

The Lyrics of Gopal Krushna

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Gopal Krushna was a poet in the first half of the nineteenth century. His lyrics invoked the spirit of Bhakti and love in the minds of the Oriyas, and have contributed greatly to the development of Oriya literature. Like the poets of his age he wrote only on religious themes, mainly the love of Radha and Krishna - a passive age in which religion and philosophy were considered as important aspect of human life. Like the contemporary poets, Gopala Krushna wrote in "Chand" literary form, using four rhyming couplets. His lyrics are simple, frank (at times erotic) and sweet (to the extent of being melodious). He uses very few words to express a fact, but has great depth in his writings. The flavour, sentiment and meaning of his lyrics are singular for their passion, metaphysical and divine aspects, touched with aesthetic beauty. No doubt, Gopala Krushna like all other poets of his age followed the Gita Govindam of Jayadev, while writing about the amorous play of Radha and Krishna, his allegory and creations are different and unique. A few examples of his uniqueness are given below, in English translation - through five poems, depicting the various moods and situations in the love play of Radha and Krishna.

The pining of a love lorn Radha, refusing to submit first, to a male, is depicted in her feelings when she hears the flute being played by Krishna, from the Kadamba grove.

What Melody, dearest friend,
From the Kadamba grove; is being heard ?
Nectar showers in my ear cavity;
Ruffling my engrossed life's tranquility.

Disseminating to the distant quarter
It renders dumb, birds and deer
The "light of the Family" is becoming bare,
Unknotting, the navel knot without any care.

Why don't you come near
Why have I this fate to bear ?
Like the Kadamba floret,
My whole body is blooming with fur erect.

The effect of Radha's beauty on Krishna, His yearnings are depicted in the following poem, to Radha through a friend (a Gopi), who is also describing Sri Krishna's Charisma.

The cupid, the fascinator of the mind,
The rain - cloud hued beauty, dearest friend !
Is in your love, Oh ! Golden complexioned ?
Is always delirious, Oh friend !

Like a champak shrub, in full boom
From afar, He looked
Oh ! On getting up, the whole body of the groom,
Began to shiver, Oh friend !

In the Nagakeshara bower,
On your sleeping mattress,
Sitting, He was slowly singing the song, the lovers,
Of Radha, his mistress.

When the cry of the swan, was heard,
From the Yamuna bed,
The "Slayer of Kamsa" does bound,
Thinking it to be your anklet sound.

In the third poem, Radha is telling Lalita about her condition after falling in love with Krishna and her subsequent anger for Krishna on hearing of His dalliance with other Gopis, which melts away on hearing the sound of the flute from the Kadamba grove and her pining to unite mentally and physically with him.

The flute is being played in the kadamba grove,
dear friend !
And Radha's climaxing vanity simmers to an end
Without you, my saviour, I have nothing
I am, the Jewel of my conscinece, losing.

Find the path for me, dearest friend !
Or else my life will come to an end.

Seeing the face of 'Brij Lotus',
I will wipe away my sorrow.
The memory of whom is keeping my mind is a harrow.

My soul has gone to the lord of the flute, so charming
And is in the ocean of nectar dissolving.

Here again Radha's false shame and anger towards an unfaithful Krishna is depicted, when she talks of the immoral dalliance of Krishna with the other Gopis, to a companion (to Gopala Krushna himself).

Salutation to shyam, to his love salutation !
Oh mother ! Let her indulge in that love
whose body is like iron.

I have heard in His connection, of His
friendship with Chandrabali.
Oh mother ! The drums about which are
being beaten in the Braj alley.

To Mathura He went to sell curd
behind the milkmaids,
Oh mother ! Whom he is seducing to
sleep in the Govardhan caves.

If I am found by some one in that position,
I will be drowned in disgrace.
Oh mother ! For my dear life, whom can I face.

Gopala Krushna says, Oh Goddess !
he is for you, in this earth,
Oh mother ! The "moon of Braj" is a
cowherd, by birth.

The last poem is highly rhythmic and depicts Krishna's coaxing and cajoling of Radha, asking her to forgive him and love him, which ultimately ends in the famous "Dehi pada palava mudaram" of Jayadev's Gita Govindam (Krishna touching the feet of Radha). Here Gopala Krushna depicts the scene in his own unique way.

Oh Love ! The amorous ballet,
so colourful is being danced !
Oh soul mate ! Do not sulk, forgive me if I have erred.

My palms are your, lotus feet's, servant,
Oh ! Precious Gem,
your body is like the moon, radiant.

"Shankar's Enemy" has me, fearlessly, inflamed,
Will you not come and rest, on the cot of my lap,
your head ?

Clasping my palms, I am imploring you,
Oh ! Beautiful Jewel,
Not to draw lines on the earth with your nail.

My being is, from last birth, your's purchased.
Pick up, from the dust, your beautiful braid.

Bowing down, her feet, you encase
Desiring Radha's Grace.

Satisfied, the women of Brij return to their houses.
this is what Gopala Krushna muses.

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