

THE
PREMA-SÂGARA

OR OCEAN OF LOVE

BEING A LITERAL TRANSLATION OF THE HINDÎ TEXT
OF LALLÛ LÂL KAVI AS EDITED BY THE LATE
PROFESSOR EASTWICK, FULLY ANNOTATED AND
EXPLAINED GRAMMATICALLY, IDIOMATICALLY
AND EXEGETICALLY BY FREDERIC PINCOTT
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SANSKRIT HITOPADES'A,
ETC., ETC.

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CHAPTER XXIII.

Krishna steals the cowherdesses' clothes while they are bathing—He expounds the spiritual meaning of his action.

S'RĪ S'UKĀDEV, the saint, said :—On the passing away of the autumn season, the winter season came, and excessive cold [and] frost began to occur. [At] that time the Braj girls began to say

¹ *jahñ ke tahñ* means “just in the same place,” that is, without change of position, or motionless.

² *karte haiñ* is here impersonal; the third person plural, without an expressed nominative, is often thus used. The sense is, “What greater penance than this does anyone perform?”

³ For *nitt* read *nit* or *nitya*.

amongst themselves,¹ "Listen, companion! by bathing in the [month of] Ag,han, the sins of birth after birth are departing; and the desire of the heart is accomplished; thus we have heard from the mouth of ancient people." Hearing this statement, it occurred to all of them, thus, "We should bathe [in] Ag,han; undoubtedly we would obtain S'ri Krishṇa [as] a boon."

Having thus reflected, as soon as [it was] dawn, getting up, donning dresses [and] ornaments, all the Braj girls together came to bathe [in] the Jumnā. Having bathed [and] offered an oblation to the Sun, [and] come out of the water, [and] made an earthen [image of] Gaur,² [and] offered sandal-wood, unbroken rice, flowers, [and] fruit, [and] having placed before [it] incense, a lamp, [and] consecrated food, [and] having worshipped, [with] joined hands, inclined head, [and] having gratified Gaur, [they] said, "O Goddess! we have repeatedly asked from you this boon, that S'ri Krishṇa should become our lord." According to this rule, the cowherdesses are continually bathing, fasting all day, eating curds and boiled rice in the evening, [and] sleeping [at night] on the earth, so that they might speedily obtain the reward of their vow.

One day all the Braj girls, collectively, went to an unfrequented *ghāt* to bathe, and having gone there [and] taken off their clothes [and] placed [them] on the bank, becoming naked, [and] entered the water, they began to sing repeatedly the virtues of Hari, and to sport [in] the water. At that very time S'ri Krishṇa also, seated in the shade of a fig-tree, was grazing cows. [By] chance having heard the sound of their singing, he also silently approached, and began to look on, concealedly. At last, as he gazed, when something entered his mind, [he] stole all the clothes [and] went [and] ascended a Kadam-tree; and tying [them in] a bundle, placed [them] before [himself]. Hereupon, when the cowherdesses looked, [and saw] there were no clothes on the bank, then, in alarm, rising up on all sides, they began to look about, and to say among themselves, "Just now not even a bird came here; who has taken away the clothes, Mother?" In the meantime a cowherdess saw that, with a crown on [his] head, a staff in [his] hand, with a yellow sectarial mark, a necklace of wild flowers, wearing yellow robes, with a tied-up bundle of clothes, preserving silence, S'ri Krishṇa mounted on the Kadam-tree, is seated, concealed. On seeing him [she] cried, "Friend! behold him, the stealer of our hearts, the stealer of clothes, on the Kadam-tree, holding the bundle,

¹ For *mañ* read *meñ*.

² *Gaur* or *Gaurī* is a name of Pārvatī, daughter of the Himālayas, and bride of S'iva. Early legends state that Umā was the name of the daughter of the Himālayas, and that she performed *sati*, burning herself for devotion; in consequence of S'iva's frantic grief thereat, she was given back to him in the form of Pārvatī. In this form he complained of her dark hue, and she, by pious exercises, attained a golden tint, and was then called Gaurī. She is, under other forms, known as Durgā and Kālī.

[seated] resplendent." Hearing this speech, and all the young women having seen Krishṇa, ashamed, entered the water, joined [their] hands, bowed [their] heads, supplicated, [and] coaxingly said,—

"Compassionate to the humble! beloved remover of grief!
O Mohan! please give our clothes."

Hearing thus, Kanhā,ī says, "I will not give thus, appealing
[to] Nand, [I swear];¹

Come out one by one, then you'll receive your clothes."

The Braj girls angrily said, "This is a nice lesson you have learnt, in that you are saying to us 'Come out naked.' We will go at once [and] tell our fathers [and] friends, then they will come [and] seize you as a thief; and we will go [and] relate [this] to Nand [and] Jasodā, then they also will properly impart to you instruction. We are ashamed of something; you have blotted out all recognition [on our part]."

On hearing this statement, angrily, S'ri Krishṇa Ji said, "Now you shall obtain the clothes when you fetch them [yourselves], not otherwise." Hearing this [and] fearing, the cowherdesses said, "Compassionate to the humble! you yourself hold us in remembrance, you are the protector of our husbands;² whom shall we bring? For you alone, having made vows, we are bathing in the month Mangsir." S'ri Krishṇa said, "If you, with sincerity, on my account are bathing [in] Ag,han, then abandon shame [and] evasion, [and] come [and] take your clothes." When S'ri Krishṇa Chand had said this, the cowherdesses, having reflected among themselves, began to say, "Come, friends! what Mohan says, that alone we should respect; because he knows all [the state]³ of our body [and] mind; what shame [is there] in this?" Having thus settled among themselves, obeying the direction of S'ri Krishṇa, concealing with the hands the breast [and] privities, all the young women issued from the water, with heads bowed down, [and] when they went [and] stood before [him] on the shore, S'ri Krishṇa laughingly said, "Now, with joined hands, come forward, then I will give the clothes." The cowherdesses said,—

"Why are you deceiving [us], Darling of Nand! we are plain simple Braj girls.

A trick has been played; consciousness [and] sense are gone; you have played this prank, O Hari!

Fortifying [our] hearts we have committed shame; now do you do something, O Ruler of Braj!"

Having said this, when the cowherdesses joined [their] hands,

¹ The equivalent of "I swear by Nand."

² Meaning "you take thought for our general welfare, you preserve the reputation of our husbands by making us good women."

³ *bāt* or *gati* is understood here.

S'ri Krishna Chand Ji, having given the clothes, came to them [and] said, "In your hearts, do not be anywise displeased at this affair; I have given you this lesson, because in the water is the abode of the god Varuṇa,¹ hence if anyone becomes naked [and] bathes in the water, all his virtue passes away. Perceiving the affection of your hearts, [and] being delighted, I have imparted this secret to you. Now go home; then, in the month of Kâtik, come [again, and] sport with me."

S'ri S'ukadev, the saint, said :—Mahârâj! Hearing this speech, [and] being pleased [and] contented, the cowherdesses then went to their own homes; and S'ri Krishna, having come to the fig-tree, taking with [him] cowherds, cows, cowherd lads, [and] companions, moved forward. Then looking again and again on the dense forest all around, he began to recount the greatness of trees, saying, "Behold! these having come into the world, how much they are taking on themselves [and] giving happiness to [other] people! It is fortunate that such-like charitable [people] come into the world." Speaking thus, [and] advancing onwards, they reached [a spot] near the bank of the Jumnâ.²

¹ *Varuṇa*, "the all-enveloper," that is, the welkin or celestial dome. He is the oldest and grandest of the Vedic deities; but becoming associated with ideas of water, through the rain-clouds, &c., his status gradually changed, until at length he became a kind of Neptune, whose abode was the ocean itself.

² Prof. Eastwick has omitted the whole of this sentence, for some reason.