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Meera Bai



Meera is regarded as an incarnation of Radha. She was born in Samvat 1557 or 1499 A.D. in the village Kurkhi, near Merta, a small state in Marwar, Rajasthan. Mira was the daughter of Ratan Singh Ranthor and the grand-daughter of Dudaji of Merta. The Ranthors of Merta were great devotees of Vishnu. Meera Bai was brought up amidst Vaishnava influence, which moulded her life in the path of devotion towards Lord Krishna. She learnt to worship Sri Krishna from her childhood. When she was four years of age, she manifested religious tendencies.

Meera's father arranged for her marriage with Rana Kumbha of Chitore, in Mewar. Meera was a very dutiful wife. She obeyed her husband's commands implicitly. After her household duties were over, she would go to the temple of Lord Krishna, worship, sing and dance before the image daily. The little image would get up, embrace Meera, play on the flute and talk to her. Rana's mother and other ladies of the house did not like the ways of Meera, as they were worldly-minded and jealous. They were all annoyed with her. Meera's mother-in-law forced her to worship Durga and admonished her often. But Meera stood adamant.

Meera was persecuted in various ways by the Rana and his relatives. She got the same treatment which Prahlad got from his father Hiranyakasipu. Hari shielded Prahlad. Here, Sri Krishna always stood by the side of Meera. Once Rana sent a cobra in a basket to Meera with the message that it contained a garland of flowers. Meera took her bath and sat for worship. After finishing her meditation, she opened the basket and found inside a lovely idol of Sri Krishna and a garland of flowers. Then Rana sent her a cup of poison with the message that it was nectar. Meera offered it to Lord Krishna and took it as His Prasad. It was real nectar to her. Rana sent a bed of nails for Meera to sleep on. Meera finished her worship and slept on the bed of nails. Lo! The bed of nails was transformed into a bed of roses.

When Meera was thus tortured by her husband's relatives, she sent a letter to Tulsidasji and asked the advice of the saint. She wrote thus: "All my relatives trouble me, because I move amongst Sadhus. I cannot carry on my devotional practices in the house. I have made Giridhar Gopal my friend from my very childhood. I am strongly attached to Him. I cannot break that attachment now".

Tulsidasji sent a reply: "Abandon those who do not worship Rama and Sita as if they are your enemies, even though they are your dearest relatives. Prahlad abandoned his father; Vibhishana left his brother Ravana; Bharata deserted his mother; Bali forsook even his Guru; the Gopis, the women of Vraja, disowned their husbands in order to attain the Lord. Their lives were all the happier for having done so. The opinion of holy saints is that the relation with God and love of God alone is true and eternal; all other relationships are unreal and temporary".

Once Akbar and his court musician Tansen came in disguise to Chitore to hear Meera's devotional and inspiring songs. Both entered the temple and listened to Meera's soul-stirring songs to their heart's content. Akbar was really moved. Before he departed, he touched the holy feet of Meera and placed a necklace of emeralds in front of the idol as a present. Somehow the news reached the Rana that Akbar had entered the temple in disguise, touched the feet of Meera and even presented her a necklace. The Rana became furious. He told Meera, "Drown yourself in the river and never show your face to the world in future. You have brought great disgrace on my family".

Meera obeyed the words of her husband. She proceeded to the river to drown herself. The names of the Lord "Govind, Giridhari, Gopal" were always on her lips. She sang and danced in ecstasy on her way to the river. When she raised her feet from the ground, a hand from behind grasped her. She turned behind and saw her beloved Krishna. She fainted. After a few minutes she opened her eyes. Lord Krishna smiled and spoke to her these words: "My dear Meera, your life with this mortal husband is over now. You are

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absolutely free. Be cheerful. You are Mine. Immediately proceed to the bowers of Vraja and the avenues of Brindavan. Seek Me there, my child. Be quick". He then disappeared.

Meera obeyed the divine call immediately. She walked barefoot on the hot sandy beds of Rajasthan. On her way, she was received by many ladies, children and devotees with great hospitality. She reached Brindavan. She found out her Flute-bearer there. She went about Brindavan begging for her food and worshipped in the Govinda Mandir which has since become famous and is now a place of pilgrimage. Her devotees of Chitore came to Brindavan to see Meera. Rana Kumbha came to Meera in the disguise of a mendicant, revealed himself and repented for his previous wrongs and cruel deeds. Meera at once prostrated before her husband.

Jiva Gosain was the head of the Vaishnavites in Brindavan. Meera wanted to have Darshan of Jiva Gosain. He declined to see her. He sent word to Meera that he would not allow any woman in his presence. Meera Bai retorted: "Everybody in Brindavan is a woman. Only Giridhar Gopal is Purusha. Today only I have come to know that there is another Purusha besides Krishna in Brindavan". Jiva Gosain was put to shame. He realized that Meera was a great devotional lady. He at once went to see Meera and paid her due respects.

Meera acted her part well on the stage of the world. She taught the world the way to love God. She rowed her boat dexterously in a stormy sea of family troubles and difficulties and reached the other shore of supreme peace and absolute fearlessness-the kingdom of supreme love. She belonged to the gentle fair sex and yet how undaunted in spirit and how courageous she was! Though she was young, she bore the persecutions silently. She endured the piercing taunts and sarcastic criticisms of the world bravely. She has left an indelible impression on the world and her name will be handed down to posterity. From Brindavan, Meera proceeded to Dwaraka. There she was absorbed in the image of Lord Krishna at the temple of Ranchod.

Meera had the beautiful cosmic vision. She saw Krishna in the tree, in the stone, in the creeper, in the flower, in the bird, in all beings-in everything. As long as there is the name of Krishna, there will be the name of Mira also.

It is extremely difficult to find a parallel to this wonderful personality-Meera-a saint, a philosopher, a poet and a sage. She was a versatile genius and a magnanimous soul. Her life has a singular charm, with extraordinary beauty and marvel. She was a princess, but she abandoned the pleasures and luxuries incident to her high station, and chose instead, a life of poverty, austerity, Tyaga and Vairagya. Though she was a delicate young lady, she entered the perilous journey on the spiritual path amidst various difficulties. She underwent various ordeals with undaunted courage and intrepidity. She stood adamant in her resolve. She had a gigantic will.

Meera's earthly life was full of troubles and difficulties. She was persecuted. She was tormented and yet she kept up an undaunted spirit and a balanced mind all through, by the strength of her devotion and the grace of her beloved Krishna. Though she was a princess, she begged alms and lived sometimes on water alone. She led a life of perfect renunciation and self- surrender.

Meera had Ragatmika Bhakti. She never cared for public criticism and the injunctions of the Shastras. She danced in the streets. She did no ritualistic worship. She had spontaneous love for Lord Krishna. From her very childhood she poured forth her love on Lord Krishna. Krishna was her husband, father, mother, friend, relative and Guru. Krishna was her Prananath.

Meera was fearless in her nature, simple in her habits, joyous in her disposition, amiable in her deportment, graceful in her behaviour and elegant in her demeanour. She immersed herself in the love of Giridhar Gopal. The name of Giridhar Gopal was always on her lips. Even in her dreams, she lived and had her being in Sri Krishna. As her song goes -



"Mere tho Giridhar Gopal Dusro naa koi"

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