

Classic Poetry Series

**Lalleshwari
- poems -**

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Lalleshwari(1320 – 1392)

Lalleshwari (?????????) (1320–1392), also known as Lalla, **Lal Ded** or "Lal Arifa". She was a mystic of the Kashmiri Shaivite sect, and at the same time, a Sufi saint. She is a creator of the mystic poetry called vatsun or Vakhs, literally 'speech'. Known as Lal Vakhs, her verses are the earliest compositions in the Kashmiri language and are an important part in history of Kashmiri literature.

Lal Ded and her mystic musings continue to have a deep impact on the psyche of Kashmiri common man, and the 2000 National Seminar on her held at New Delhi led to the release of the book Remembering Lal Ded in Modern Times. A solo play in English, Hindi and Kashmiri titled 'Lal Ded' (based on her life), has been performed by actress Mita Vashisht all over India since 2004.

Biography

Lalleshwari was born in Pandrethan (ancient Puranadhithana) some four and a half miles to the southeast of Srinagar in a Kashmiri Pandit family. She married at age twelve, but her marriage was unhappy and she left home at twenty-four to take sanyas (renunciation) and become a disciple of the Shaivite guru Siddha Srikantha (Sed Bayu). She continued the mystic tradition of Shaivism in Kashmir, which was known as Trika before 1900.

There are various stories about Lal Ded's encounters with the founding fathers of Kashmiri Sufism. One story recounts how, when Sheikh Nooruddin Noorani (Nund Rishi) was born, he wouldn't feed from his mother. After three days, Lal Ded arrived and fed him herself. She said to the baby that, since he hadn't been ashamed to be born, why should he be ashamed to drink from his mother's breast?

Her poems (called vakhs) have been translated into English by Richard Temple, Jaylal Kaul, Coleman Barks, Jaishree Odin, and Ranjit Hoskote.

Lal Vakh

Lala Vakh, literally mean sayings of Lala or Lala Ded...

Lal Vakh in Kashmiri:

"yi yi karu'm suy artsun
yi rasini vichoarum thi mantar

yihay lagamo dhahas partsun
suy Parasivun tanthar"

Translation:

"Whatever work I did became worship of the Lord;
Whatever word I uttered became a prayer;
Whatever this body of mine experienced became
the sadhana of Saiva Tantra
illuminating my path to Parmasiva." -138

A Royal Fly-Whisk

A royal fly-whisk, sunshade,
chariot and throne,
Merry revels,
pleasures of the theater,
a bed of cotton down-
Which of these, you think,
will go with you when you are dead ?
How then can you dispel the fear of death ?

Lalleshwari

A Thousand Times I Asked My Guru

A thousand times I asked my guru,
'The name of the One who is known by No-thing',
Tired and exhausted was I, asking time and again;
Out of Nothing emerged Something, bewildering and great!

Lalleshwari

A Thousand Times My Guru I Asked

A thousand times my Guru I asked:
'How shall the Nameless be defined?'
I asked and asked but all in vain.
The Nameless Unknown, it seems to me,
Is the source of the something that we see.

Lalleshwari

A Wooden Bow And Rush Grass For An Arrow

A wooden bow and rush grass for an arrow:
A carpenter unskilled and a palace to build:
A shop unlocked in a busy bazaar:
A body uncleansed by waters holy-
Oh dear! who knows what hath befallen me?

Lalleshwari

Ah Me! The Five

Ah me! the Five (Bhuta-s) , the ten (Indriya-s) ,
And the Eleventh, their lord the mind,
scraped this pot* and went away.
Had all together pulled on the rope,
Why should the Eleventh have lost the cow?
(Why should the soul have gone astray?)

Lalleshwari

At The End Of A Crazy-Moon Night

At the end of a crazy-moon night
the love of God rose.
I said, "It's me, Lalla."

The Beloved woke. We became That,
and the lake is crystal-clear.

Lalleshwari

Bathe Daily At Places Of Pilgrimage

Bathe daily at places of pilgrimage.
Not even for a moment
Like in laughing, sneezing, coughing or yawning.
Is He off from anywhere
Before you He remains all the year round.
Near you He is,
Recognise Him,

Lalleshwari

By Pandering To Your Appetites

By pandering to your appetites,
you get nowhere;
By penance and fasting,
you get conceit.
Be moderate in food and drink
and live a moderate life,
The gates of Heaven will surely be
thrown open wide for you.

Lalleshwari

By The Highway I Came

By the highway I came,
But by the highway I return not.
And so I find me still on the embarkment,
not having gone even half the way,
And the day is done, the light has failed.
I search my pockets but not a cowrie find:
What shall I pay for the ferry fee ?

Lalleshwari

Chidananda, The Light Of Absolute Knowledge

Chidananda, the light of absolute knowledge
Those who understood,
Are free, realised souls:
Limitless, infinite,
Hundreds of hundreds of times
Intertwined are the ignorant
In the cycle of life and death

Lalleshwari

Countless Times We Come

Countless times we come, and
Limitless times we should go,
In movement we should remain,
Day after day and, night after night;
Whence we come, thence
We should return:
Something or the other,
and, something or the other,
And, something or what?

Lalleshwari

Coursing In Emptiness

Coursing in emptiness,
I, Lalla,
dropped off body and mind,

and stepped into the Secret Self.

Look: Lalla the sedgeflower
blossomed a lotus.

Lalleshwari

Dance, Lalla, With Nothing On

Dance, Lalla, with nothing on
but air: Sing, Lalla,
wearing the sky.

Look at this glowing day! What clothes
could be so beautiful, or
more scared?

[Taken from Poetry for the Spirit: Poems of Universal Wisdom and Beauty, Edited
by Alan Jacobs]

Lalleshwari

Day Will Be Erased In Night

Day will be erased in night.
The ground's surface will extend outward.

The new moon will be swallowed
in eclipse, and the mind in meditation

will be completely absorbed
by the Void inside it.

Lalleshwari

Deception, Hypocrisy, Untruth

Deception, hypocrisy, untruth,
I shunned and, to my mind,
I gave the same message,
In my lifetime, I found Him as
The only one, all-pervading God:
What's the source of food and feed?

Lalleshwari

Draped In Stores Of Knowledge

Draped in stores of knowledge,
The points of the verses
That Lalla sang, became,
Organic parts of her heart and soul;
Her self-consciousness awakened
And removed all doubts of death.

Lalleshwari

Dying And Giving Birth Go On

Dying and giving birth go on
inside the one consciousness,
but most people misunderstand

the pure play of creative energy,
how inside that, those
are one event.

Lalleshwari

Fair Or Foul, Satire Or Sarcasm

Fair or foul, satire or sarcasm, all
I deserve:
Blockade of audition, screening eyes,
As the voice of god tickled
My consciousness!
My Rattandeeep (Ghee/burning lamp) sparkled
Even in raging storms

Lalleshwari

Five Sayings Of Lal Ded

I

By a way I came, but I went not by the way.
While I was yet on the midst of the embankment
with its crazy bridges, the day failed for me.
I looked within my poke, and not a cowry came to hand
(or, at I, was there) .
What shall I give for the ferry-fee?
(Translated by G. Grierson)

II

Passionate, with longing in mine eyes,
Searching wide, and seeking nights and days,
Lo' I beheld the Truthful One, the Wise,
Here in mine own House to fill my gaze.
(Translated by R.C. Temple)

III

Holy books will disappear, and then only the mystic formula will remain.
When the mystic formula departed, naught but mind was left.
When the mind disappeared naught was left anywhere,
And a voice became merged within the Void.
(Translated by G. Grierson)

IV

You are the heaven and You are the earth,
You are the day and You are the night,
You are all pervading air,
You are the sacred offering of rice and flowers and of water;
You are Yourself all in all,
What can I offer You?

V

With a thin rope of untwisted thread
Tow I ever my boat o'er the sea.

Will God hear the prayers that I have said?
Will he safely over carry me?
Water in a cup of unbaked clay,
Whirling and wasting, my dizzy soul
Slowly is filling to melt away.
Oh, how fain would I reach my goal.

Lalleshwari

Fondly Will They Drink Water From

Fondly will they drink water from
The very lake
That is too brimful to accommodate
Even a mustard seed anymore:
Deer, Jackal, rhinoceros, sea-elephant arise
Like waves of rhythm and splash,
In the ocean of space and time,
To share pleasure and, pain, merriment and grief.
For a while in transition and then,
Wither away and fall back
Into the same lake:

Lalleshwari

For A Moment I Suppressed The Bellows Of Respiration

For a moment I suppressed the bellows of respiration,
Lo and behold! The Lamp lit up brightly and I realized my Self!
The light within me sparkled out;
In the encompassing darkness, I seized at It and gripped It tightly.

Lalleshwari

For Ever We Come, For Ever We Go

For ever we come, for ever we go;
For ever, day and night, we are on the move.
Whence we come, thither we go,
For ever in the round of birth and death,
From nothingness to nothingness.
But sure, a mystery here abides,
A Something is there for us to know.
(It cannot all be meaningless) .

Lalleshwari

Forgetful One, Get Up!

Forgetful one, get up!
It's dawn, time to start searching.

Open your wings and lift.
Give like the blacksmith
even breath to the bellows.

Tend the fire that changes
the shape of metal.

Alchemical work begins at dawn,
as you walk out to meet the Friend.

[Taken from Poetry for the Spirit: Poems of Universal Wisdom and Beauty, Edited
by Alan Jacobs]

Lalleshwari

Have No Fear, O Restless Mind

Have no fear, O restless mind,
The Eternal One takes thought for you.
He knows how to fulfil your wants.
Then cry to Him alone for help,
His Name will lead you safe across.

Lalleshwari

He Stands Close By You!

Give up imagining that the skill of killing desire,
and meditating on the Self are too costly to buy;
He stands close by you! Do not look for Him far away.
The void was dissolved in the Void!

Lalleshwari

He Who Wields The Sword A Kingdom Gains

He who wields the sword a kingdom gains;
Paradise is gained by penance and alms.
Follow the Guru's word and gain
True knowledge of the Self within.
Of his own virtue and his sin
Man himself surely reaps the fruits.

Lalleshwari

He, Who Overcomes Pride, Greed, Vanity

He, who overcomes pride, greed, vanity
And removes such hurdles of robbery
from his path,
Facilitates his contemplation:
And, in all humility, serves mankind,
Discarding all else as useless
Is the real seeker of the Lord!

[Translated by P. N. Razdan (Mahanori)]

Lalleshwari

I Bore With All Mocking And Jeering

I bore with all mocking and jeering
With equanimity?
Ill - spoken of I was all along !
Not for a moment did
Deviate from my path.
And thus, when I attained
My goal
What else should I mind?

[Translated by P. N. Razdan (Mahanori)]

Lalleshwari

I Came Straight

I came straight,
And straight I shall return.
How can the crooked lead me astray?
Surely, no harm can come to me:
He knows me from the beginning of time,
And loves me.

Lalleshwari

I Didn'T Bear With

I didn't bear with
Love, lust or affection .
Brushed off wrath and anger,
With a gust of wind (by pranayam)
I cut the feet of
Illusive attachment, temptation,
As well as the spell of ignorance:
And thus, I was emancipated.

Lalleshwari

I Have Seen A Learned Man Die Of Hunger

I have seen a learned man die of hunger,
A sere leaf dropp in winter wind;
I have seen an utter fool beat his cook
(who could not make a toothsome dish).
Since then I, Lalla, anxiously await
The day when the lure of the world will fall away.

Lalleshwari

I Have To Suffer The Consequence

I have to suffer the consequence
of whatever I do,
even if I work for others' gain.
But if, with mind from attachment free,
I dedicate all works to God,
It will be well for me wherever I be,
here and hereafter.

Lalleshwari

I Have Worn Out My Palate And Tongue

I have worn out my palate and tongue
reading the holy books,
But I have not learnt the practices
that would please my Lord.
I have worn thin my finger and thumb
telling the rosary beads,
But I have not been able to dispel
duality from my mind.

Lalleshwari

I Might Disperse Tthe Southern Clouds

I might disperse the southern clouds,
I might drain out the sea,
I might cure the incurable sick,
But I cannot convince a fool.

Lalleshwari

I Overpowered And Subdued

I overpowered and subdued
My vile heart.
Twisted my liver.
And renounced all I had. ;
Thus, giving up all my
Worldy possessions,
I became Lalla for all

Lalleshwari

I Practiced What I Read

I practiced what I read,
And learnt what was not taught.
From its jungle abode
I brought the lion down
as I a jackal would;
(From pleasures of the world
I pulled my mind away).
I practiced what I preached,
and scored the goal.

Lalleshwari

I Searched For My Self

I searched for my Self
until I grew weary,

but no one, I know now,
reaches the hidden knowledge
by means of effort.

Then, absorbed in "Thou art This,"
I found the place of Wine.

There all the jars are filled,
but no one is left to drink.

[Taken from *Women in Praise of the Sacred: 43 Centuries of Spiritual Poetry by Women*, Edited by Jane Hirshfield]

Lalleshwari

I Traveled A Long Way Seeking God

I traveled a long way seeking God,
but when I finally gave up and turned back,
there He was, within me!

O Lalli!

Now why do you wander
like a beggar?

Make some effort,
and He will grant you
a vision of Himself
in the form of bliss
in your heart.

Lalleshwari

I Treaded On The Expanse

I treaded on the expanse
of the Void within me:
I lost intellect, cognizance and
The sensations external:
A detective of self.
I became myself; Lo and behold: from which ear
My (Lalla's) lotus blossomed forth?

[Translated by P. N. Razdan (Mahanori)]

Lalleshwari

I Will Weep And Weep For You, O Mind

I will weep and weep for you, O Mind;
(my Soul) The world hath caught you in its spell.
Though you cling to them with the anchor of steel,
Not even the shadow of the things you love Will go with you when you are dead.
Why then have you forgot your own true Self ?

Lalleshwari

I, Lalla, Willingly Entered Through The Garden-Gate

I, Lalla, willingly entered through the garden-gate,
There, O Joy! I found Siva united with Sakti;
There and then I got absorbed drinking at the Lake of Nectar.
Immune to harm am I, dead as I am to the world, though still alive.

[Taken from The Ascent of Self: A Reinterpretation of the Mystical Poetry of
Lalla-Ded, by B. N. Paramoo]

Lalleshwari

If You've Melted Your Desires

If you've melted your desires
in the river of time, choose
to be a recluse, or choose
a family, the village job.

If you know the pure Lord within you,
you'll be That, wherever.

Lalleshwari

Ill Or Well, Whatever Befalls

Ill or well, whatever befalls,
let it come.
My ears will not hear,
My eyes will not see.
When the Voice calls from within
the inmost mind,
The lamp of faith burns steady and bright
even in the wind.

Lalleshwari

Impart Not Esoteric Truth To Fools

Impart not esoteric truth to fools,
Nor on molasses feed an ass.
Do not sow seed in sandy beds,
Nor waste your oil on cakes of bran.

Lalleshwari

In Life I Sought Neither Wealth Nor Power

In life I sought neither wealth nor power,
Nor ran after the pleasures of sense.
Moderate in food and drink,
I lived a controlled life,
And loved my God.

Lalleshwari

In Seeking And Searching Myself

In seeking and searching myself,
I was exhausted and yet,
I could not reach mystic knowledge
Sticking to it,
I intensified my efforts
Lo and behold: I attained my goal;
Brimful there, are all vessels
and no one's there to drink:

Lalleshwari

In The Midst Of The Ocean

In the midst of the ocean
With unspun thread.
I am towing the boat:
Would that God grant
My prayer and.
Ferry me too, across:
Water in my unbaked earthen plates
Seeps in and none collects '
yearn and yearn
To return Home

Lalleshwari

In Your Mother'swomb You Vowed

In your mother's womb you vowed
not to be born again.
When will you recall the vow ?

And die, even while alive
(to all desire, and be released from birth and death):
Great honor will be yours in this life and greater honor after death.

Lalleshwari

Intense Cold Makes Water Ice

Intense cold makes water ice.
Then the hard ice turns to slush
and back to water, so there are three
forms of consciousness: the individual,
the world, and God, which in the sun
of True Awareness melt to one flowing:

Lalla is that.

In meditation, I entered the love furnace,
burned impurities away, and as the sun
of a new knowing rose, I realized
that the words 'Lalla' and 'God'
point to this peacefulness.

Lalleshwari

It Is Easy To Read And Tto Recite

It is easy to read and to recite;
It is hard to practice what one reads,
And, reading seek out the Self within.
By constant practice, not by books,
Conviction grew in my heart
Of God, Who is Consciousness-Bliss.

Lalleshwari

Just For A Moment, Flowers Appear

Just for a moment, flowers appear
on the empty, nearly-spring tree.

Just for a second, wind
through the wild thicket thorns.

Self inside self, You are nothing but me.
Self inside self, I am only You.

What we are together
will never die.

The why and how of this?
What does it matter?

[Taken from Poetry for the Spirit: Poems of Universal Wisdom and Beauty, Edited
by Alan Jacobs]

Lalleshwari

Keep Your Mind Intent Upon

Keep your mind intent upon
the path that leads to immortality.
Should it stray from the path,
it will fall into evil ways.
Be firm with it and have no fear;
For mind is like a suckling baby,
which tosses restless even in its mother's lap.

Lalleshwari

Lalla Wilfully Entered The Garden Door

Lalla wilfully entered the garden door (of self).

There.

I saw Shiva and Shakti

Merged in one:

Absorbed in that VISION, I

Dissolved in Him alive.

Realised the essence and,

Tasted the sweetness of

The Divine secret, I would die while alive

How can He stop me ?

Lalleshwari

Lalla, Embarked On

Lalla, embarked on
Going a-searching, a cotton flower:
Thorns and carders pricked and kicked me hard;
As the spinner spun me thin, on the spinning wheel,
The weaver hung me by the leg on the loom;
As the washerman rubbed me with soap.
He dashed me against a stone
And, washed me clean,
Soothed I was on seeing water:
And when the tailor moved his machine
To shape me well,
There and then, I attained
Supreme salvation and bliss'

[Translated by P. N. Razdan (Mahanori)]

Lalleshwari

Let Not Your Body Suffer

Let not your body suffer
from hunger and thirst,
Feed it whenever it feels famished.
Fie on your fasts and religious rites;
Do good: therein your duty lies.

Lalleshwari

Meditate Within Eternity

Meditate within eternity.
Don't stay in the mind.

Your thoughts are like a child fretting
near its mother's breast, restless
and afraid, who with a little guidance,
can find the path to courage.

Lalleshwari

My Guru Gave Me But One Percept

My Guru gave me but one percept :
'From without withdraw your gaze within
And fix it on the Inmost Self.'
Taking to heart this one percept,
Naked I began to roam.

Lalleshwari

Now I Saw A Stream Flowing

Now I saw a stream flowing;
Now neither bank nor bridge was seen.
Now I saw a bush in bloom;
Now neither rose nor thorn was seen.

Lalleshwari

Now I Saw The Hearth Ablaze

Now I saw the hearth ablaze,
Now I saw not fire nor smoke.
Now I saw the Pandava Mother,
Now she was but a potters' aunt

Lalleshwari

O Infinite Consciousness

O infinite Consciousness,
brimming with elixir,
You live within my body,
and I worship only You.
I do not care
if I die, take birth,
or pass into some other state.
These things are so ordinary now.

[Taken from Laleshwari: Spiritual Poems by a Great Siddha Yogini, Translated by Swami Muktananda]

Laleshwari

O, Mind, How Intoxicated You Are

O, mind, how intoxicated you are
With a foreign brand:
How are you eluded by untruth
for truth?

Listen:

Enthralled you have become
By a foreign creed,
Coming and going, birth and rebirth
Are but a cyclic movement
Of life and death

Lalleshwari

Ocean And The Mind Of Man Are Both Alike

Ocean and the mind of man are both alike:

Under the ocean's bottom lies
the destructive fire, vadvagni;

And in the breast of man doth rage
the fire of wrath.

When the fire breaks out, its flames
of angry, abusive words,
sear and scorch and burn.

But if one ponders unruffled and calm,
and weighs the words, though angry they be,
They have no substance, no, nor weight.

Lalleshwari

Patience To Endure Lightning And Thunder

Patience to endure lightning and thunder,
Patience to face darkness at noon,
Patience to go through a grinding-mill -
Be patient whatever befalls, doubting not
that He will surely come to you.

Lalleshwari

Playfully, You Hid From Me

Playfully, you hid from me.
All day I looked.

Then I discovered
I was you,

and the celebration
of That began.

[Taken from Naked Song, by Lalla / Translated by Coleman Barks]

Lalleshwari

Probing Inside, I Came

Probing inside, I came
Seeking the moon within me:
Sifting the chaff from the grain.
I went seeking
The Like, Alike,
Thou art Narayan. thou art Narayan
Thou art Narayan, then,
Why this will- of- the- wisp ?

Lalleshwari

Should You, In This Body, Seek

Should you, in this body, seek
The Supreme Self that dwells within,
Greed and illusion soon removed,
A halo of glory will surround
this very body of yours.

Lalleshwari

Slay The Murderous Demons

Slay the murderous demons,
Lust, Anger and Greed;
Or, aiming their arrows at you, they will
surely shoot you dead.
Take care, feed them on self-restraint
and discrimination of the Self;
Thus starved these demons will become
powerless and weak.

Lalleshwari

The Arrows Of My Wooden Bow Turned Out

The arrows of my wooden bow turned out
To be the pith of water rush grass;
The Rajdhani of the kingdom
Fell into the rustic hands of
A crude carpenter;
In the midst of a busy bazar,
Lockless remained my shop,
And a pilgrimless self.
I became:
Who appreciates, my friend .

Lalleshwari

The Dirt Of Myfilthy Heart

The dirt of my filthy heart
Seemed to be cleansed,
I found the known, unknown: and
The dirt of my filthy heart
Seemed to be cleansed,
I found the known, unknown: and
When I saw Him near me,
I discovered When I saw Him near me, I discovered

[Translated by P. N. Razdan (Mahanori)]

Lalleshwari

The Joys Of Palate And Fine Apparel

The joys of palate and fine apparel
bring man no lasting peace.
They who give up false hopes and don't
put trust in the things of the world,
Ascend, unafraid of Death's terrors
by scriptures told;
For having lived contented lives,
they are not debtors of Desire

Lalleshwari

The Mind's The Garden Of Flowers

The mind's the garden of flowers, and
Faith, the florist:
Adorn HIM with the garlands of devotion:
Shower Him with thy inner moonlight
Through a 'Nauri Kalash', in puja
Silent Mantras unto Shankara'll thus
Awaken the souls:

Lalleshwari

The Sling Knots Of The Load Of Candy

The sling knots of the load of candy.

Loosened;

My bony frame bent

Into a bow;

What load can my back bear,

Dear Friend?

Loss of the Guru's word added salt

To my suffering:

A shepherdless flock became

My sheep:

What can I bear ?

Lalleshwari

The Sling Of My Candy Load Has Ggone Loose

The sling of my candy load has gone loose,
(and it galls my back):
My body has bent double under its weight;
how shall I carry the load ?
The word of my Guru
(that I must lose the world to gain my soul),
Has been a painful "loss-blister" for me.
I am become a shepherdless flock, ah me!

Lalleshwari

The Soul, Like The Moon

The soul, like the moon,
is now, and always new again.

And I have seen the ocean
continuously creating.

Since I scoured my mind
and my body, I too, Lalla,
am new, each moment new.

My teacher told me one thing,
live in the soul.

When that was so,
I began to go naked,
and dance.

[Taken from Naked Song, by Lalla / Translated by Coleman Barks]

Lalleshwari

The Steed Of Mind Speedeth Over The Sky

The steed of mind speedeth over the sky,
And, in the twinkling of the eye,
A hundred thousand leagues traverseth he.
Yet a man of discrimination can control
the curvetting steed,
And, on the wheels of praana and apraana, guide
his chariot aright.

Lalleshwari

The Tri-Pinnacled Lake

The tri-pinnacled lake.

The confluence of, running brooks
Is crowned by a cliff, glittering in the skies.
A bund links Harmukh
With Qaunsar Nag (Veshnapad)
The septapeaked mountain Lake is
Caged in a limitless VOID:

Lalleshwari

The Way Is Difficult And Very Intricate

The way is difficult and very intricate.

Lalla discarded her books that told
about it, and through meditation
saw the truth that never comes
to anyone from reading words.

Lalleshwari

There Is A Yawning Pit Underneath You

There is a yawning pit underneath you,
and you are dancing overhead.

Pray, Sir, how can you bring yourself to dance?

See, the riches you are amassing here,
nothing of them will go with you.

Pray, Sir, how can you relish your food and drink?

Lalleshwari

There Is Neither You, Nor I

There is neither you, nor I;
neither the object of meditation,
nor the process of meditation;
The Father of all action forgot Himself there.
The blind did not see any relationship and support there,
The devout merged with Him, the moment they saw the Lord!

Lalleshwari

They May Abuse Me Or Jeer At Me

They may abuse me or jeer at me,
They may say what pleases them,
They may with flowers worship me.
What profits them whatever they do?
I am indifferent to praise and blame.

Lalleshwari

This Counsel To The Body Give, O Soul

This counsel to the body give, O Soul:
Wear only such clothes as ward off cold;
Eat only to satisfy your hunger;
Devote yourself with all your heart
to the knowledge of the Supreme Self.
Consider this body to be food for the forest ravens.

Lalleshwari

Though You Are Wise, Be As A Fool

Though you are wise, be as a fool;
Though you can see, be as one blind;
Though you can hear, be as one deaf;
Patiently bear with all you meet,
and politely talk to everyone.
This practice surely will lead you
to the realisation of the Truth.

Lalleshwari

Thousand Times I Asked My Guru

Thousand times I asked my Guru,
What's HIS name, who's called Nothing?
Asking him again and again,
I was tired and exhausted.
But all too subtly
Something came out of nothing
After all

Lalleshwari

Tickled By The Sparks Of Shiva Consciousness

Tickled by the sparks of Shiva consciousness
On passing through six chakras to seventh, (the inner Moon)
My desire deepened and I
Moulded my nature by pranayamas: (Deep breathing)
Torched my liver:
With the fire of Love:
And thus. I found
Graceful Shiva before me.

Lalleshwari

To Learn The Scriptures Is Easy

To learn the scriptures is easy,
to live them, hard.
The search for the Real
is no simple matter.

Deep in my looking,
the last words vanished.
Joyous and silent,
the waking that met me there.

Lalleshwari

What Is Bitter At First Is Sweet In The End

What is bitter at first is sweet in the end,
What is sweet at first is poison in the end.
(To everyone is given the choice)
It all depends on the effort put in,
and the unflagging determined will;
For whoever strives must soon arrive at the city of his choice.

Lalleshwari

What Is Worship? Who Are This Man

What is worship? Who are this man
and this woman bringing flowers?

What kinds of flowers should be brought,
and what streamwater poured over the images?

Real worship is done by the mind
(Let that be a man) and by the desire
(Let that be a woman). And let those two
choose what to sacrifice.

There is a liquid that can be released
from under the mask of the face,
a nectar which when it rushes down
gives discipline and strength.

Let that be your sacred pouring,
Let your worship song be silence.

[Taken from Holy Fire: Nine Visionary Poets and the Quest for Enlightenment,
Edited by Daniel Halpern]

Lalleshwari

What Was It You Had Sown Which Should Have Borne A Rich Harvest?

What was it you had sown which should have borne a rich harvest?
You had but tanned a carcass hide,
shaped and stretched it taut on pegs,
(Your only care your own body which you pegged to the bonds of desire) .
But counsel to a fool is labour lost,
Like a ball thrown at a big-sized pillar,
rebounding but not hitting the mark;
Or fruitless as feeding a tawny bullock on sweet molasses,
And expect a yield of milk from him.

Lalleshwari

When My Mind Was Cleansed Of Impurities

When my mind was cleansed of impurities,
like a mirror of its dust and dirt,
I recognized the Self in me:
When I saw Him dwelling in me,
I realized that He was the Everything and I was nothing.

Lalleshwari

When Siddhanath Applied Lotion To My Eyes

When Siddhanath applied lotion to my eyes,
the cataracts that covered them dissolved.

I saw an astonishing sight.

Wherever I looked and whatever I beheld,

I saw my own Self, I saw God.

Wherever I looked, I saw my own Self!

O Lalli! This is the true seeing.

Lalleshwari

Whence I Have Come And By Which Way

Whence I have come and by which way,

I do not know.

Whither I shall go and by which way,

I do not know.

Were I to know the end of it all

And gain the knowledge of the truth,

(it would be well, for otherwise)

Life here is but an empty breath.

Lalleshwari

Which Are The Flowers And From Which Florists?

Which are the flowers and from which florists?

With which flowers should we

Adore HIM in obeisance?

Which juice should we use in a

'Nauri-Kalash' in puja? (a spouted container)

Which Mantras should we mutter

Unto Shankar

To Awaken our Souls?

Lalleshwari

Who Slays The Highway Robbers Three

Who slays the highway robbers three,
Greed, Lust and Pride,
And yet, in utter humility, serves
his fellow-men-
He truly seeks out the Lord,
disregarding as worthless ashes
all other things.

Lalleshwari

Why Do You Dote Upon Someone, My Soul

Why do you dote upon someone, my Soul,
who is not your true love?
Why have you taken the false for the true?
Why can't you understand, why can't you know?
It is ignorance that binds you to the false,
To the ever-recurring wheel of birth and death,
this coming and going.

Lalleshwari

Why Do You Grope Thus Like The Blind?

Why do you grope thus like the blind ?
Pray, doubt not what I say to you:
If you are wise, enter within
And see the Lord Himself is there.
You need not search Him here and there.

Lalleshwari

Why Have You Sunk Deep In The Sea

Why have you sunk deep in the sea
of the illusory pleasures of the world?
Why have you pulled down the high-banked road
which could have led you safe across?
The dense darkness of tamas surrounds you now,
and, at the appointed time,
Yama's apparitors prepare to drag
your body bleeding to death.
Who can dispel your fear of death?

Lalleshwari

With A Rope Of Loose-Spun Thread Am I Towing

With a rope of loose-spun thread am I towing
my boat upon the sea.

Would that God heard my prayer
and brought me safe across!

Like water in cups of unbaked clay
I run to waste.

Would God I were to reach my home!

Lalleshwari

Word, Thought, Kula And Akula Cease To Be There!

Word, Thought, Kula and Akula cease to be there!
Neither silence nor yogic postures gain you admission there;
Neither Shiva, nor Shakti abide there!
Whatever remains is That; this is the Lesson!

Lalleshwari

You Will Not Know Peace Of Mind

You will not know peace of mind
if you a kingdom gain,
Nor will you gain content or rest
if you give it away.
Only the man, free from desire,
will never die.
Only he has true knowledge
Who, though alive, is as one dead,
dead to all desire.

Lalleshwari

Your Way Of Knowing Is A Private Herb Garden

Your way of knowing is a private herb garden.
Enclose it with a hedge of meditation,
and self-discipline, and helpfulness to others.

Then everything you've done before
will be brought as a sacrifice
to the mother goddess.

And each day, as you eat the herbs,
your garden grows more bare and empty.

[Taken from Naked Song, by Lalla / Translated by Coleman Barks]

Lalleshwari