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CHAPTER

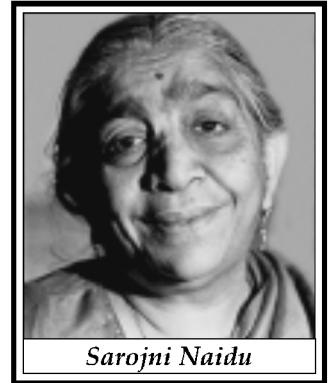
The Village Song

—Sarojini Naidu (1879-1949)

◆ *About the Poetess*

Sarojini Naidu was born in Hyderabad Deccan, of Bengalee parents on 13th February, 1879. Sarojini's father Dr. Aghorenath Chattopadhyaya was professor in the Nizam's college and her mother was Varada Sundari a devout and cultured lady. Like most of Bengalees, Sarojini was also very proud of her cultural heritage.

Sarojini Naidu's poetic career truly began with the publication of her first anthology 'The Golden Threshold' in 1905. She was called the 'Nightingale of India'. Mahatma Gandhi was her mentor and the Indian National Congress was the forum. She became the President of the Indian National Congress, even before Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru. At sixty-eight, she became the Governor of the Uttar Pradesh, the most populous state of India. She was first woman-Governor of the Independent India. She died on 2nd March, 1949.



◆ *Central Idea of the Poem*

"THE VILLAGE SONG" is a beautiful example of Sarojini Naidu's Folk lyrics. Its question-answer form makes it dramatic. The dialogue between a mother and her child (a daughter) unfolds the theme. The scene is pastoral. The happy world of Nature seems more enchanting to the child than the world of sordid realities, pain and frustration. Even the mundane desires and pleasures hold no charm and it desires to escape to the beauties of songs and flowers in Nature. The mother strives to persuade her child to lead an ordinary and normal life but the child seems intent on having its way despite its mother's counter-arguments. To the determined child the call of the beautiful Nature, with its inherent peace and happiness, is undeniable and irresistible. The spell is too strong to be broken.

In simple verses of exquisite beauty the poet depicts the virtues and magic of Nature and with great skill incorporates philosophy and spirituality to make the lyric a gem of rare excellence.

*HONEY, child, honey, child, whither are you going?
Would you cast your jewels all to the breezes blowing?
Would you leave the mother who on golden grain has fed you?*

Would you grieve the lover who is riding forth to wed you?

*Mother mine, to the wild forest I am going,
Where upon the champa boughs the champa buds are blowing;
To the Koil-haunted river-isles where lotus lilies glisten,
The voices of the fairy folk are calling me : O listen!*

*Honey, child, honey, child, the world is full of pleasure,
Of bridal-songs and cradle-songs and sandal-scented leisure.
Your bridal robes are in the loom, silver and saffron glowing,
Your bridal cakes are on the hearth : O whither are you going?*

*The bridal-songs and cradle-songs have cadences of sorrow,
The laughter of the sun today, the wind of death tomorrow
Far sweeter sound the forest-notes where forest-streams are falling;
O mother mine, I cannot stay, the fairy-folk are calling.*

|| Glossary ||

Whither	To what place, where	किस स्थान को, कहाँ
Cast	To throw, to fling	फेंकना, उछाल देना
Cast your Jewels	Throw your precious ornaments	अपने बहुमूल्य आभूषण फेंकना
Golden grain	Wheat grain	गेहूँ का दाना
Fed you	Brought you up	पालन-पोषण किया
Grieve	To suffer grief	दुःख भोगना
To wed	with the purpose of marrying	शादी करने के लिए
Boughs	Branches of trees	पेड़ों की शाखायें
Blowing	Blooming	फूल रही हैं
Lotus Lilies	Lotus flowers	कमल के फूल
Glisten	Shine or sparkle like silk	रेशम की भाँति चमकना या झिलमिलाना
Fairy-folks	Fairies	परियाँ
Saffron	Orange-coloured	केसरिया रंग का
Glowing	Shining	चमकते हुए
Hearth	The fire on which food is cooked	चूल्हा
Sound	Appear, seem	लगना, प्रतीत होना

|| Exercise ||

↳ STANZAS FOR COMPREHENSION

Read the following stanzas given below and answer the questions that follow each—

- (1) Honey, child forth to wed you?
(i) Write title of the poem from which the above stanza has been taken.

- (ii) Who is leaving the mother and why?
 (iii) Who fed the golden grain?
- (2) **Mother mine calling me : O Listen.**
 (i) Write title of the poem from which the above stanza has been taken.
 (ii) Where is daughter going?
 (iii) Where are Champa buds blowing?
 (iv) What do you mean by 'River-Isles'?
- (3) **Honey, child are you going?**
 (i) According to mother how is the world?
 (ii) What do you understand by Bridal song?
 (iii) Who says that your bridal robes are in the loom?
- (4) **The bridal songs fairy-folk are calling.**
 (i) Write the title of the poem from which the above stanza has been taken.
 (ii) According to the daughter, how is the world?
 (iii) Who are calling the daughter?

↳ COMPREHENSION

Answer the following questions—

1. What is the word golden grain mean?
2. Where does daughter want to go?
3. Why does daughter want to go forest?
4. What does daughter tell about world?
5. Why does mother want to stay her daughter in the house?
6. Write down the central idea of the poem 'The Village Song' in your own words.
7. Who is the poet of the poem?
8. Explain the expression Cradle-songs.

↳ Project Work

1. Make a list of Poems of Sarojini Naidu.
2. Give a biographical report with chart of Sarojini Naidu.