

LEELA- CHANESAR

Lakhpat is situated in the province of Kutch. Once there used to be a ruler Khangaru. He was very impressive and powerful. He had a daughter named Konru. She was very beautiful and the fame of her beauty was spread far and wide. No one could match her in beauty. She was all the while engrossed in the dream world.

In those times in Devalkot King Chanesar used to rule. He had no parallel in looks, strength, riches and grandeur. He possessed quite a formidable and attractive personality. His strong and long body, with impressive moustache on his face and chiseled features was envy of many. Every girl dreamt of him as an ideal husband. One day Konru dressed up in all her finery, was looking a ravishing beauty. Her friend remarked, "You have dressed up yourself beautifully, as if you have won Chanesar." This remark sparked love for Chanesar in Konru's heart. She had already heard his fame now she started pining for him. When Konru's mother Murki came to know of the condition of her daughter she spoke about it to her husband King Khangaru. He was very proud and was afraid that if he approached Chanesar and he refused an alliance with him through marriage of his daughter he may lose his respect. This would tantamount to lowering the head which would be worse than death. They decided to employ another stratagem. The mother Murki and her daughter Konru dressed up as wealthy merchants and after a long journey reached Devalkot. In Devalkot they got friendly with a flower vendor who was in charge of decorating Kings bedroom. They confided in him and all the three decided that Chanesar's minister Jakhro, who was very clever should be approached for the guidance and help in the matter. At first Jakhro was indifferent but at last he relented and assuaged their feelings by saying, "Leave everything in the hands of God, and be assured he would do all the best." Next day, when Chanesar and Jakhro were busy discussing things in a lighter vein, seizing this opportunity Jakhro spoke about the beauty of Konru in such glowing terms that the curiosity of Chanesar was aroused, but he was already married to Leela who was very dear to him and he told Jakhro not to mention about Konru ever again.

Thus being dejected they decided to find another way. They decided to sell all their belongings and assumed the garb of poor servants and approached Leela. They pleaded with her that they were poor destitute and wanted to serve her, and for this kindness they would always remain grateful to her. The most loved queen of the king could at least offer them an opportunity to serve her. On asking what work they were experienced in, they replied that, the elder one was an expert weaver and the younger one was expert at house keeping. Leela out of pity gave the work of making the head gear to elder lady and doing the private room of the king to younger one. One day Konru was weeping at the irony of the fate, being in a situation of being so near to Chanesar and yet not getting her heart's object. Leela seeing her crying thus, asked her the reason of her distress. Konru told her that once she was also a princess like her and she had costly ornaments, one of which was a diamond necklace which would shine brightly even in the darkness of night and it would banish the darkness itself.

Leela did not believe her and wanted to see the proof of her boast. On being thus challenged Konru immediately brought out her costly necklace worth nine lakhs. Lo and behold! The whole palace started dazzling with its brilliance. Leela was so attracted to that necklace that she wanted to possess it herself at any cost. She told Leela that she was not interested to sell this for any material gain, this priceless necklace could be her only if she allowed her to spend one night with the king. Leela could not resist the temptation of the ornament and agreed to that condition and got hold of that beautiful necklace.

That night Chanesar returned to his chamber in a condition of being dead drunk. Leela told him, "This poor servant will serve you and meet all your needs- she will care for you with all her heart." Chanesar frowned at it but as he was drunk Leela managed to bring them together and vanished. In the meanwhile Konru's mother had made all the arrangements; a priest was kept ready, he immediately got Chanesar and Konru married. Chanesar did not know anything about the going on as he was already drunk and after the ceremony he went and fell on his bed. Konru also slept with him on the same bed. Chanesar was completely unconcerned about whom he slept with.

In the morning when he got up seeing Konru on his side Chanesar was quite puzzled. He silently wanted to leave the room. At this moment, mother of Konru entered and told him, "Where are you leaving your wedded wife? Leela has bartered one night of yours for a mere necklace!" Hearing the whole incident he was angry at the avarice of Leela and sensing the true love of Konru for him he accepted her and even he was besotted by her beauty. Leela was exiled from the favorite chamber of the palace and that place was occupied by Konru.

All this turn of events made Leela feel guilty and she started to curse herself for being attracted to the glittering ornament and having exchanged the same for the love of Chanesar. It is said that after all one has to pay for own action. There is no cure of the same with any healer and one has to bear the pain. Thus Leela deeply repented for her action.

I can not say anything, but withering within,
Being attracted on an ornament, burn within,
I lost king myself; wish I meet him again,
I must meet beloved, else shall die of separation,
I keep on suffering, may my body go to beloved. (Shah Latif)

Having lost her beloved husband Leela went back to her parent's house. She cherished only one hope and desire that one day her beloved king would forgive her folly and call her back. Leela repented for her foolish action and her pride was shattered, she gave up all her ornaments and all her efforts to beautify herself. Those of her friends who used to envy her and praise her beauty now started to taunt her instead.

Attracted by ornament, foolish! Your deed,
You put a wedge between self and Chanesar Jaam,
The page has turned, and you are now abandoned. (Shah Latif)

According to advice of Shah Latif the only way for Leela is to plead. The beloved does not believe in pride and false beauty of ornaments. He can be conquered only by humility. That woman who totally surrenders and pleads with her beloved is able to win his love. If she acts smart she has to face the ignominy of being discarded. Therefore he says:

What you thought to be an ornament proved the thread of pain,
Chanesar discarded you and was won by a servant,
Result of scheming is naught before beloved! (Shah Latif)

Leela repents and says:

I am prepared to forsake ornament; I would throw it away,
If I get back my beloved I would feel honored indeed!

Those who clean their inner self with tears of repentance at last are able to win over their beloved.

Thus many years passed and Chanesar did not even remember Leela. Accidently the minister of Chanesar named Jakhro got engaged to a girl belonging to same village as Leela. When villagers came to know of this they refused to marry their daughter to Jakhro. Actually Jakhro was in love with that girl so he was anxious to get that girl. He went to Leela and requested her to help him. She promised to help on the condition that at least once he would bring his King Chanesar to her. Jakhro went back to his city Devalkot and some how persuaded him to attend his marriage.

“King your presence in my wedding will
Lend me an honor and prestige,
Your grandeur will help, else my humiliation,
Come and save my prestige,
As we have in laws from the same village.”

When the marriage procession reached the out skirts of the village, many ladies with their faces covered came dancing to welcome the marriage party. This welcome pleased Chanesar. He told the main singer, “Your voice is so sweet, your face should also be equally beautiful. I command you to remove your veil”. When veil was removed he was stunned to see her beauty and swooned. After all the old flame of love which lay dormant was rekindled. Seeing this Leela also copiously wept and swooned.

Thus they both went into a sort of coma from which they never recovered again. This way both were immortalized in their love for ever.