

Haridasas of Karnataka

## **Dasa Sahithya : Selected, Abridged Works**

- Prof. D.V Potdar

The haridasas were mystics, who had glimpses of truth in their exalted moods. They recorded them in their works. Hoping, they will be a good guide for living I have put some of them into English here.

1.

How easy His worship,  
for the wise who know.

The universe is the temple,  
the earth the seat,  
the sun and the moon the lamps,  
the trees the chamaras\*,  
the sky the white umbrella\*\*,  
rainfall the shower, the directions the garments,  
breezes from Malayaja+ the burning of incense,  
the crops on the earth, the food offered,  
flashes of lightning the waving of camphor lights,  
thunder, the roar of oceans the beating of drums,  
the orbs of the sun, moon, the mirrors,  
river Bhogavati, the water for rinsing,  
the oceans, water for washing the feet of  
the macroform++.

Those who plan His worship this way,  
receive the blessings of Jagannath vithal,  
and'll be happy, always.

- Jagannath das

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\* kind of fan \*\* symbol of royalty + mountain where sandalwood grows  
++ vishwarupa

2.

The guru is the guide,  
pray for his grace.

Mere study of scriptures,  
company of the good,

wearing garlands round necks,  
smearing of ashes, or telling of beads,  
wont do, they are like a serpent\* going on a fast,  
but his grace is the only key to the magic world.

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\* due to slow digestion !

Devotion is the track, and release\*  
the goal,  
so keep running,  
let not even the stars shining during day,  
or the sun during night stop you,  
Prahlad, Dhruva, Ajamila all these ran,  
reached their goals.

The devotees need fear nothing,  
evils shun them, like the elephant the lion,  
or ants the fire.

They're like pearls, which melt  
not when thrown back,  
or like pots\*\* which turn not into clay,  
they are divine, beyond the reach of even gods,  
(like the image of wealth seen in a mirror),  
only fools think they are human !

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\* moksha      \*\* baked

(a miscellany)

3.

Worry, unhappiness, anxiety\* chase us all.

.  
Brahma is unhappy over the loss of his head,  
and the mentor of the demons\*\* over the loss of his eye,  
the god of love+ is unhappy, being burnt to ashes,  
the three-eyed god++ is unhappy, for he has to beg his food,  
the divine cow# is worried, somebody may milk her dry,  
women are worried about getting good husbands,  
sovereigns are worried about raids from neighbours,  
the clerk is worried about the heap of work,  
the pious fear the loss of their happiness,

the wicked are anxious to do evil,  
Arjuna is worried about the impending battle,  
and Bhima about a sumptuous meal !

disciples are anxious to learn the divine path,  
and the released, to have a glimpse of the lord,  
the erudite are anxious to utter words of wisdom,  
and our Purandar vithal is worried about the welfare of us all !

--Purandar das

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\* for all these words the poet uses only one --chinte \*\* Shukracharya  
+ Manmatha ++ Shiva # Kamadhenu

4.

Come what may,  
Let me keep repeating your name  
Purandar vithal.

May it be ever lasting poverty or  
loss of property,  
may I miss, my path or even trees in the wood (!)  
may I lose my job or my mind ,  
may I be, poisoned or be torn to pieces  
by bird and beast,  
may I lose my manhood or my family,  
may I be, kicked by moneylenders,  
or be called a hypocrite,  
may the sky fall on my head,  
or may my hopes or faith be lost,  
I don't mind !

--Purandar das

5.

Holding a sugarcane,  
why chew a twig ?  
holding, the pot ever full\*,  
why go hungry ?  
sitting on a cache\*\*,  
why fear poverty ?  
keeping the divine cow at home,  
why be unhappy ?

repeating Garuda's name,  
why the fear of poison ?  
why light lamps,

when the sun shines ?  
why a show of devotion,  
with a mind impure,  
and no caste marks on the body ?

--Purandar das

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\* akshaya patre    \*\* buried wealth

6.

Things happen,  
not as man wishes, but as He wills !

Man wishes to marry, beget children,  
but He wills—remain unmarried,  
man wishes to ride horses, elephants,  
but He wills—walk on foot,  
man wishes to go on pilgrimages,  
but he wills—fall ill,  
man wishes to distribute food,  
but He wills--go, beg,  
man wishes to rule the earth,  
but He wills—go serve,  
man wishes to have a glimpse of Purandar vithal,  
but He wills—from suffering be free ! \*

--Purandar das

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\* note —man proposes, but god disposes.

7.

Repeat Hari's name, be free from  
the fear of, hell, maya,  
poison, enemies, worldly sorrows,  
or even birth and death !

--Shri. Vadiraj

8.

I have parents, relations,  
You have none.

You are my father, Indira my mother,  
You have no father, or mother,  
Brahma is my brother, the sun and moon my uncles,  
but you have no brothers, uncles,  
The Ganges is my sister, the ocean my brother-in-law,  
but you have no sister, brother-in-law,  
The god of love is my younger brother,  
the gods my relations,  
but you have no brother, no relations,  
the earth, my only mother, the Maruts  
my mentors,  
you have no mother or mentors,  
Consort of Siri Vijaya vithal raya,  
I have your feet to serve, but you have none!

--Vijaya das

9.

Gopi said,  
“Stay with me Ranga,  
I pray”.

“Don’t go to Karipura,\*  
thinking you’ll be happy meeting cousins,  
you’ll have to wash, clean up,  
and drive a chariot .

Don’t go to Gokula,  
you’ll have to herd cows,  
and listen to the prattle of the cowgirls.

Don’t go to meet your uncle,  
he wants you killed by the elephants  
or the wrestlers !”

--Purandar das

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\* Hastinapura

10.

Right time for you to visit me , Ranga, Krishna,  
My sister-in-law is busy twisting cotton wicks,  
my mother-in-law is away to listen to your tales,\*

my father-in-law trusts me not,  
my wedded husband loves me not,  
my brother-in-law keeps away,  
I care not for my parents and children,  
Purandar vithal, mountain-lifter,  
come, let me touch your feet !

- Purandar das

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\* religious discourse

11.

Since birth you are my guide, Govinda,  
so you know what is right or wrong.

Reluctant to be born, I was pushed out,  
and if the leader of the blind leads to a ditch,  
or if a mother suffers a child to fall in a well,  
who's to blame ?

When the goods are handed over,  
why the taxes ?

Puppeteer,  
You make us pious or sinners,  
you make us dullards or learned,  
and be loved by sons and friends.

Merciful one,  
you make souls pass through many lives,  
make them do good or bad deeds,  
and grant them release.

Your devotees, follow no do's or don'ts,  
wherever they bathe, the waters are holy,  
wherever they stand the ground is sacred,  
(like the elephant walking and making a path,  
or the merchant settling down and building a city,)  
whatever words they utter are mantras,  
abandoning pleasures sacrifices,

their losses, destruction of the results of actions  
past, present and future,  
what they drink is soma juice,  
for they, see the divine everywhere,

go in a trance wherever they sit,  
and be free from sins.

(a miscellany)

12.

Revelation, at last!  
the doors had remained shut, sealed for long,  
sheltering evils,  
and kept me in darkness,  
but now opened one by one.

By His and my mentor's grace,  
I found the key, and accompanied by devotees,  
unlocked the doors.

Carrying the lamp of knowledge,  
I crossed doors, beautiful mansions,  
and met His favourites, Prana and others.

And in the midst, shone like a thousand suns,  
His palace, and the Lotus-in-the- navel,\*  
embodiment of existence-mind-bliss,\*\*  
Vijaya vithal, merrymaking, embraced by  
Rama and others,  
While the Lotus-born+ and rishis  
sang His praise.

--Vijaya das

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\* Kamala nabha    \*\* sat-chit-anand + Brahma  
(the reference is to an inner world)

13.

A wise man knows  
he is a bundle of bones, flesh and blood,  
covered with skin,  
packed with dirt inside.

(But this)  
Self knowledge comes not easily,  
till, a rat swallows a cat, and a parrot  
a witch,  
till a fox swallows a wild elephant, and a fly  
a mountain,

till, a sparrow turns into a swan,  
or your ego vanishes, and you receive the blessing  
of Purandara vithal.

("Be in the world but not of it"\*)  
Like children building houses, playing awhile,  
and running away,  
like people gathering in the market,  
buying, selling and going away,  
like birds flocking in the courtyard,  
and flying away,  
like the traveler, halting on the way,  
and taking the early road.

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\* sufi saying

Janaka listened to the report,  
" Mithila is burnt down",  
coolly replied "I've lost nothing" !

The gods said to sage Dadhichi,  
"We want your bones to make a weapon,"  
he smiled, and consented

Don't find fault with neighbours,  
lest their sins fall on your head.

I say,  
A lake without lotuses is not charming,  
nights without moonlight are dull,  
music, with the notes mixed, is but a jangle,  
making love to a frigid woman is agony,  
a curt soldier is a boor,  
money earned, but not spent is a waste.

(a miscellany)

14.

See, the signs of the evil times,\*  
people, prefer loose talk to a religious discourse,  
slander teachers, elders,  
disobey parents, listening to the hussies,  
covet neighbor's wives,  
fail to return loans,

swear, make promises, but still cheat,  
follow charlatans, betray benefactors,  
neglect the needy, but feed the rich,  
sing not psalms, but keep babbling.

--Purandar das

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\* Kali yuga

15.

Trust not the favors of the rulers  
and make enemies,  
for favors dont last long,

though wielding power and authority,  
you are sure to stumble sometime,  
like the blind man carrying a water pot,

listen to the pleas of the humble,  
don't discard them,

don't be swollen-headed, and bang others,  
for harsh words quake even the earth,

don't listen to gossip, and boil over with anger,

remember, people die, wealth is lost,  
but a good name endures,

money earned by exploitation, doesn't last,

see your life passing away, like water  
dripping from a leaking pot.

--Purandar das

16.

Be a fish, beating fins, in Madhwa lore,  
be pure in mind,  
burn up passions, like grass.

("Resist not evil",\*)  
Offer a dinner to those, who offer poison,

be friendly with the jealous,  
name your son after a malefactor,  
have a warm greeting even for slanderers !

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\* Christ

(a miscellany )

17.

Quarrel with the wise,  
rather than make friends with fools,  
go, beg in a village, rather than starve  
at a king's court,  
be in the company of devotees,  
rather than gossip with friends,  
drink a glass of water, be content,  
rather than face jeers after dinner,  
stay in a forest, unknown,  
rather than be in the company of a cheat,  
stay away in an old a temple, rather than  
quarrel with a termagant !\*

--Purandar das

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\* overbearing woman

18.

Be wise, stay not with in-laws,  
for, you may catch a serpent,  
meet the gods,  
even swallow fire,  
but staying with in-laws hurts.

You may lodge with strangers, heathens,  
yield to a killer,  
live in a cave, surrounded by trees, mountains  
but not with in-laws.

For a month or two, it's all welcome,  
soft words,  
but when complaints, shows of disrespect start,  
it's time for you to go away,  
to beg, rather than stay !

--Kanak das

19.

Listen brothers,  
earth, earth, everything is made  
of the earth,  
there's nothing but the earth !

Our bodies are made of the earth,  
our food and drinks come out of the earth,  
gold, our treasures are all earth,  
the residence of the three-eyed god,  
our temples, monasteries are all earth,  
the pots we cook in, the castles of the kings  
are all earth,  
the banks of the holy Ganges,  
the fields where corn grows  
are earth,  
for our burial or cremation it's the earth,  
and Elysium to which we proceed,  
residence of Purandar vithal, is all earth !

--Purandar das

20.

The mighty have many friends,  
but the feeble none.

The sun shines on the pond,  
And the lotus blooms,  
But thrown out of the pond,  
it wilts, fades.

The wind blows on the burning forest,  
the wildfire rages, the sparks fly,

but at home a strong draught,  
puts the lamp out.

The grace of Purandara vithal,  
surrounds you with friends,  
the grace lost, you're left alone.

--Purandar das

21.

Mind control is very difficult,  
even for the gods !  
Retreating armies, advancing wild elephants  
may be stopped,  
river courses may be changed,  
Bhairava may be plucked by the beard,  
storms, plagues, roaring of oceans, pouring rains  
may be checked,  
but to stop the mind from wandering is difficult !

--Vijaya das

Om Tat Sat