

Haridasas of Karnataka

Shri Vijaya Das :
Works - Prose lyrics (selected, abridged) (Part III)

- Prof. D. V. Potdar

These prose lyrics expound the tenets of dualism through the regional language. That is their main purpose. Rigid religious practices are to be given up, and the path of devotion is to be followed. All religions discuss God and man's relations and point out ways to approach him. According to dualism Vishnu is supreme, and adjectives like ever content, happy, perfect are associated with him. He and his spouse Lakshmi are inseparable. He assigns different gods the work of creation, maintenance, and destruction.

He is present everywhere, and in all bodies but is not affected by joys or sorrows. He grants humans freedom, but that is limited. Individual souls have the potential to do good or bad, He simply supervises them and leads them to the creator's or Kali' camps. The five differences, gradation of the gods, the importance of fasts and repetition of His name, and the mode of worship are described. Mind control is essential for getting peace. Charity is tax paid to the lord, and lessens the gap between the rich and the poor.

1.

Vani makes the earth a sheet,*
the trees pens, the seas ink,
and writes His story, endless !

cf. the following lines,

I make the earth a sheet,*
the forests pens, the seven seas ink,
but can't sing the praise of the guru.

- a Hindi mystic

* Of paper

2.

The calf while drinking milk,
dashes his head to get more,
but doesn't anger the mother.

Vijaya vithal reya,
you are the divine cow, we calves,

overlook our faults,
don't distance us.

A poor guy takes his daily earnings
to the king,
and if a thief burgles,
he'll find the house empty,
So, awake or asleep,
the good or bad I do is your service,
please accept, Vijaya vithal reya.

3.

You hang a necklace of gems, pearls
round a donkey's neck,
feed him curds rice,
play a band 'round him,
and holding up an umbrella,
start a procession,
but if he meets his mate, he'll
bray, sure!

Thus scandal mongers,
though in good company,
getting a chance'll wag tongues.

4.

People wear necklaces of bones
round their necks,
cover them with fine garments,
so did I hide my impure mind
with show,
and fool the people.

Greed rides our backs,
even at the height of our enjoyment,
or when we become ascetics, shave heads,
when we fall ill, or are c
after having our fill,
when we suffer or flourish,

when we beg, go from door to door,
strut with full authority,
or roll on a luxury bed!

5.

Welcome hungry guests on
the doorstep,
bow to them, feed them,
but care not for heretics, lest you
be damned,
acting thus you live in a home,
otherwise you just dwell in a forest,
for nothing like hospitality,
to earn His grace.

6.

Where'er His devotees be,
whate'r be they doing,
like keeping low company,
or gourmandizing,
sins fly from them, like insects
from fire,
if they repeat His name with firm faith.

7.

When there are floods,
the pits, stones and things in
the river bed disappear,
in like manner when you contemplate
His feet,
the rush of self knowledge,
washes away ignorance,
associated with the gross body.

8.

Oxen, donkeys shouldnt bother
about fodder,
and the maid about her master's future;
the kid shouldn't worry about his family,

and the elephant about the king's affairs;
for Varuna aids our speech and Agni
our digestion,
Jayanta leads us by the hand, and Prana
keeps us alive,
and our noble Vijaya vithal reya

feeds us like a father.
So where's independence?

9.

Stock not for tomorrow,
stretch not your palm before others,
steal not from your enemy's house,
lead a righteous life,
for death swoops upon you
at His decree,
which nobody can stop,
like the roaring sea in tide,
flooding your house,
tho' the doors be shut tight

10.

Vijya vithal reya grants you,
choice food, fine clothes,
ornaments to wear,
happiness in the company of wife,
children, kith and kin,
immense fortune of all kinds,
but not unshakable faith,
tho' you roll on His feet.

But, suffer losses calmly,
bow to His authority,
repeat His name thro' thick and thin,
and surrender your self,
you sure'll be his blue eyed boy!

11.

Don't run after money.
It'll bring pain in the body,

Drive you away from matters spiritual
and other worlds,
it'll make you proud,
and the more the money, the more
your desire for women,
and you'll be a fiend.

So, let your riches, body, mind,

wife, kids be for His service.

12.

If you care for release,*
see all objects as His idols,
let all advice be scriptures,
and the water you drink holy,
let the steps you walk be pilgrimages,
and your talk mantras,
let all your offerings** be nectar, and your
simple clothes His silk garments,
let all perfumes, flowers be
His decorations,
and your family His retinue.

*moksha **to god

13.

Common people, scholars fear
the dullard prince,
some flatter him,
Spouse of Laxmi,
those worshipping your feet,
wise or otherwise,
the gods protect,
and evils shun their sight.

14.

The good or the wicked carry
Hari in their hearts,
if they suffer, so should He!
wrong,
for see, the father gets his son married,

later, joys or sorrows the couple share,
not the father,
But, "Why the suffering?"
the answer is "Why is sugar sweet and
a stone hard?"

15.

The soul, life after life,

is wrapped by the gross body,
but it suffers not,
like, the seed in the berry,
or like the piece of fireproof cloth,
thrown in the fire.

16.

The pure hearted narrate His story,
nectar like to the ears,
escape life and death, chum with the gods;
attempts to find fault in such stories,
are like efforts to stop the river current
dipping a finger:
the fool who tries, the mighty waves carry
away, and drown;
for faultless is the Lord, and so're His
devotees,
as has been sung for ages.

A soldier, sword in hand,
rushes among the enemy, drives them
helter skelter,
and earns honours.*

Can a fellow holding up hands,
against the sun,
bring night on the earth?*

Fond of chomping bones,
will the dog relish creamy milk?*

* hits at detractors

17.

When, goddess Laxmi, ruler of
the worlds,
Viranchi, your son, the elephant-hide drest,
carrying Ganga in his crest,
dance attendance upon you,
why should You care for me, a nonentity?
well here's why,
brothers, sisters, relations gather,
and are feasting,

if a fellow comes there to gather food,*
they welcome and feed him,
treat me in like manner, Vijaya vithal reya

Garments, jewels are stored in a box,
but don't keep me near the door,
like shoes, Vijaya vithal reya.**

*madhukar (poet's word) ** please note the symbolism

18.

Repeat His name while ye may!

For--when you grow gray, become forgetful,
choke, and your head shakes,
as you're led by the hand
cant see, hear,
your mouth open, (like a bell
without the tongue,)
swallow what you're fed,
become unconscious,
and Yama's flunkeys come knocking--
you cant!

19.

If your family, neighbours
go naked,
you go about in the market, buy clothes,
but told to get a piece of cloth
to decorate our Lord, creator,
you put up your hands;
so how can you say "Vijaya vithal
is tight fisted?"

20

Devotion,
is a ditch in which Hari falls,
flounders,
a rope that binds Him, hands and feet,
drives Him, like the goad the elephant,
makes Him, a friend, a charioteer,
a guardian, a servant voluntary;

it destroys our sins, leads us to salvation,
nothing pleases Him like it,
not song, silence, or knowledge.

21.

See the tricks, played by our Lord,
the millionaires go hungry, feel sad,
but the penniless eat, and are glad,
so bow to the Lord, accept what he gives
for fearing the slings of fortune,
you cant escape, (even) hiding
in a hole under the tree.

22.

The washer man to clean dirty clothes,
beats them on a stone,
the clothes take the beating, not
the water.
So, joys or sorrows affect our bodies,
but not the Dweller* within.

* the supreme being

23.

Don't worship lower gods,
for it is like packing things in a bag
with holes,
which'll drop away.
"Will to do something good" goes the
saying,
but remember, Rudra controls the mind,
Vayu Rudra,

and both are ruled by the Lord.
He makes a guy do good or evil,
-results of acts in previous births--
since time immemorial.

Drown'd in the nectar of devotion,
who cares for release?

Winds never sweat,
Your devotees, seldom suffer.

Many worlds, may be ruled
by many gods,
but it is like this,
people are seated in carriages,
but nobody can drive,
so among the rulers it is Vijaya vithal
reya who's Supremo!*

Servants are at the beck and call of
king's favourites,
how lucky, to be Vijaya vithal reya's
minions!

You parade a dog in the marriage pandal,
but cant make him the bridegroom!

* He controls all

(a miscellany)

Om Tat Sat