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Sri Narsi Mehta



Sant Narsi Mehta

"Vaishnava Janato Thene Re Kahiye Peed Parayi Jaane Re"

Narsi Mehta was a devotee par excellence; he drank deep the grace of the Lord. The fruit of surrender was clearly seen in his life. His life was a vivid proof and example of the validity of the Lord's assurance in the Gita - "My devotee never perishes".

Sant Narsi Mehta is one of the greatest devotees of the Lord who lived around 14th century AD. He is the composer of the soul-stirring song, "Vaishnava Janato Tene Kahiye je", which describes the qualities of a devotee. Narsi Mehta's place of birth is believed to be Taloja in Gujarat. It is said that Narsi was dumb and lost his parents quite early. His Grandma took him to the temples and to see Saints who visited the temples. One such Saint looked at Narsi and said that he was a blessed soul who will inspire many generations to the path of devotion leading to God. He placed his hand on the child's head and said "RadhaKrishna!" and Narsi immediately repeated "RadhaKrishna!"

Narsi was not drawn to studies and schooling. Instead he preferred to listen to discourses. He was enraptured by the story of Lord Krishna. He would dress himself as Radha or Gopi and dancing frequently. After his grandma's demise, he lived with his brother and sister-in-law. He did not contribute anything to the household. The brother thought he will do better if he was married but marriage did not change Narsi. Once when the sister-in-law was harsh to Narsi because of his lazy ways, he went to their family deity, Lord Shiva's temple and sat in prayer for 7 days without food or drink. Lord Shiva appeared before him as a Sadhu very pleased. Since Narsi was devoted to Krishna and the Gopies, Lord Shiva blessed him to be a spectator of Raas Lila that night. Narsi was lost in devotion at the sight of his Krishna dancing in the moonlight. Lord Krishna gave Narsi a torch and asked him to light it. So lost in devotion was Narsi that he lit his own hand instead. Lord Krishna healed the burning hand with His touch and blessed Narsi with "Kar tal". Narsi burst into compositions in a special tune called Raag Kedar when watching the Raas. The Lord blessed him that whenever Narsi needed help, he should sing in that tune. He also told Narsi to go take care of his family. Narsi returned to his wife and a daughter and then a son was born to them. They lived by themselves with Narsi engaging in Bhajans constantly. They were poor. Narsi was always lost in Krishna Bhakthi, just like a Gopi. Many miracles followed which showed that the Lord takes care of His devotees. When Narsi's daughter was married, Narsi could not send her to her in-laws place with a lot of presents. He and his family immersed themselves in Bhajans instead and the Lord delivered loads of presents to be sent with the daughter.

Narsi's devotion became well known. Once a Harijan approached Narsi and asked him to sing for his people. Narsi went to their house without second thought and sang all night long. When he returned, his wife had passed away. Narsi took it with equanimity. The high caste people became angry with Narsi and excommunicated him. A few days later, a Brahmin was giving a feast. He wanted to invite Narsi but did not. When guests started arriving, he saw a Harijan with every Brahmin coming in. He realized his mistake and begged Narsi's pardon. Narsi taught them that a true Brahmin accepted the universal brotherhood of all men and treated them equally.

Another time, a Brahmin came to Narsi and asked for a loan for his daughter's wedding. Narsi had no money but went to a pawn broker. He pledged his beloved raga "Kedar" in return for the amount needed by the Brahmin. In the meantime a jealous person, poisoned the local king's mind against Narsi. The king summoned Narsi and asked him to argue with other learned men who said that there were rules around who can sing Bhajans. Narsi humbly responded that he was not learned. But he stood firm that every one can sing Bhajans and no one should be barred from singing the God's name. The king said that if he had so much devotion, he should be able to get the idol in the local temple to accept a garland from Narsi through closed doors. Narsi agreed and sat in front of the sanctum and started singing. He felt bereft without his raag Kedar. The Lord went to the pawnbroker's house and repaid the money and dropped the receipt in Narsi's lap. As soon as Narsi saw that, he was in tears at the mercy of the Lord and sang in raag Kedar asking the Lord to accept the garland. The garland flew to the idol and the king fell at Narsi's feet. Narsi was a devotee

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par-excellence. Bhajans were his lifeline and he considered himself as the Lord's humble servant. His surrender to the Lord was complete. The Lord, for His part, always stood by Narsi and blessed him and showed his greatness to all. Narsi was very simple and humble. Narsi saw God in all his fellow creatures. His simple songs have inspired generations for more than five centuries.

Vaishnava Janato song describes the qualities of the true child of God, of the ideal man, of the ideal devotee. This song summarizes and epitomizes the teachings of all the moral and ethical codes, and this unique gospel song has been gifted to us by Saint Narsi Mehta. It was this song that made Gandhi who was just an ordinary person like any of us into Mahatma Gandhi.

Meaning of Vaishnava Janato

1. One who is a Vaishnav (Believer in Vishnu) is one who knows the pain of others Does good to others, especially to those who are in misery And does not let pride enter his mind
2. A Vaishnav tolerates and praises the entire world, Does not say bad things about anyone, Keeps his/her words, actions and thoughts pure. O Vaishnav, your mother is blessed (dhanya-dhanya)
3. A Vaishnav is one who sees everything equally, rejects greed and avarice, Considers another's wife or daughter his mother His tongue may be tired, but he will never speak lies, One who does not even touch someone else's property
4. A Vaishnav is one who does not succumb to worldly attachments, Who has devoted himself to staunch detachment from worldly pleasures, Who has become addicted to the elixir coming by the name of Ram, For whom all the religious sites are in the mind.
5. A Vaishnav is one who has no greed and deceit, Who has renounced lust of all types and anger. The poet Narsi would like to see such a person by whose virtue, the entire family gets salvation.



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