy breast. [7]
O, Drinker of the poison!
Ah, high Delight of earth!
What light is to the lotus-buds,
What singing is to mirth,
Art thou – art thou that slayedst
Madhou and Narak grim;
That ridest on the King of Birds,
Making all glories dim.
With eyes like open lotus-flowers,
Bright in the morning rain,
Freeing by one swift piteous glance
The spirit from Life's pain:
Of all the three Worlds Treasure!

Of sin the Putter-by!
O'er the Ten-Headed Victor!
Jai Hari! Hari! jai!
Thou Shaker of the Mountain!
Thou Shadow of the Storm!
Thou Cloud that unto Lakshmi's face
Comes welcome, white, and warm!
O thou, — who to great Lakshmi
Art like the silvery beam
Which moon-sick chakors feed upon [8]
By Jumna's silent stream, —
To thee this hymn ascendeth,
That Jayadev doth sing,
Of worship, love, and mystery
High Lord and Heavenly King!
And unto whoso hears it
Do thou a blessing bring —
Whose neck is gilt with yellow dust
From lilies that did cling
Beneath the breasts of Lakshmi,
A girdle soft and sweet,
When in divine embracing
The lips of Gods did meet;
And the beating heart above
Of thee — Dread Lord of Heaven! —
She left that stamp of love —
By such deep sign be given
Prays Jayadev, the glory
And the secret and the spells
Which close-hid in this story
Unto wise ears he tells.

END OF INTRODUCTION.

[9]

SARGA THE FIRST.

SAMODADAMODARO.

THE SPORTS OF KRISHNA.

Beautiful Radha, jasmine-bosomed Radha,
All in the Spring-time waited by the wood
For Krishna fair, Krishna the all-forgetful,—
Krishna with earthly love's false fire consuming—
And some one of her maidens sang this song:—

(What follows is to the Music Vasanta and the Mode Yati.)

I know where Krishna tarries in these early days of Spring,
When every wind from warm Malay brings fragrance on its
wing;

[10] Brings fragrance stolen far away from thickets of the
clove,

In jungles where the bees hum and the Koil flutes her love;
He dances with the dancers of a merry morrice one,
All in the budding Spring-time, for 'tis sad to be alone.

I know how Krishna passes these hours of blue and gold
When parted lovers sigh to meet and greet and closely hold
Hand fast in hand; and every branch upon the Vakul-tree
Droops downward with a hundred blooms, in every bloom a
bee;

He is dancing with the dancers to a laughter-moving tone,
In the soft awakening Spring-time, when 'tis hard to live
alone.

Where Kroona-flowers, that open at a lover's lightest tread,
Break, and, for shame at what they hear, from white blush
modest red;

[11] And all the spears on all the boughs of all the Ketuk-
glades

Seem ready darts to pierce the hearts of wandering youths

and maids;

Tis there thy Krishna dances till the merry drum is done,
All in the sunny Spring-time, when who can live alone?

Where the breaking forth of blossom on the yellow Keshra-
sprays

Dazzles like Kama's sceptre, whom all the world obeys;
And Pâtal-buds fill drowsy bees from pink delicious bowls,
As Kama's nectared goblet steeps in languor human souls;
There he dances with the dancers, and of Radha thinketh
none,

All in the warm new Spring-tide, when none will live alone.

Where the breath of waving Mâdhvi pours incense through
the grove,

And silken Mogras lull the sense with essences of love,—
[12] The silken-soft pale Mogra, whose perfume fine and
faint

Can melt the coldness of a maid, the sternness of a saint—
There dances with those dancers thine other self, thine Own,
All in the languorous Spring-time, when none will live alone.

Where—as if warm lips touched sealed eyes and waked
them—all the bloom

Opens upon the mangoes to feel the sunshine come;
And Atimuktas wind their arms of softest green about,
Clasping the stems, while calm and clear great Jumna
spreadeth out;

There dances and there laughs thy Love, with damsels many
an one,

In the rosy days of Spring-time, for he will not live alone.

Mark this song of Jayadev!

Deep as pearl in ocean-wave
Lurketh in its lines a wonder

Which the wise alone will ponder:

[13] *Though it seemeth of the earth.*

Heavenly is the music's birth;
Telling darkly of delights

In the wood, of wasted nights,
Of witless days, and fruitless love,
And false pleasures of the grove,
And rash passions of the prime,
And those dances of Spring-time;
Time, which seems so subtle-sweet,
Time, which pipes to dancing-feet,
Ah! so softly – ah! so sweetly –
That among those wood-maids featly
Krishna cannot choose but dance,
Letting pass life's greater chance.

Yet the winds that sigh so
As they stir the rose,
Wake a sigh from Krishna
Wistfuller than those;
All their faint breaths swinging
The creepers to and fro
Pass like rustling arrows
Shot from Kama's bow:
[14] Thus among the dancers
What those zephyrs bring
Strikes to Krishna's spirit
Like a darted sting.

And all as if – far wandered –
The traveller should hear
The bird of home, the Koil,
With nest-notes rich and clear;
And there should come one moment
A blessed fleeting dream
Of the bees among the mangoes
Beside his native stream;
So flash those sudden yearnings,
That sense of a dearer thing,
The love and lack of Radha
Upon his soul in Spring.

Then she, the maid of Radha, spake again;
And pointing far away between the leaves
Guided her lovely Mistress where to look,
And note how Krishna wantoned in the wood
Now with this one, now that; his heart, her prize,
[15] Panting with foolish passions, and his eyes
Beaming with too much love for those fair girls –
Fair, but not so as Radha; and she sang:

(What follows is to the Music Râmagirî and the Mode Yati.)

See, Lady! how thy Krishna passes these idle hours
Decked forth in fold of woven gold, and crowned with for-
est-flowers;
And scented with the sandal, and gay with gems of price –
Rubies to mate his laughing lips, and diamonds like his,
eyes; –
In the company of damsels, [1] who dance and sing and play,
Lies Krishna, laughing, toying, dreaming his Spring away.

[1] It will be observed that the "Gopis" here personify the five senses. Lassen says, "*Manifestum est puellis istis nil aliud significar quam res sensiles.*"

One, with star-blossomed champâk wreathed, woos him to
rest his head
On the dark pillow of her breast so tenderly outspread;
[16] And o'er his brow with, roses blown she fans a fragrance
rare,
That falls on the enchanted sense like rain in thirsty air,
While the company of damsels wave many an odorous
spray,
And Krishna, laughing, toying, sighs the soft Spring away.

Another, gazing in his face, sits wistfully apart,
Searching it with those looks of love that leap from heart to

heart;
Her eyes – afire with shy desire, veiled by their lashes
black –
Speak so that Krishna cannot choose but send the message
back,
In the company of damsels whose bright eyes in a ring
Shine round him with soft meanings in the merry light of
Spring.

The third one of that dazzling band of dwellers in the
wood –
Body and bosom panting with the pulse of youthful blood –
[17] Leans over him, as in his ear a lightsome thing to speak,
And then with leaf-soft lip imprints a kiss below his cheek;
A kiss that thrills, and Krishna turns at the silken touch
To give it back – ah, Radha! forgetting thee too much.

And one with arch smile beckons him away from Jumna's
banks,
Where the tall bamboos bristle like spears in battle-ranks,
And plucks his cloth to make him come into the mango-
shade,
Where the fruit is ripe and golden, and the milk and cakes
are laid:
Oh! golden-red the mangoes, and glad the feasts of Spring,
And fair the flowers to lie upon, and sweet the dancers sing.

Sweetest of all that Temptress who dances for him now
With subtle feet which part and meet in the Râs-measure
slow,
[18] To the chime of silver bangles and the beat of rose-leaf
hands,
And pipe and lute and cymbal played by the woodland
bands;
So that wholly passion-laden – eye, ear, sense, soul
o'ercome –
Krishna is theirs in the forest; his heart forgets its home.

*Krishna, made for heavenly things,
'Mid those woodland singers sings;
With those dancers dances feately,
Gives back soft embraces sweetly;
Smiles on that one, toys with this,
Glance for glance and kiss for kiss;
Meets the merry damsels fairly,
Plays the round of folly rarely,
Lapped in milk-warm spring-time weather,
He and those brown girls together.*

*And this shadowed earthly love
In the twilight of the grove,
Dance and song and soft caresses,
Meeting looks and tangled tresses,
[19] Jayadev the same hath writ,
That ye might have gain of it,
Sagely its deep sense conceiving
And its inner light believing;
How that Love – the mighty Master,
Lord of all the stars that cluster
In the sky, swiftest and slowest,
Lord of highest, Lord of lowest –
Manifests himself to mortals,
Winning them towards the portals
Of his secret House, the gates
Of that bright Paradise which waits
The wise in love. Ah, human creatures!
Even your phantasies are teachers.
Mighty Love makes sweet in seeming
Even Krishna's woodland dreaming;
Mighty Love sways all alike
From self to selflessness. Oh! strike
From your eyes the veil, and see
What Love willeth Him to be
Who in error, but in grace,
Sitteth with that lotus-face,
And those eyes whose rays of heaven
Unto phantom-eyes are given;*

[20] *Holding feasts of foolish mirth*
With these Visions of the earth;
Learning love, and love imparting;
Yet with sense of loss upstarting: –

For the cloud that veils the fountains
Underneath the Sandal mountains,
How – as if the sunshine drew
All its being to the blue –
It takes flight, and seeks to rise
High into the purer skies,
High into the snow and frost,
On the shining summits lost!
Ah! and how the Koil's strain
Smites the traveller with pain, –
When the mango blooms in spring,
And "Koo-hoo," "Koo-hoo," they sing –
Pain of pleasures not yet won,
Pain of journeys not yet done,
Pain of toiling without gaining,
Pain, 'mid gladness, of still paining.

[21]
But may He guide us all to glory high
Who laughed when Radha glided, hidden, by,
And all among those damsels free and bold
Touched Krishna with a soft mouth, kind and cold;
And like the others, leaning on his breast,
Unlike the others, left there Love's unrest;
And like the others, joining in his song,
Unlike the others, made him silent long.

*(Here ends that Sarga of the Gīta Govinda entitled
Samodadamodaro.)*

[22]

SARGA THE SECOND.

KLESHAKESHAVO.

THE PENITENCE OF KRISHNA.

Thus lingered Krishna in the deep, green wood,
And gave himself, too prodigal, to those;
But Radha, heart-sick at his falling-off,
Seeing her heavenly beauty slighted so,
Withdrew; and, in a bower of Paradise –
Where nectarous blossoms wove a shrine of shade,
Haunted by birds and bees of unknown skies –
She sate deep-sorrowful, and sang this strain,

(What follows is to the Music Gurjarî and the Mode Yati.)

Ah, my Beloved! taken with those glances,
Ah, my Beloved! dancing those rash dances,
[23] Ah, Minstrel! playing wrongful strains so well;
Ah, Krishna! Krishna with the honeyed lip!
Ah, Wanderer into foolish fellowship!
My Dancer, my Delight! – I love thee still.

O Dancer! strip thy peacock-crown away,
Rise! thou whose forehead is the star of day,
With beauty for its silver halo set;
Come! thou whose greatness gleams beneath its shroud
Like Indra's rainbow shining through the cloud –
Come, for I love thee, my Beloved! yet.

Must love thee – cannot choose but love thee ever,
My best Beloved – set on this endeavor,
To win thy tender heart and earnest eye
From lips but sadly sweet, from restless bosoms,
To mine, O Krishna with the mouth of blossoms!
To mine, thou soul of Krishna! yet I sigh

Half hopeless, thinking of myself forsaken,
And thee, dear Loiterer, in the wood o'ertaken
With passion for those bold and wanton ones,
[24] Who knit thine arms as poison-plants gripe trees
With twining cords – their flowers the braveries
That flash in the green gloom, sparkling stars and stones.

My Prince! my Lotus-faced! my woe! my love!
Whose broad brow, with the tilka-spot above,
Shames the bright moon at full with fleck of cloud;
Thou to mistake so little for so much!
Thou, Krishna, to be palm to palm with such!
O Soul made for my joys, pure, perfect, proud!

Ah, my Beloved! in thy darkness dear;
Ah, Dancer! with the jewels in thine ear,
Swinging to music of a loveless love;
O my Beloved! in thy fall so high
That angels, sages, spirits of the sky
Linger about thee, watching in the grove.

I will be patient still, and draw thee ever,
My one Beloved, sitting by the river
Under the thick kadambas with that throng:
[25] Will there not come an end to earthly madness?
Shall I not, past the sorrow, have the gladness?
Must not the love-light shine for him ere long?

*Shine, thou Light by Radha given,
Shine, thou splendid star of heaven!
Be a lamp to Krishna's feet,
Show to all hearts secrets sweet,
Of the wonder and the love
Jayadev hath writ above.
Be the quick Interpreter
Unto wisest ears of her
Who always sings to all, "I wait,
He loveth still who loveth late."*