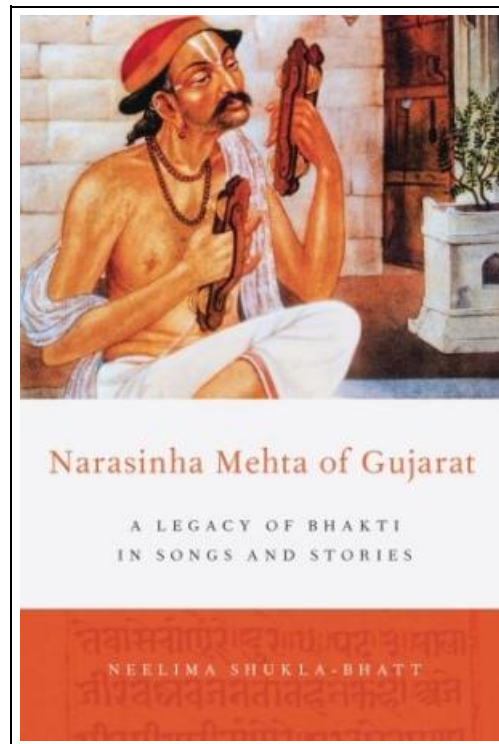


Narasinha Mehta of Gujarat: A Legacy of Bhakti in Songs and Stories



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(Dr. Rashawn Lang)

NARASINHA MEHTA OF GUJARAT: A LEGACY OF BHAKTI IN SONGS AND STORIES

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Oxford University Press Inc. Paperback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, Narasinha Mehta of Gujarat: A Legacy of Bhakti in Songs and Stories, Neelima Shukla-Bhatt, Neelima Shukla-Bhatt offers an illuminating study of Narsinha Mehta, one of the most renowned saint-poets of medieval India and the most celebrated bhakti (devotion) poet from Gujarat, whose songs and sacred biography formed a vital source of moral inspiration for Gandhi. Exploring manuscripts, medieval texts, Gandhi's more obscure writings, and performances in multiple religious and non-religious contexts, including modern popular media, Shukla-Bhatt shows that the songs and sacred narratives associated with the saint-poet have been sculpted by performers and audiences into a popular source of moral inspiration. Drawing on the Indian concept of bhakti-rasa (devotion as nectar), Narasinha Mehta of Gujarat reveals that the sustained popularity of the songs and narratives over five centuries, often across religious boundaries and now beyond devotional contexts in modern media, is the result of their combination of inclusive religious messages and aesthetic appeal in performance. Taking as an example Gandhi's perception of the songs and stories as vital cultural resources for social reconstruction, the book suggests that when religion acquires the form of popular culture, it becomes a widely accessible platform for communication among diverse groups. Shukla-Bhatt expands upon the scholarship on the embodied and public dimension of bhakti through detailed analysis of multiple public venues of performance and commentary, including YouTube videos. This study provides a vivid picture of the Narasinha tradition, and will be a crucial resource for anyone seeking to understand the power of religious performative traditions in popular media.

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