



The 15th Century's Indian Great Devotee Poets Of Lord Krishna

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1. Narsinh Mehta

Narsinh Mehta ji known as Narsi Bhagat was born in early 15th century in village called Talaja (famous for Mangoes- Kesar) and later moved to Junagarh in Bhav Nagar District of Gujarat state. His father held an administrative post in royal court. Unfortunately he lost his parents when he was only five years old and was brought up by his grandmother Jaygaouri. He was unable to speak up to the age of 8.

He married probably in the year 1429. Mehta and his wife stayed in his brother Bansidhar's house in Junagarh. However he and his wife were not well treated at his brother's house by his bhabhi because she was ill- tempered woman, always taunting and insulting for his nature of devotion (bhakti). One day when Narsinh Mehta had enough of these taunts and insults, he left the house and went to a nearby forest in search of some peace, where he fasted and mediated for seven days by a secluded Shiva lingam until Shiva appeared before him in person. On the poet's request, the Lord took him to Vrindavan and showed him the eternal raas leela of Krishna and the Gopis. A legend has it that the poet, transfixed by the spectacle, burnt his hand with the torch he was holding, but he was so engrossed in the ecstatic vision that he was oblivious to the pain. Mehta, as the popular account goes, at Krishna's command, decided to sing his praises and the nectarous experience of the rasa in this mortal world. He resolved to compose around 22,000 kirtas or compositions.

He was an exponent of Vaishnav sampradaya poetry. His literary forms called Pada (Verse), Akhyana and Prabhatiy (morning devotional songs).

One of the most important features of Mehtaji's work is that it is not available in the language in which Narsinh has composed them. They have been largely preserved orally.

Mehtaji wrote many bhajans and artis for lord Krishna and they are published in many books. His devotional bhajans are sung today mostly in Gujarat. His bhajan Vaishnav jan was Mahatma Gandhi's favourite and has become synonymous with him. As he worshiped Lord Shiva after leaving home, it can be said that his family tradition was Shivism. He became Vaishnava due to Shiva. It is mentioned that other Nagars opposed him due to his Vaishnava tradition. Vishwanath Jani's mosalacharitra mentions that a Nagar opposed him saying that he is not vipra (Brahmin) because he is Vaishnava. So Dholakiya opines that even of Shiva may have originated to make his Vaishnava devotion acceptable.

Harivallabh Bhavani opines that the Vaishnava devotion was prevalent in Narshin's time and it is not unusual that he was devotee of Vaishnava. He also mentions the Vaishnava surname among Nagars. Soon after his daughter, kunwarbai's marriage (1447) to Shirang Mehta of Una's son, Kunwarbai conceived and it had been a custom for the girl's parents to give gifts and present to all the in-laws during the seventh month of pregnancy.

This custom known as Mameru, was simply out of the reach of materialistically poor Narsinh who had hardly anything except intransient faith in his Lord. How Krishna helped his beloved devoice is a legend depicted in 'Mameru Na Pada', this episode is preserved vividly in the memory of Gujarati people later by compositions poets and films.

The famous Bhajan – (Vaishnav Jan To Tene Kahiye) -

Vaishnav Jan to Tene kahiye Je

Peer Parai Jaane Re.

Par Dukhe Upkar Kare Toy

Man Abhiman Na Ane Re.

Sam Drishti Ne Trishna Tyagi,

Par stri Jene Mat Re.

Jihva Thaki Asatya Na Bole,

Par Dhan Nab Jhale Hath Re.

Moh Maya Vyape Nahi Jene,

Dridhh Vairagy Jena Man Ma Re.

Ram Nam Shoon Tali Lagi
Sakal Teerath Jena Man Ma Re.

Van lobhi ne kapat Rahit Chhe,
Kam Krodh Nivarya Re.

Bhale Nar Saiyon Tenu Darshan Karta,
Kul Ekoter Tarya Re.

Meaning of Bhajan-

One who is a Vaishnav (Devotee of Vishnu) Knows the pain of others does well to others without letting pride enters his mind. A Vaishnav, tolerates and praises the entire world. Does not speak ill of others Keeps his promises, actions and thoughts pure your mother is blessed indeed. A Vaishnav sees everything equally, rejects greed and avarice respects women as he respects his own mother though his tongue may tire he will utter no untruth, never touches the property of others.

A Vaishnav does not succumb to worldly attachments he has renounced lust of all types and anger. The poet Narsi will like to see such a person by whose virtue, the entire family gets salvation.

2. Meera Bai

Meera Bai –A Hindu mystic poet and devotee of Lord Krishna born in a village Kudki, a small village of Jaitaran Tehsil of Pali district north of Nagaur district which is 150 kms from Jodhpur of Rajasthan in the family of Ratan Singh Rathore who was the ruler of Kudki. The exact records about Meera Bai is not available, and scholars have attempted to establish Meera's biography from secondary literature that mentions her, and wherein dates and other moments.

Meera Bai unwillingly married Raja Bhoj Raj, the crown prince of Mewar in 1516. Her husband was wounded in one of the ongoing wars with the Delhi sultanate in 1518, and he died of battle wounds in 1521. Both her father and father –in law (Rana Sanga) died a few days after their defeat in the Battle of Khanwa against first Mughal Emperor Babur.

After the death of her father-in-laws, tried many times to assassinate her, such as sending Meera Bai a glass of poison and telling her it was nectar or sending her a basket with a snakes instead of flowers.

According to the hagiographic legends, she was not harmed in either case, with the snakes miraculously becoming a Krishna idol. or a garland of flowers. In another version of these legends, she is asked by Vikram Singh to go drown herself, which she tries but she finds herself floating on water. Yet another legends states that the third Mughal emporor Akbar the great came with Tansen to visit Meera Bai and presented a pearl necklace, but scholar doubt this ever happened because Tansen joined Akbar's court in 1562. 15 years after she died. Similarly some stories state that Guru Ravidas was her guru (teacher), but there is no corroborating historical evidence for this. Some versions suggest this could likely have happened others disagree.

The three different oldest records are known as of 2014 that mention Meera Bai, all from the 17th century and written within 150 years of Meera's death, neither mention that the people who persecuted her were her in-laws or from some Rajput royal family.

Nancy Martin-Kershaw states that to the extent Meera bai was challenged and persecuted, religious or social conventions were unlikely to have been the cause, rather the likely cause was political chaos and military conflicts between the Rajput kingdom and the Mughal Empire.

Other stories state that Meera Bai left the Kingdom of Mewar and went on pilgrimages. In her last years, Meera Bai lived in Dwarka or Vrindavan, where legends state she miraculously disappeared by merging into idol of Krishna in 1547. While miracles are contested by scholars for the lack of historical evidence. It is widely acknowledge that Meera dedicated her life to Lord Krishna, composing songs of devotion and was one of the most important poet saints of the Bhakti movement's period.

The famous Bhajan- (Mohe Lagi Lagan Guru Charanan Ki)-

Mohe Lagi Lagan Guru Charnan ki

Charan Bina mohe kachhu Nahin bhav,
Jhuthi Maya Sapnan ki.

Bhav sagar sab sookh gayo hai
Fikar nahin Mohe taranan ki.

Meera ke Prabhu giridhar Nagar,
Ulat bhai more nainan ki.

Mohe Lagi Lagan Guru Charnan ki
Charan Bina mohe kachhu Nahin bhav.

3. Swami Vallabhacharya

Vallabhacharya was born to Shree Lakshman Bhatt and Yellama in 1499 (Vikram samvat 1535) on the 11th day of the dark half of lunar month of Chaitra in Champaran, Chhattisgarh, India.

Vallabhacharya also known as Vallabh was an Indian philosopher who founded the Krishna centered Pushti sect of Vaishnavism in the Braj region of India, 500 old sect of Hindu religion.

Madhurashtakam was written by Swamy Vallabhacharya, founder of the Pushti sect and philosophy of shuddhadwait. It is written in respect of lord Krishna.

When he was around 9 years old, he and his brother Shri Ramchandra Bhatt were initiated into Yagyopavit Sanskar, the Hindu thread ceremony.

In in tender age of 11 years he studied Yoga, Nyay, Mimansa and all the philosophical systems of India.

He is the Acharya and guru of Pushti Marg which he founded after his own interpretation of Vedanta philosophy. He died on 26th June 1531 at the age of 52 in Varanasi.

His literature is best preserved in the Braj region of U.P. particularly at Nathdwara in Mewar region of India and important Krishna pilgrimage centre.

Famous Bhajan – (Madhurashtakam)

1.

Adharam madharam, vadanam madharam

Nayanam madharam, hasitam madharam

Hridayam madharam, Gamanam madharam

Madhuradhipate rakhilam madharam.

2.

Vachnam madharam, Charitam madharam

Vasanam madharam, Valikam madharam

Chalitam madharam, Bhramitam madharam

Madhuradhipate rakhilam madharam.

3.

Venurmadhuro, Renurmadhurah

Panirmadhurah, Padaumadhurou

Nrityam madharam, Saksham madharam

Madhuradhipate rakhilam madhuram.

4.

Gitam madhuram, Pritam madhuram

Bhuktam madhuram, Suptam madhuram

Roopam madhuram, Tilakam madhuram

Madhuradhipate rakhilam madhuram.

5.

Karnan madhuram, Taranan madhuram

Haranam madhuram, Ramanam madhuram

Vanitam madhuram, Shamitam madhuram

Madhuradhipate rakhilam madhuram.

6.

Gunja madhura, Mala madhura

Yamuna madhura, Vichim madhuram

Salilam madhuram, Kamalam madhuram

Madhuradhipate rakhilam madhuram.

7.

Gopi madhura, Lila madhura

Yuktam madhuram, Muktam madhuram

Drishtam madhuram, Srishtam madhuram

Madhuradhipate rakhilam madhuram.

8.

Gopa madhura, Gavo madhura

Yashtirmadhura, Srishtirmadhuram

Dalitam madhuram, Phalitam madhuram

Madhuradhipate rakhilam madhuram.

Meaning of Pada-

1. (O Krishna) Your Lips are Sweet and Charming, Your Face is Sweet and Charming, Your Eyes are Sweet and Charming and Your Laughter is Sweet and Charming, Your Heart is Sweet and Charming and Your Going is Sweet and Charming; Everything about You is Sweet and Charming, O Lord of Sweetness.
2. (O Krishna) Your speech is Sweet and Charming, Your Nature is Sweet and Charming, Your Garments are Sweet and Charming and Your Bent Posture is Sweet and Charming, Your Walking is Sweet and Charming and Your Creation of confusion is Sweet and Charming, Everything about You is Sweet and Charming, O Lord of Sweetness.

3. (O Krishna) Your Flute is Sweet and Charming, Your Flowers (with Pollen) are Sweet and Charming, Your Hands are Sweet and Charming and Your Feet are Sweet and Charming, Your Dance is Sweet and Charming and Your Friendship is Sweet and Charming, Everything About You is Sweet and Charming, O Lord of Sweetness.
4. (O Krishna) Your Singing is Sweet and Charming, Your Drinking is Sweet and charming, Your Eating is Sweet and Charming, Your Sleeping is Sweet and charming, Your Form is Sweet and Charming and Your Mark on Forehead is Sweet and Charming; Everything about You is Sweet and Charming, O Lord of Sweetness.
5. O Krishna) Your Acts are Sweet and Charming, Your Carrying Over is Sweet and Charming, Your Stealing is Sweet and Charming and Your Divine Love Play is Sweet and Charming, Your Exuberance is Sweet and Charming and Your Relaxation is Sweet and Charming; Everything about You is Sweet and Charming, O Lord of Sweetness.
6. (O Krishna) Your Humming is Sweet and Charming, Your Garland is Sweet and Charur Yamuna is Sweet and Charming and Your Waves (of Yamuna) is Sweet and Charming, Your Water (of Yamuna) is Sweet and Charming and Your Lotus is Sweet and Charming; Everything about You is Sweet and Charming, O Lord of Sweetness.
7. (O Krishna) Your Gopis (Cowherd Girls) are Sweet and Charming, Your Divine Play is Sweet and Charming, Your Togetherness is Sweet and Charming and Your Setting Free is Sweet and Charming, Your Glance is Sweet and Charming and Your Courtesy is Sweet and Charming; Everything about You is Sweet and Charming, O Lord of Sweetness.
8. (O Krishna) Your Gopas (Cowherd Boys) are Sweet and Charming, Your Cows are Sweet and Charming, Your Staff is Sweet and Charming and Your Creation is Sweet and Charming, Your Breaking is Sweet and Charming and Your Making is Sweet and Charming; Everything about You is Sweet and Charming, O Lord of Sweetness.

4. Sant Kabir Das

The great Poet Sant Kabir Das was born in mid 15th century in Kashi (Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh). The details about the life of Kabir are shrouded in uncertainty. There are differing opinions, contrasting facts and multiple legends about his life. Even sources discussing his life are scanty. It is said that Kabir was conceived miraculously. and brought up in Muslim weavers family Niru and Neema. His mother was a devout Brahmin widow who had accompanied her father on a pilgrimage to a famous ascetic. Impressed by their dedication, the ascetic blessed her and told her she would soon bear a son. After the son was born, to escape dishonor (as she was not married), Kabir's mother abandoned him. Young Kabir was adopted by Neema, the wife of a Muslim weaver.

In another version of the legend, the ascetic assured the mother that the birth would be in an unusual manner and so it was, Kabir was born out of the palm of his mother. In this version of the story too, he was later adopted by the same Neema.

When people started doubting and questioning Neema about the child, the newly born miraculously proclaimed in a firm voice, "I was not born of a woman but manifested as a boy.. I have neither bones, nor blood, nor skin. I reveal to men the Shabda (word) I am the highest being".

To satiate his spiritual quest, he wanted to become the chela (disciple) of Ramananda, a famed saint in Varanasi. Kabir felt that if he could somehow know the secret mantra of his teacher, his initiation would follow. Saint Ramananda used to visit a certain ghat regularly in Varanasi.

When Kabir saw him approaching, he lay down on the stairs of the ghat and was struck by Ramananda who out of shock gasped the word 'Ram'. Kabir found the mantra and he was later accepted as a disciple by the saint.

From Khajinat al-Asafiya, we find that a Sufi Pir, Shaikh Taqqi was also the teacher of Kabir. Sufi influence is also quite apparent in Kabir's teaching and philosophy. There is a locality named Kabir Chaura in Varanasi which is believed to be the place where he grew up. Kabir eventually married a woman named Loi and had two children, a son Kamal and daughter Kamali. Some sources suggest that he married twice or he did not marry at all. While we do not have the luxury of establishing these facts about his life, we do have insights into the philosophy propagated by him through his poems.

Kabir seems to be deeply influenced by Upanishadic non-dualism and Islamic monism. He was also guided by the vaishnava Bhakti tradition which stressed on complete surrender towards God. He did not acknowledge distinctions based on caste.

A story goes that one day while some Brahmin men were taking a dip in the holy water of Ganga to expiate their sins; Kabir filled his wooden cup with its water and offered it to the men to drink. The men were quite offended at being offered it to the water from a lower caste man to which he replied "if the Ganges water cannot purify my cup, how can I believe that it can wash away my sins."

Famous Bhajan – (Chadariya jhini re jhini) -

Chadariya jhini re jhini
 Ram nam Ras bhini .
 Asht Kamal Ka charkha banaya
 Panch tatv ki pooni,

Nou das maas bunan ko lage,
 Moorakh maili kinhi.

Jab mori chadar ban ghar aayi
 Rangrez ko dinhi
 Aisa rang ranga rang rez ne
 Lalo lal kar dinhi.

Chadariya jhini re jhini..
 Chadar odhha shanka mat kariyo,
 Ye do din tumako dinhi,
 Moorakh log bhed nahi Jane

Din-din maili kinhi.
 Chadariya jhini re jhini.
 Dhruv, Prahalad, sudama ne oddhi,
 Shukdev ne nirmal kinhi.
 Das Kabir ne aisi odhhi,
 Jyon ki tyon dhar dinhi.
 Chadariya jhini re jhini

**Meaning-**

Kabir here talks about body, or human experience and how to utilize it. He talks about how he lived in the body, how other notable predecessors lived and how does an average man live. He says body is like finely woven cloth and is permeated by the ram naam (ra+ma rechak purak (breath)).

Eight-petalled lotus was used as a spinning wheel and the 5 elements as yarn
 It took 9-10 months to knit it, oh fool you spoiled it. When I got my sheet, I gave it to person who dyes sheet (guru). It was dyed such, totally red in color
 Dhruv prahlad and sudama wore it, Shuk dev made it pure. Kabir Das wore it such, he left it as it is (as he got it). He did not let it get soiled. He maintained the new born's awareness all his life.