

Classic Poetry Series

**Ishwar Chandra Gupta**  
**- poems -**

**Publication Date:**  
2012

**Publisher:**  
Poemhunter.com - The World's Poetry Archive

# Ishwar Chandra Gupta(March 1812 - 23 January 1859)

Ishwar Chandra Gupta was an Indian Bengali poet and writer. Gupta was born in the village Kanchanpalli or Kanchrapara, 24 Parganas district (currently in North 24 Parganas district, West Bengal, India).

## <b>Early Life</b>

Ishwar Chandra Gupta was brought up in his uncle's house after the death of his mother. Gupta spent most of his childhood in Kolkata. At that time, poets were named Kobiwala and the kobiwalas were not so civilized in language. Sexual words and clashes were common. But Ishwar Chandra Gupta created a different style of poetry.

He started the newspaper Sambad Prabhakar with Jogendra Mohan Tagore on on January 28, 1831. which finally became a daily on June 4, 1839. Many Bengali writers of the 19th century started their career with that magazine. He reintroduced into Bengali poetry the mediaeval style with double meaning (already seen in Sandhyakaranandi and Bharatchandra):

"Ke bole Ishwar Gupta, byapta charachar,  
Jahar prabhaye prabha paye Prabhakar.."

'Ishwar' means God, 'Gupta' means hidden and 'Prabhakar' is the a translation runs:

"Who says God is hidden? He is omnipresent  
From Him the Sun gets its luminescence."

Also, Ishwar (Chandra) Gupta ran the journal 'Prabhakar'. So a second meaning of the poem, making a tongue-in-cheek reference to the author, runs:

"Who says Ishwar (Gupta) is hidden? His reach touches the world  
For his brilliance makes the Prabhakar luminiscent."

## <b>Literary Style</b>

He brought modern era of poetry in Bengali. He did not describe the life of Gods and Goddesses, but the daily life of human beings. He also wrote biographies of

many Bengali poets and musicians.

Ishwarchandra Gupta always satires the so called modern class who blindly followed the colonial British power.

"Tumi ma kalpataru  
Amra shob posha goru  
Shikhi ni shing bankano  
Khai kebol khol-bichuli-ghash  
Jano ranga amla  
Tule mamla  
Na bhangе gamla  
Ma!  
Pele bhushi  
Tatei kushi  
Ghushi khele bachbo na!"

His literary works were included in the curriculum of school level, secondary and higher secondary Bengali Literature in Bangladesh.

### <b>Political Views</b>

In the early days he was a conservative, opposing the Young Bengal movement as well as frowning on widow remarriage. His views on widow remarriage put him at odds with Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar. He was one of the earliest advocates of a Hindu view of Indian society. Later in his life, his views began to change and he championed the cause for the remarriage of virgin widows and women's education.

Ishwar Chandra was a nationalist, with strong feelings for his land and his language. He started a movement for the improvement of Bangla and also made it a point to use Bangla words unaffected by English.

Among his other important contributions are his biographies of <a href="http://www.poemhunter.com/bharatchandra-ray/">Bharatchandra</a>, <a href="http://www.poemhunter.com/ramprasad-sen/">Ramprasad Sen</a>, Ramnidhi Gupta, Haru Thakur, and other poets. The credit for creating a proper climate for writers such as Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay, Dinabandhu Mitra, Rangalal Banerjee also goes to him.

### <b>Works</b>

Apart from Sambad Prabhakar, he also edited a number of other journals including Sangbadratnabali, Pasandapidan, and Sangbadsadhuranjan. He also edited Kalikirtan (1833) and Prabodh Prabhakar (1858) by Ramprasad Sen. Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay edited some of Ishwar Chandra's writings in Ishwar Chandra Guptar Kavita Sanggraha (Collected Poems, 1885) and Satyanarayan Vratakatha (1913).

# Duryodhan At Dvaipayan

In the far horizon streaks of blood  
merge into the black gloom;  
Below, on the darkling solitary plain  
whose form sprawls, alone?

--Know you not who I am? That name have I not  
forgotten-- king am I-- Raja Duryodhan!  
Kuruksheetra, is it over?--  
Where am I-- is this Dvaipayan?  
O Queen, queen Bhanumati--  
where are you, my wife, in calamity?  
--Chariot; my chariot,-- driver, charioteer--  
Where, where are the guards gone?  
Oh! the pain-- torment agonising--  
who calls the royal surgeon?  
Royal valour, hero's fortitude--  
will even they give way today?  
--Yet, yet I do not fear,  
alone will I fight undeterred;  
Yet, in unfair battle defeat  
I spurn!--  
Alas, my fate! even that I cannot,  
shattered these thighs in dust lie;  
Refuge-less my valour only  
cries out its impotence!  
Vrikodara, wolf-waisted, Pandavas' shame,  
you blackened Pandu's face--  
like a thief in the night  
dharma you burnt,  
firing it with your own hands;  
Un-Kshatriya in Kshatriya clan--  
proof aright of Wind-god's son--  
On that tarnished Pandava name  
of yours shame, shame,--  
a thousand shames.

\*

Did none have eyes in this world?  
Alas, who is left in this wide world?  
Bhishma, Drona, Karna gone--

Who will punish whom?  
All, that deceiving Krishna's work,  
cruel intriguer's evil counsel--  
'Dharma-rajya', righteous rule,  
confusing words ever on his lips.  
With Krishna a band of rogues  
call him 'friend', serve as slaves.  
That shame of Yadava clan  
manipulates them, smiling.

\*

Where's Balarama, generous, valorous,  
radiant-white Raivatak?  
And where the clan's shame, his brother,  
partisan and cheat!  
Oh-- that pain, again, again!  
Who's there?

Come near, O Sanjaya,  
See your invincible Duryodhan's  
calamitous condition!  
Kuru clan-is it uprooted then--  
Kurukshetra-- is it annihilation?  
Speak, Counsellor, why silent?  
What is left to realise!  
--You muse, to Duryodhan you won't  
relate that inauspicious news,--  
Alas! at death's throes now  
has that any worth?

\*

Today I recall in that assembly hall  
Uncle's folded hands-  
Had then I known of today,  
Would've I berated him so bitterly?  
Yet, considering royalty's honour,  
I repent not--  
Who among his enemies is unaware  
of Duryodhan's sense of honour?  
His morals, his acts, all,  
all befit the King of kings--  
The noble were honoured, genius welcomed,  
bounty seeker returned with wealth.

\*

Oh! That incident?  
Kshatriyas' right to gamble's well known--  
Who calls it sin? No tearful remorse  
touches these eyes!  
If violence you regard a crime,  
you're a coward;-- proof of it:  
Perpetual strife of god and titan  
though brothers-  
What say you to that?  
Violence's natural to creatures,  
violence--bred food nurtures life--  
Time's desire mirrored in violence  
is figured forth in the dynasty.

\*

Panchali? Mention not, Counsellor!  
Who marries five husbands,  
as bride-price wins perpetual right  
to mockery as fate's boon!  
King's duties are grave, profound,  
Desires, wishes, aren't for him,  
All life a one-pointed dedication,  
you well know, O Sanjaya.  
Kunti's sons, Draupadi's husbands-  
too harshly treated?  
Kuru patriarch, in his kingdom,  
is impartial, adamant!

\*

Needlepoint's land I refused  
Pandavas? Because I was miserly?  
Duryodhan's munificent hand  
who knows not on this earth?  
It's not that, Counsellor,--  
Justice's just an excuse  
of enemies to demand rights!  
Were it a prayer? Gifting kingdom away  
the forest would receive Duryodhan.

\*

Only one thing I cannot forget,  
Counsellor, which even today  
pierces my heart,--  
Abhimanyu's heinous murder

by seven chariot-heroes!

\*

--Oh, that agony! Shooting up  
from thigh to skull  
blacks all out!  
Blind eyes, frenzied mind,  
doomsday roar drumming in ears!  
No physician left? Send messages  
summon, call them-  
this necklace as prize.

\*

Dusk deepens in skies o'erhead  
at plain's end forest-skirted,  
after lake waters grow black  
in deepening darkness!  
Hundreds of will-o'-wisp eyes light up  
thronging Kurukshetra-plain;  
Ravening carnivores roam roaring!

\*

Sanjaya, stay awhile,  
perhaps my last night this!  
Defeat, victory-- not the issue,  
they're life's partners I know.  
Regrets have I none in this life,  
by nature King is this Duryodhan;  
above blame and fame  
his all-ruling throne!

\*

Only, a hundred pranams convey  
at my father's feet, Counsellor,--  
tell him-- I am that great father's  
renowned dynast.  
Death I own proudly, easily,  
my constant servitor,--  
Life he steals,  
steal he cannot fame  
that is eternal.

\*

What if father's eyes are blind-  
what can't fate do?

Love for his son--I know,  
is limitless. Yet not blind.  
Desiring progeny's welfare  
shackling in chains of state-rule  
in war he could've been party  
following conventional advice;  
--Of counsellors there was no shortage,  
--Krishna, Vidura, heroic Bhishma,--  
Yet with faith in his son  
that head high-held bowed in respect.  
--Better than cowardly peace  
is even war eternal,--  
In paternal love that kingly ethic  
never forgot, that ruler of men.  
--For proud son's befitting father he,  
supernal radiance in mind's eyes;--  
At his feet, hence, again and again  
I bow today with body and soul.

\*

Night deepens,--farewell, friend,  
return home with pranam;  
May Duryodhan's glorious fame  
live, constant companion!  
As nearby Dvaipayana ripples,  
hallowed by Vyasa's holy name;--  
may Kshatriya valour's radiant star  
shine in the gloom-- Duryodhan.

[Transcreated by Pradip Bhattacharya]

Ishwar Chandra Gupta