

# SONGS OF KABIR

RABINDRANATH TAGORE \*

SONGS OF KABÎR

Translated by Rabindranath Tagore

## Introduction by Evelyn Underhill

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## INTRODUCTION

The poet Kabîr, a selection from whose songs is here for the first time offered to English readers, is one of the most interesting personalities in the history of Indian mysticism. Born in or near Benares, of Mohammedan parents, and probably about the year 1440, he became in early life a disciple of the celebrated Hindu ascetic Râmânanda. Râmânanda had brought to Northern India the religious revival which Râmânûja, the great twelfth-century reformer of Brâhmanism, had initiated in the South. This revival was in part a reaction against the increasing formalism of the orthodox cult, in part an assertion of the demands of the heart as against the intense intellectualism of the Vedânta philosophy, the exaggerated monism which that philosophy proclaimed. It took in Râmânûja's preaching the form of an ardent personal devotion to the God Vishnu, as representing the personal aspect of the Divine Nature: that mystical "religion of love" which everywhere makes its appearance at a certain level of spiritual culture, and which creeds and philosophies are powerless to kill.

Though such a devotion is indigenous in Hinduism, and finds expression in many passages of the Bhagavad Gîtâ, there was in

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its mediæval revival a large element of syncretism. Râmânanda, through whom its spirit is said to have reached Kabîr, appears to have been a man of wide religious culture, and full of missionary enthusiasm. Living at the moment in which the impassioned poetry and deep philosophy of the great Persian mystics, Attâr, Sâdî, Jalâlu'ddîn Rûmî, and Hâfiz, were exercising a powerful influence on the religious thought of India, he dreamed of reconciling this intense and personal Mohammedan mysticism with the traditional theology of Brâhmanism. Some have regarded both these great religious leaders as influenced also by Christian thought and life: but as this is a point upon which competent authorities hold widely divergent views, its discussion is not attempted here. We may safely assert, however, that in their teachings, two—perhaps three—apparently antagonistic streams of intense spiritual culture met, as Jewish and Hellenistic thought met in the early Christian Church: and it is one of the outstanding characteristics of Kabîr's genius that he was able in his poems to fuse them into one.

A great religious reformer, the founder of a sect to which nearly a million northern Hindus still belong, it is yet supremely as a mystical poet that Kabîr lives for us. His fate has been that of many revealers of Reality. A hater of religious exclusivism, and seeking above all things to initiate men into the liberty of the children of God, his followers have honoured his memory by re-erecting in a new place the barriers which he laboured to cast down. But his wonderful songs survive, the spontaneous expressions of his vision and his love; and it is by these, not by the didactic teachings associated with his name, that he makes his immortal appeal to the heart. In these poems a wide range of mystical emotion is brought into play: from the loftiest abstractions, the most otherworldly passion for the Infinite, to the most intimate and personal realization of God, expressed in homely metaphors and religious symbols drawn indifferently from Hindu and Mohammedan belief. It is impossible to say of their author that he was Brâhman or Sûfî, Vedântist or Vaishnavite. He is, as he says himself, "at once the child of Allah and of Râm." That Supreme Spirit Whom he knew and adored, and to Whose joyous friendship he sought to induct the souls of other men, transcended whilst He included all metaphysical categories, all credal definitions; yet each contributed something to the description of that Infinite and Simple Totality Who revealed Himself, according to their measure, to the faithful lovers of all creeds.

Kabîr's story is surrounded by contradictory legends, on none of which reliance can be placed. Some of these emanate from a Hindu, some from a Mohammedan source, and claim him by turns as a Sûfî and a Brâhman saint. His name, however, is practically a conclusive proof of Moslem ancestry: and the most probable tale is that which represents him as the actual or adopted child of a



Mohammedan weaver of Benares, the city in which the chief events of his life took place.

In fifteenth-century Benares the syncretistic tendencies of Bhakti religion had reached full development. Sûfis and Brâhmans appear to have met in disputation: the most spiritual members of both creeds frequenting the teachings of Râmânanda, whose reputation was then at its height. The boy Kabîr, in whom the religious passion was innate, saw in Râmânanda his destined teacher; but knew how slight were the chances that a Hindu guru would accept a Mohammedan as disciple. He therefore hid upon the steps of the river Ganges, where Râmânanda was accustomed to bathe; with the result that the master, coming down to the water, trod upon his body unexpectedly, and exclaimed in his astonishment, "Ram! Ram!"—the name of the incarnation under which he worshipped God. Kabîr then declared that he had received the mantra of initiation from Râmânanda's lips, and was by it admitted to discipleship. In spite of the protests of orthodox Brâhmans and Mohammedans, both equally annoyed by this contempt of theological landmarks, he persisted in his claim; thus exhibiting in action that very principle of religious synthesis which Râmânanda had sought to establish in thought. Râmânanda appears to have accepted him, and though Mohammedan legends speak of the famous Sûfi Pîr, Takkî of Jhansî, as Kabîr's master in later life, the Hindu saint is the only human teacher to whom in his songs he acknowledges indebtedness.

The little that we know of Kabîr's life contradicts many current ideas concerning the Oriental mystic. Of the stages of discipline through which he passed, the manner in which his spiritual genius developed, we are completely ignorant. He seems to have remained for years the disciple of Râmânanda, joining in the theological and philosophical arguments which his master held with all the great Mullahs and Brâhmans of his day; and to this source we may perhaps trace his acquaintance with the terms of Hindu and Sûfi philosophy. He may or may not have submitted to the traditional education of the Hindu or the Sûfi contemplative: it is clear, at any rate, that he never adopted the life of the professional ascetic, or retired from the world in order to devote himself to bodily mortifications and the exclusive pursuit of the contemplative life. Side by side with his interior life of adoration, its artistic expression in music and words—for he was a skilled musician as well as a poet—he lived the sane and diligent life of the Oriental craftsman. All the legends agree on this point: that Kabîr was a weaver, a simple and unlettered man, who earned his living at the loom. Like Paul the tentmaker, Boehme the cobbler, Bunyan the tinker, Tersteegen the ribbon-maker, he knew how to combine vision and industry; the work of his hands helped rather than hindered the impassioned meditation of his heart. Hating mere bodily austerities, he was

no ascetic, but a married man, the father of a family—a circumstance which Hindu legends of the monastic type vainly attempt to conceal or explain—and it was from out of the heart of the common life that he sang his rapturous lyrics of divine love. Here his works corroborate the traditional story of his life. Again and again he extols the life of home, the value and reality of diurnal existence, with its opportunities for love and renunciation; pouring contempt—upon the professional sanctity of the Yogi, who "has a great beard and matted locks, and looks like a goat," and on all who think it necessary to flee a world pervaded by love, joy, and beauty—the proper theatre of man's quest—in order to find that One Reality Who has "spread His form of love throughout all the world." [Footnote: Cf. Poems Nos. XXI, XL, XLIII, LXVI, LXXVI.]

It does not need much experience of ascetic literature to recognize the boldness and originality of this attitude in such a time and place. From the point of view of orthodox sanctity, whether Hindu or Mohammedan, Kabîr was plainly a heretic; and his frank dislike of all institutional religion, all external observance—which was as thorough and as intense as that of the Quakers themselves—completed, so far as ecclesiastical opinion was concerned, his reputation as a dangerous man. The "simple union" with Divine Reality which he perpetually extolled, as alike the duty and the joy of every soul, was independent both of ritual and of bodily austerities; the God whom he proclaimed was "neither in Kaaba nor in Kailâsh." Those who sought Him needed not to go far; for He awaited discovery everywhere, more accessible to "the washerwoman and the carpenter" than to the self-righteous holy man. [Footnote: Poems I, II, XLI.] Therefore the whole apparatus of piety, Hindu and Moslem alike—the temple and mosque, idol and holy water, scriptures and priests—were denounced by this inconveniently clear-sighted poet as mere substitutes for reality; dead things intervening between the soul and its love—

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The images are all lifeless, they cannot speak:  
I know, for I have cried aloud to them.  
The Purâna and the Koran are mere words:  
lifting up the curtain, I have seen.

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[Footnote: Poems XLII, LXV, LXVII.]

This sort of thing cannot be tolerated by any organized church; and it is not surprising that Kabîr, having his head-quarters in Benares, the very centre of priestly influence, was subjected to considerable persecution. The well-known legend of the beautiful courtesan sent by Brâhmans to tempt his virtue, and converted, like the Magdalen, by her sudden encounter with the initiate of a higher love, pre serves the memory of the fear and dislike with

which he was regarded by the ecclesiastical powers. Once at least, after the performance of a supposed miracle of healing, he was brought before the Emperor Sikandar Lodi, and charged with claiming the possession of divine powers. But Sikandar Lodi, a ruler of considerable culture, was tolerant of the eccentricities of saintly persons belonging to his own faith. Kabîr, being of Mohammedan birth, was outside the authority of the Brâhmans, and technically classed with the Sûfis, to whom great theological latitude was allowed. Therefore, though he was banished in the interests of peace from Benares, his life was spared. This seems to have happened in 1495, when he was nearly sixty years of age; it is the last event in his career of which we have definite knowledge. Thenceforth he appears to have moved about amongst various cities of northern India, the centre of a group of disciples; continuing in exile that life of apostle and poet of love to which, as he declares in one of his songs, he was destined "from the beginning of time." In 1518, an old man, broken in health, and with hands so feeble that he could no longer make the music which he loved, he died at Maghar near Gorakhpur.

A beautiful legend tells us that after his death his Mohammedan and Hindu disciples disputed the possession of his body; which the Mohammedans wished to bury, the Hindus to burn. As they argued together, Kabîr appeared before them, and told them to lift the shroud and look at that which lay beneath. They did so, and found in the place of the corpse a heap of flowers; half of which were buried by the Mohammedans at Maghar, and half carried by the Hindus to the holy city of Benares to be burned—fitting conclusion to a life which had made fragrant the most beautiful doctrines of two great creeds.

## II

The poetry of mysticism might be defined on the one hand as a temperamental reaction to the vision of Reality: on the other, as a form of prophecy. As it is the special vocation of the mystical consciousness to mediate between two orders, going out in loving adoration towards God and coming home to tell the secrets of Eternity to other men; so the artistic self-expression of this consciousness has also a double character. It is love-poetry, but love-poetry which is often written with a missionary intention.

Kabîr's songs are of this kind: out-births at once of rapture and of charity. Written in the popular Hindi, not in the literary tongue, they were deliberately addressed—like the vernacular poetry of Jacopone da Todi and Richard Rolle—to the people rather than to the professionally religious class; and all must be struck by the constant employment in them of imagery drawn from the common life, the universal experience. It is by the simplest

metaphors, by constant appeals to needs, passions, relations which all men understand—the bridegroom and bride, the guru and disciple, the pilgrim, the farmer, the migrant bird— that he drives home his intense conviction of the reality of the soul's intercourse with the Transcendent. There are in his universe no fences between the "natural" and "supernatural" worlds; everything is a part of the creative Play of God, and therefore—even in its humblest details—capable of revealing the Player's mind.

This willing acceptance of the here-and-now as a means of representing supernal realities is a trait common to the greatest mystics. For them, when they have achieved at last the true theopathic state, all aspects of the universe possess equal authority as sacramental declarations of the Presence of God; and their fearless employment of homely and physical symbols—often startling and even revolting to the unaccustomed taste—is in direct proportion to the exaltation of their spiritual life. The works of the great Sûfis, and amongst the Christians of Jacopone da Todì, Ruysbroeck, Boehme, abound in illustrations of this law. Therefore we must not be surprised to find in Kabîr's songs—his desperate attempts to communicate his ecstasy and persuade other men to share it—a constant juxtaposition of concrete and metaphysical language; swift alternations between the most intensely anthropomorphic, the most subtly philosophical, ways of apprehending man's communion with the Divine. The need for this alternation, and its entire naturalness for the mind which employs it, is rooted in his concept, or vision, of the Nature of God; and unless we make some attempt to grasp this, we shall not go far in our understanding of his poems.

Kabîr belongs to that small group of supreme mystics—amongst whom St. Augustine, Ruysbroeck, and the Sûfî poet Jalâlu'ddîn Rûmî are perhaps the chief—who have achieved that which we might call the synthetic vision of God. These have resolved the perpetual opposition between the personal and impersonal, the transcendent and immanent, static and dynamic aspects of the Divine Nature; between the Absolute of philosophy and the "sure true Friend" of devotional religion. They have done this, not by taking these apparently incompatible concepts one after the other; but by ascending to a height of spiritual intuition at which they are, as Ruysbroeck said, "melted and merged in the Unity," and perceived as the completing opposites of a perfect Whole. This proceeding entails for them—and both Kabîr and Ruysbroeck expressly acknowledge it—a universe of three orders: Becoming, Being, and that which is "More than Being," i.e., God. [Footnote: Nos. VII and XLIX.] God is here felt to be not the final abstraction, but the one actuality. He inspires, supports, indeed inhabits, both the durational, conditioned, finite world of Becoming and the unconditioned, non-successional, infinite world of Being; yet utterly transcends them both. He is the

omnipresent Reality, the "All-pervading" within Whom "the worlds are being told like beads." In His personal aspect He is the "beloved Fakir," teaching and companioning each soul. Considered as Immanent Spirit, He is "the Mind within the mind." But all these are at best partial aspects of His nature, mutually corrective: as the Persons in the Christian doctrine of the Trinity—to which this theological diagram bears a striking resemblance—represent different and compensating experiences of the Divine Unity within which they are resumed. As Ruysbroeck discerned a plane of reality upon which "we can speak no more of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but only of One Being, the very substance of the Divine Persons"; so Kabîr says that "beyond both the limited and the limitless is He, the Pure Being." [Footnote: No. VII.]

Brahma, then, is the Ineffable Fact compared with which "the distinction of the Conditioned from the Unconditioned is but a word": at once the utterly transcendent One of Absolutist philosophy, and the personal Lover of the individual soul—"common to all and special to each," as one Christian mystic has it. The need felt by Kabîr for both these ways of describing Reality is a proof of the richness and balance of his spiritual experience; which neither cosmic nor anthropomorphic symbols, taken alone, could express. More absolute than the Absolute, more personal than the human mind, Brahma therefore exceeds whilst He includes all the concepts of philosophy, all the passionate intuitions of the heart. He is the Great Affirmation, the font of energy, the source of life and love, the unique satisfaction of desire. His creative word is the *ijOm/i* or "Everlasting Yea." The negative philosophy which strips from the Divine Nature all Its attributes and defining Him only by that which He is not—reduces Him to an "Emptiness," is abhorrent to this most vital of poets.—Brahma, he says, "may never be found in abstractions." He is the One Love who Pervades the world., discerned in His fullness only by the eyes of love; and those who know Him thus share, though they may never tell, the joyous and ineffable secret of the universe. [Footnote: Nos. VII, XXVI, LXXVI, XC.]

Now Kabîr, achieving this synthesis between the personal and cosmic aspects of the Divine Nature, eludes the three great dangers which threaten mystical religion.

First, he escapes the excessive emotionalism, the tendency to an exclusively anthropomorphic devotion, which results from an unrestricted cult of Divine Personality, especially under an incarnational form; seen in India in the exaggerations of Krishna worship, in Europe in the sentimental extravagances of certain Christian saints.

Next, he is protected from the soul-destroying conclusions of pure monism, inevitable if its logical implications are pressed home: that is, the identity of substance between God and the soul, with its corollary of the total absorption of that soul in the Being of God as the goal of the spiritual life. For the thorough-going monist the soul, in so far as it is real, is substantially identical with God; and the true object of existence is the making patent of this latent identity, the realization which finds expression in the Vedântist formula "That art thou." But Kabîr says that Brahma and the creature are "ever distinct, yet ever united"; that the wise man knows the spiritual as well as the material world to "be no more than His footstool." [Footnote: Nos. VII and IX.] The soul's union with Him is a love union, a mutual inhabitation; that essentially dualistic relation which all mystical religion expresses, not a self-mergence which leaves no place for personality. This eternal distinction, the mysterious union-in-separateness of God and the soul, is a necessary doctrine of all sane mysticism; for no scheme which fails to find a place for it can represent more than a fragment of that soul's intercourse with the spiritual world. Its affirmation was one of the distinguishing features of the Vaishnavite reformation preached by Râmânûja; the principle of which had descended through Râmânanda to Kabîr.

Last, the warmly human and direct apprehension of God as the supreme Object of love, the soul's comrade, teacher, and bridegroom, which is so passionately and frequently expressed in Kabîr's poems, balances and controls those abstract tendencies which are inherent in the metaphysical side of his vision of Reality: and prevents it from degenerating into that sterile worship of intellectual formulæ which became the curse of the Vedântist school. For the mere intellectualist, as for the mere pietist, he has little approbation. [Footnote: Cf. especially Nos. LIX, LXVII, LXXV, XC, XCI.] Love is throughout his "absolute sole Lord": the unique source of the more abundant life which he enjoys, and the common factor which unites the finite and infinite worlds. All is soaked in love: that love which he described in almost Johannine language as the "Form of God." The whole of creation is the Play of the Eternal Lover; the living, changing, growing expression of Brahma's love and joy. As these twin passions preside over the generation of human life, so "beyond the mists of pleasure and pain" Kabîr finds them governing the creative acts of God. His manifestation is love; His activity is joy. Creation springs from one glad act of affirmation: the Everlasting Yea, perpetually uttered within the depths of the Divine Nature. [Footnote: Nos. XVII, XXVI, LXXVI, LXXXII.] In accordance with this concept of the universe as a Love-Game which eternally goes forward, a progressive manifestation of Brahma—one of the many notions which he adopted from the common stock of Hindu religious ideas, and illuminated

by his poetic genius—movement, rhythm, perpetual change, forms an integral part of Kabîr's vision of Reality. Though the Eternal and Absolute is ever present to his consciousness, yet his concept of the Divine Nature is essentially dynamic. It is by the symbols of motion that he most often tries to convey it to us: as in his constant reference to dancing, or the strangely modern picture of that Eternal Swing of the Universe which is "held by the cords of love." [Footnote: No. XVI.]

It is a marked characteristic of mystical literature that the great contemplatives, in their effort to convey to us the nature of their communion with the supersensuous, are inevitably driven to employ some form of sensuous imagery: coarse and inaccurate as they know such imagery to be, even at the best. Our normal human consciousness is so completely committed to dependence on the senses, that the fruits of intuition itself are instinctively referred to them. In that intuition it seems to the mystics that all the dim cravings and partial apprehensions of sense find perfect fulfilment. Hence their constant declaration that they *îsee*/i the uncreated light, they *îhear*/i the celestial melody, they *îtaste*/i the sweetness of the Lord, they know an ineffable fragrance, they feel the very contact of love. "Him verily seeing and fully feeling, Him spiritually hearing and Him delectably smelling and sweetly swallowing," as Julian of Norwich has it. In those amongst them who develop psycho-sensorial automatisms, these parallels between sense and spirit may present themselves to consciousness in the form of hallucinations: as the light seen by Suso, the music heard by Rolle, the celestial perfumes which filled St. Catherine of Siena's cell, the physical wounds felt by St. Francis and St. Teresa. These are excessive dramatizations of the symbolism under which the mystic tends instinctively to represent his spiritual intuition to the surface consciousness. Here, in the special sense-perception which he feels to be most expressive of Reality, his peculiar idiosyncrasies come out.

Now Kabîr, as we might expect in one whose reactions to the spiritual order were so wide and various, uses by turn all the symbols of sense. He tells us that he has "seen without sight" the effulgence of Brahma, tasted the divine nectar, felt the ecstatic contact of Reality, smelt the fragrance of the heavenly flowers. But he was essentially a poet and musician: rhythm and harmony were to him the garments of beauty and truth. Hence in his lyrics he shows himself to be, like Richard Rolle, above all things a musical mystic. Creation, he says again and again, is full of music: it *îis*/i music. At the heart of the Universe "white music is blossoming": love weaves the melody, whilst renunciation beats the time. It can be heard in the home as well as in the heavens; discerned by the ears of common men as well as by the trained senses of the ascetic. Moreover, the body of

every man is a lyre on which Brahma, "the source of all music," plays. Everywhere Kabîr discerns the "Unstruck Music of the Infinite"—that celestial melody which the angel played to St. Francis, that ghostly symphony which filled the soul of Rolle with ecstatic joy. [Footnote: Nos. XVII, XVIII, XXXIX, XLI, LIV, LXXVI, LXXXIII, LXXXIX, XCVII.] The one figure which he adopts from the Hindu Pantheon and constantly uses, is that of Krishna the Divine Flute Player. [Footnote: Nos. L, LIII, LXVIII.] He sees the supernal music, too, in its visual embodiment, as rhythmical movement: that mysterious dance of the universe before the face of Brahma, which is at once an act of worship and an expression of the infinite rapture of the Immanent God.'

Yet in this wide and rapturous vision of the universe Kabîr never loses touch with diurnal existence, never forgets the common life. His feet are firmly planted upon earth; his lofty and passionate apprehensions are perpetually controlled by the activity of a sane and vigorous intellect, by the alert commonsense so often found in persons of real mystical genius. The constant insistence on simplicity and directness, the hatred of all abstractions and philosophizings, [Footnote: Nos. XXVI, XXXII, LXXVI] the ruthless criticism of external religion: these are amongst his most marked characteristics. God is the Root whence all manifestations, "material" and "spiritual," alike proceed; [Footnote: Nos. LXXV, LXXVIII, LXXX, XC.] and God is the only need of man—"happiness shall be yours when you come to the Root." [Footnote: No. LXXX.] Hence to those who keep their eye on the "one thing needful," denominations, creeds, ceremonies, the conclusions of philosophy, the disciplines of asceticism, are matters of comparative indifference. They represent merely the different angles from which the soul may approach that simple union with Brahma which is its goal; and are useful only in so far as they contribute to this consummation. So thorough-going is Kabîr's eclecticism, that he seems by turns Vedântist and Vaishnavite, Pantheist and Transcendentalist, Brâhman and Sûfi. In the effort to tell the truth about that ineffable apprehension, so vast and yet so near, which controls his life, he seizes and twines together—as he might have woven together contrasting threads upon his loom—symbols and ideas drawn from the most violent and conflicting philosophies and faiths. All are needed, if he is ever to suggest the character of that One whom the Upanishad called "the Sun-coloured Being who is beyond this Darkness": as all the colours of the spectrum are needed if we would demonstrate the simple richness of white light. In thus adapting traditional materials to his own use he follows a method common amongst the mystics; who seldom exhibit any special love for originality of form. They will pour their wine into almost any vessel that comes to hand: generally using by preference—and lifting to new levels of beauty and significance—the religious or philosophic formulæ current in their own day. Thus we find that



some of Kabîr's finest poems have as their subjects the commonplaces of Hindu philosophy and religion: the Lîlâ or Sport of God, the Ocean of Bliss, the Bird of the Soul, Mâyâ, the Hundred-petalled Lotus, and the "Formless Form." Many, again, are soaked in Sûfi imagery and feeling. Others use as their material the ordinary surroundings and incidents of Indian life: the temple bells, the ceremony of the lamps, marriage, suttee, pilgrimage, the characters of the seasons; all felt by him in their mystical aspect, as sacraments of the soul's relation with Brahma. In many of these a particularly beautiful and intimate feeling for Nature is shown. [Footnote: Nos. XV, XXIII, LXVII, LXXXVII, XCVII.]

In the collection of songs here translated there will be found examples which illustrate nearly every aspect of Kabîr's thought, and all the fluctuations of the mystic's emotion: the ecstasy, the despair, the still beatitude, the eager self-devotion, the flashes of wide illumination, the moments of intimate love. His wide and deep vision of the universe, the "Eternal Sport" of creation (LXXXII), the worlds being "told like beads" within the Being of God (XIV, XVI, XVII, LXXVI), is here seen balanced by his lovely and delicate sense of intimate communion with the Divine Friend, Lover, Teacher of the soul (X, XI, XXIII, XXXV, LI, LXXXV, LXXXVI, LXXXVIII, XCII, XCIII; above all, the beautiful poem XXXIV). As these apparently paradoxical views of Reality are resolved in Brâhma, so all other opposites are reconciled in Him: bondage and liberty, love and renunciation, pleasure and pain (XVII, XXV, XL, LXXIX). Union with Him is the one thing that matters to the soul, its destiny and its need (LI, I, II, LIV, LXX, LXXIV, XCIII, XCVI); and this union, this discovery of God, is the simplest and most natural of all things, if we would but grasp it (XLI, XLVI, LVI, LXXII, LXXVI, LXXVIII, XCVII). The union, however, is brought about by love, not by knowledge or ceremonial observances (XXXVIII, LIV, LV, LIX, XCI); and the apprehension which that union confers is ineffable—"neither This nor That," as Ruysbroeck has it (IX, XLVI, LXXVI). Real worship and communion is in Spirit and in Truth (XL, XLI, LVI, LXIII, LXV, LXX), therefore idolatry is an insult to the Divine Lover (XLII, LXIX) and the devices of professional sanctity are useless apart from charity and purity of soul (LIV, LXV, LXVI). Since all things, and especially the heart of man, are God-inhabited, God-possessed (XXVI, LVI, LXXVI, LXXXIX, XCVII), He may best be found in the here-and-now: in the normal human, bodily existence, the "mud" of material life (III, IV, VI, XXI, XXXIX, XL, XLIII, XLVIII, LXXII). "We can reach the goal without crossing the road" (LXXVI)—not the cloister but the home is the proper theatre of man's efforts: and if he cannot find God there, he need not hope for success by going farther afield. "In the home is reality." There love and detachment, bondage and freedom, joy and pain play by turns upon the soul; and it is from their conflict that the Unstruck Music of the Infinite proceeds. Kabîr says: "None but Brahma can evoke its melodies."

"This version of Kabîr's songs is chiefly the work of Mr. Rabîndranâth Tagore, the trend of whose mystical genius makes him—as all who read these poems will see—a peculiarly sympathetic interpreter of Kabîr's vision and thought. It has been based upon the printed Hindî text with Bengali translation of Mr. Kshiti Mohan Sen; who has gathered from many sources—sometimes from books and manuscripts, sometimes from the lips of wandering ascetics and minstrels—a large collection of poems and hymns to which Kabîr's name is attached, and carefully sifted the authentic songs from the many spurious works now attributed to him. These painstaking labours alone have made the present undertaking possible.

We have also had before us a manuscript English translation of 116 songs made by Mr. Ajit Kumâr Chakravarty from Mr. Kshiti Mohan Sen's text, and a prose essay upon Kabîr from the same hand. From these we have derived great assistance. A considerable number of readings from the translation have been adopted by us; whilst several of the facts mentioned in the essay have been incorporated into this introduction. Our most grateful thanks are due to Mr. Ajit Kumar Chakravarty for the extremely generous and unselfish manner in which he has placed his work at our disposal.

E. U.

The reference of the headlines of the poems is to:

Sântiniketana; Kabîr by Srî Kshitimohan Sen, 4 parts, Brahmacharyâsrama, Bolpur, 1910-1911.

For some assistance in normalizing the transliteration we are indebted to Professor J. F. Blumhardt.

## KABIR'S POEMS

### I

I. 13. jîmo ko kahân dhûnro bandeṛ/iṛ

O servant, where dost thou seek Me?  
Lo! I am beside thee.  
I am neither in temple nor in mosque: I am neither in Kaaba nor in Kailash:  
Neither am I in rites and ceremonies, nor in Yoga and renunciation.  
If thou art a true seeker, thou shalt at once see Me: thou shalt meet Me in a moment of time.  
Kabîr says, "O Sadhu! God is the breath of all breath."

## II

### I. 16. *ṛiṣṭantan jât na pûcho nirguniyânî/iṣ*

It is needless to ask of a saint the caste to which he belongs;  
For the priest, the warrior, the tradesman, and all the  
thirty-six castes, alike are seeking for God.  
It is but folly to ask what the caste of a saint may be;  
The barber has sought God, the washerwoman, and the carpenter—  
Even Raidas was a seeker after God.  
The Rishi Swapacha was a tanner by caste.  
Hindus and Moslems alike have achieved that End, where remains no  
mark of distinction.

## III

### I. 57. *ṛiṣṭâdho bhâi, jîval hî karo âs'âî/iṣ*

O friend! hope for Him whilst you live, know whilst you live,  
understand whilst you live: for in life deliverance abides.  
If your bonds be not broken whilst living, what hope of  
deliverance in death?  
It is but an empty dream, that the soul shall have union with Him  
because it has passed from the body:  
If He is found now, He is found then,  
If not, we do but go to dwell in the City of Death.  
If you have union now, you shall have it hereafter.  
Bathe in the truth, know the true Guru, have faith in the true  
Name!  
Kabîr says: "It is the Spirit of the quest which helps; I am the  
slave of this Spirit of the quest."

## IV

### I. 58. *ṛiṣṭbâgo nâ jâ re nâ jâî/iṣ*

Do not go to the garden of flowers!  
O Friend! go not there;  
In your body is the garden of flowers.  
Take your seat on the thousand petals of the lotus, and there  
gaze on the Infinite Beauty.

## V

### I. 63. *ṛiṣṭavadhû, mâyâ taji na jâyî/iṣ*

Tell me, Brother, how can I renounce Maya?  
When I gave up the tying of ribbons, still I tied my garment  
about me:

When I gave up tying my garment, still I covered my body in its folds.  
 So, when I give up passion, I see that anger remains;  
 And when I renounce anger, greed is with me still;  
 And when greed is vanquished, pride and vainglory remain;  
 When the mind is detached and casts Maya away, still it clings to the letter.  
 Kabîr says, "Listen to me, dear Sadhu! the true path is rarely found."

## VI

### I. 83. $\text{ṛiḷcandâ jhalkai yahi ghat mâhîṇi/iḷ}$

The moon shines in my body, but my blind eyes cannot see it:  
 The moon is within me, and so is the sun.  
 The unstruck drum of Eternity is sounded within me; but my deaf ears cannot hear it.

So long as man clamours for the  $\text{ṛiḷIḷ/iḷ}$  and the  $\text{ṛiḷMineḷ/iḷ}$ , his works are as naught:  
 When all love of the  $\text{ṛiḷIḷ/iḷ}$  and the  $\text{ṛiḷMineḷ/iḷ}$  is dead, then the work of the Lord is done.  
 For work has no other aim than the getting of knowledge:  
 When that comes, then work is put away.

The flower blooms for the fruit: when the fruit comes, the flower withers.  
 The musk is in the deer, but it seeks it not within itself: it wanders in quest of grass.

## VII

### I. 85. $\text{ṛiḷSâdho, Brahm alakh lakhâyâḷ/iḷ}$

When He Himself reveals Himself, Brahma brings into manifestation That which can never be seen.  
 As the seed is in the plant, as the shade is in the tree, as the void is in the sky, as infinite forms are in the void—  
 So from beyond the Infinite, the Infinite comes; and from the Infinite the finite extends.

The creature is in Brahma, and Brahma is in the creature: they are ever distinct, yet ever united.  
 He Himself is the tree, the seed, and the germ.  
 He Himself is the flower, the fruit, and the shade.  
 He Himself is the sun, the light, and the lighted.  
 He Himself is Brahma, creature, and Maya.  
 He Himself is the manifold form, the infinite space;  
 He is the breath, the word, and the meaning.

He Himself is the limit and the limitless: and beyond both the limited and the limitless is He, the Pure Being.  
He is the Immanent Mind in Brahma and in the creature.

The Supreme Soul is seen within the soul,  
The Point is seen within the Supreme Soul,  
And within the Point, the reflection is seen again.  
Kabîr is blest because he has this supreme vision!

## VIII

I. 101. jîis ghat antar bâg bagîcej/iĵ

Within this earthen vessel are bowers and groves, and within it is the Creator:  
Within this vessel are the seven oceans and the unnumbered stars.  
The touchstone and the jewel-appraiser are within;  
And within this vessel the Eternal soundeth, and the spring wells up.  
Kabîr says: "Listen to me, my Friend! My beloved Lord is within."

## IX

I. 104. jîaisâ lo nahîn taisâ loĵ/iĵ

O How may I ever express that secret word?  
O how can I say He is not like this, and He is like that?  
If I say that He is within me, the universe is ashamed:  
If I say that He is without me, it is falsehood.  
He makes the inner and the outer worlds to be indivisibly one;  
The conscious and the unconscious, both are His footstools.  
He is neither manifest nor hidden, He is neither revealed nor unrevealed:  
There are no words to tell that which He is.

## X

I. 121. jîtohi mori lagan lagâye re phakîr wâĵ/iĵ

To Thee Thou hast drawn my love, O Fakir!  
I was sleeping in my own chamber, and Thou didst awaken me;  
striking me with Thy voice, O Fakir!  
I was drowning in the deeps of the ocean of this world, and  
Thou didst save me: upholding me with Thine arm, O Fakir!  
Only one word and no second—and Thou hast made me tear off all  
my bonds, O Fakir!  
Kabîr says, "Thou hast united Thy heart to my heart, O Fakir!"

## XI

I. 131. jînis' din khelat rahî sakhiyân sangî/iî

I played day and night with my comrades, and now I am greatly afraid.

So high is my Lord's palace, my heart trembles to mount its stairs: yet I must not be shy, if I would enjoy His love.

My heart must cleave to my Lover; I must withdraw my veil, and meet Him with all my body:

Mine eyes must perform the ceremony of the lamps of love.

Kabîr says: "Listen to me, friend: he understands who loves. If you feel not love's longing for your Beloved One, it is vain to adorn your body, vain to put unguent on your eyelids."

XII

II. 24. jîhamsâ, kaho purâtan vâtî/iî

Tell me, O Swan, your ancient tale.

From what land do you come, O Swan? to what shore will you fly?  
Where would you take your rest, O Swan, and what do you seek?

Even this morning, O Swan, awake, arise, follow me!

There is a land where no doubt nor sorrow have rule: where the terror of Death is no more.

There the woods of spring are a-bloom, and the fragrant scent "He is I" is borne on the wind:

There the bee of the heart is deeply immersed, and desires no other joy.

XIII

II. 37. jîangadhiyâ devâî/iî

O Lord Increate, who will serve Thee?

Every votary offers his worship to the God of his own creation: each day he receives service—

None seek Him, the Perfect: Brahma, the Indivisible Lord.

They believe in ten Avatars; but no Avatar can be the Infinite Spirit, for he suffers the results of his deeds:

The Supreme One must be other than this.

The Yogi, the Sanyasi, the Ascetics, are disputing one with another:

Kabîr says, "O brother! he who has seen that radiance of love, he is saved."

XIV

II. 56. jîdariyâ kî lahar dariyâo hai jîî/iî

The river and its waves are one

surf: where is the difference between the river and its waves?  
When the wave rises, it is the water; and when it falls, it is  
the same water again. Tell me, Sir, where is the distinction?  
Because it has been named as wave, shall it no longer be  
considered as water?

Within the Supreme Brahma, the worlds are being told like beads:  
Look upon that rosary with the eyes of wisdom.

## XV

II. 57. *ṣiḷjânh khelat vasant riturâjṣi/iḷ*

Where Spring, the lord of the seasons, reigneth, there the  
Unstruck Music sounds of itself,  
There the streams of light flow in all directions;  
Few are the men who can cross to that shore!  
There, where millions of Krishnas stand with hands folded,  
Where millions of Vishnus bow their heads,  
Where millions of Brahmâs are reading the Vedas,  
Where millions of Shivas are lost in contemplation,  
Where millions of Indras dwell in the sky,  
Where the demi-gods and the munis are unnumbered,  
Where millions of Saraswatis, Goddess of Music, play on the vina—  
There is my Lord self-revealed: and the scent of sandal and  
flowers dwells in those deeps.

## XVI

II. 59. *ṣiḷjânh, cet acet khambh dôûṣi/iḷ*

Between the poles of the conscious and the unconscious, there has  
the mind made a swing:  
Thereon hang all beings and all worlds, and that swing never  
ceases its sway.  
Millions of beings are there: the sun and the moon in their  
courses are there:  
Millions of ages pass, and the swing goes on.  
All swing! the sky and the earth and the air and the water; and  
the Lord Himself taking form:  
And the sight of this has made Kabîr a servant.

## XVII

II. 61. *ṣiḷgrah candra tapan jot varat haiṣi/iḷ*

The light of the sun, the moon, and the stars shines bright:  
The melody of love swells forth, and the rhythm of love's  
detachment beats the time.  
Day and night, the chorus of music fills the heavens; and Kabîr

says

"My Beloved One gleams like the lightning flash in the sky."

Do you know how the moments perform their adoration?  
Waving its row of lamps, the universe sings in worship day and night,  
There are the hidden banner and the secret canopy:  
There the sound of the unseen bells is heard.  
Kabîr says: "There adoration never ceases; there the Lord of the Universe sitteth on His throne."  
The whole world does its works and commits its errors: but few are the lovers who know the Beloved.  
The devout seeker is he who mingles in his heart the double currents of love and detachment, like the mingling of the streams of Ganges and Jumna;  
In his heart the sacred water flows day and night; and thus the round of births and deaths is brought to an end.

Behold what wonderful rest is in the Supreme Spirit! and he enjoys it, who makes himself meet for it.  
Held by the cords of love, the swing of the Ocean of Joy sways to and fro; and a mighty sound breaks forth in song.  
See what a lotus blooms there without water! and Kabîr says "My heart's bee drinks its nectar."  
What a wonderful lotus it is, that blooms at the heart of the spinning wheel of the universe! Only a few pure souls know of its true delight.  
Music is all around it, and there the heart partakes of the joy of the Infinite Sea.  
Kabîr says: "Dive thou into that Ocean of sweetness: thus let all errors of life and of death flee away."

Behold how the thirst of the five senses is quenched there! and the three forms of misery are no more!  
Kabîr says: "It is the sport of the Unattainable One: look within, and behold how the moon-beams of that Hidden One shine in you."  
There falls the rhythmic beat of life and death:  
Rapture wells forth, and all space is radiant with light.  
There the Unstruck Music is sounded; it is the music of the love of the three worlds.  
There millions of lamps of sun and of moon are burning;  
There the drum beats, and the lover swings in play.  
There love-songs resound, and light rains in showers; and the worshipper is entranced in the taste of the heavenly nectar.  
Look upon life and death; there is no separation between them,  
The right hand and the left hand are one and the same.  
Kabîr says: "There the wise man is speechless; for this truth may never be found in Vadas or in books."



I have had my Seat on the Self-poised One,  
 I have drunk of the Cup of the Ineffable,  
 I have found the Key of the Mystery,  
 I have reached the Root of Union.  
 Travelling by no track, I have come to the Sorrowless Land: very  
 easily has the mercy of the great Lord come upon me.  
 They have sung of Him as infinite and unattainable: but I in my  
 meditations have seen Him without sight.  
 That is indeed the sorrowless land, and none know the path that  
 leads there:  
 Only he who is on that path has surely transcended all sorrow.  
 Wonderful is that land of rest, to which no merit can win;  
 It is the wise who has seen it, it is the wise who has sung of  
 it.  
 This is the Ultimate Word: but can any express its marvellous  
 savour?  
 He who has savoured it once, he knows what joy it can give.  
 Kabîr says: "Knowing it, the ignorant man becomes wise, and the  
 wise man becomes speechless and silent,  
 The worshipper is utterly inebriated,  
 His wisdom and his detachment are made perfect;  
 He drinks from the cup of the inbreathings and the outbreathings  
 of love."

There the whole sky is filled with sound, and there that music is  
 made without fingers and without strings;  
 There the game of pleasure and pain does not cease.  
 Kabîr says: "If you merge your life in the Ocean of Life, you  
 will find your life in the Supreme Land of Bliss."

What a frenzy of ecstasy there is in every hour! and the  
 worshipper is pressing out and drinking the essence of the  
 hours: he lives in the life of Brahma.  
 I speak truth, for I have accepted truth in life; I am now  
 attached to truth, I have swept all tinsel away.  
 Kabîr says: "Thus is the worshipper set free from fear; thus have  
 all errors of life and of death left him."

There the sky is filled with music:  
 There it rains nectar:  
 There the harp-strings jingle, and there the drums beat.  
 What a secret splendour is there, in the mansion of the sky!  
 There no mention is made of the rising and the setting of the  
 sun;  
 In the ocean of manifestation, which is the light of love, day  
 and night are felt to be one.  
 Joy for ever, no sorrow,—no struggle!  
 There have I seen joy filled to the brim, perfection of joy;  
 No place for error is there.  
 Kabîr says: "There have I witnessed the sport of One Bliss!"

I have known in my body the sport of the universe: I have escaped from the error of this world..  
 The inward and the outward are become as one sky, the Infinite and the finite are united: I am drunken with the sight of this All!  
 This Light of Thine fulfils the universe: the lamp of love that burns on the salver of knowledge.  
 Kabîr says: "There error cannot enter, and the conflict of life and death is felt no more."

### XVIII

II. 77. *ṣiḥmaddh âkas' âp jahân baitheṣ/iḥ*

The middle region of the sky, wherein the spirit dwelleth, is radiant with the music of light;  
 There, where the pure and white music blossoms, my Lord takes His delight.  
 In the wondrous effulgence of each hair of His body, the brightness of millions of suns and of moons is lost.  
 On that shore there is a city, where the rain of nectar pours and pours, and never ceases.  
 Kabîr says: "Come, O Dharmadas! and see my great Lord's Durbar."

### XIX

II. 20. *ṣiḥparamâtam guru nikat virâjatnṣ/iḥ*

O my heart! the Supreme Spirit, the great Master, is near you: wake, oh wake!  
 Run to the feet of your Beloved: for your Lord stands near to your head.  
 You have slept for unnumbered ages; this morning will you not wake?

### XX

II. 22. *ṣiḥman tu pâṛ utar kânh jaihoṣ/iḥ*

To what shore would you cross, O my heart? there is no traveller before you, there is no road:  
 Where is the movement, where is the rest, on that shore?  
 There is no water; no boat, no boatman, is there;  
 There is not so much as a rope to tow the boat, nor a man to draw it.  
 No earth, no sky, no time, no thing, is there: no shore, no ford!  
 There, there is neither body nor mind: and where is the place that shall still the thirst of the soul? You shall find naught in that emptiness.

Be strong, and enter into your own body: for there your foothold is firm. Consider it well, O my heart! go not elsewhere,  
Kabîr says: "Put all imaginations away, and stand fast in that which you are."

## XXI

### II. 33. jîghar ghar dîpak baraij/iĵ

Lamps burn in every house, O blind one! and you cannot see them.  
One day your eyes shall suddenly be opened, and you shall see:  
and the fetters of death will fall from you.  
There is nothing to say or to hear, there is nothing to do: it is  
he who is living, yet dead, who shall never die again.

Because he lives in solitude, therefore the Yogi says that his  
home is far away.  
Your Lord is near: yet you are climbing the palm-tree to seek  
Him.  
The Brâhman priest goes from house to house and initiates people  
into faith:  
Alas! the true fountain of life is beside you., and you have set  
up a stone to worship.  
Kabîr says: "I may never express how sweet my Lord is. Yoga and  
the telling of beads, virtue and vice—these are naught to Him."

## XXII

### II. 38. jîSâdho, so satgur mohi bhâwaij/iĵ

O brother, my heart yearns for that true Guru, who fills the cup  
of true love, and drinks of it himself, and offers it then to  
me.  
He removes the veil from the eyes, and gives the true Vision of  
Brahma:  
He reveals the worlds in Him, and makes me to hear the Unstruck  
Music:  
He shows joy and sorrow to be one:  
He fills all utterance with love.  
Kabîr says: "Verily he has no fear, who has such a Guru to lead  
him to the shelter of safety!"

## XXIII

### II. 40. jîtinwir sâñjh kê gahirâ âwaij/iĵ

The shadows of evening fall thick and deep, and the darkness of  
love envelops the body and the mind.  
Open the window to the west, and be lost in the sky of love;  
Drink the sweet honey that steeps the petals of the lotus of the

heart.

Receive the waves in your body: what splendour is in the region of the sea!

Hark! the sounds of conches and bells are rising.

Kabîr says: "O brother, behold! the Lord is in this vessel of my body."

#### XXIV

II. 48.  $\text{ḡḡ}is\ se\ rahani\ apâr\ jagat\ menḡ/iḡ$

More than all else do I cherish at heart that love which makes me to live a limitless life in this world.

It is like the lotus, which lives in the water and blooms in the water: yet the water cannot touch its petals, they open beyond its reach.

It is like a wife, who enters the fire at the bidding of love.

She burns and lets others grieve, yet never dishonours love.

This ocean of the world is hard to cross: its waters are very deep. Kabîr says: "Listen to me, O Sadhu! few there are who have reached its end."

#### XXV

II. 45.  $\text{ḡḡ}Hari\ ne\ apnâ\ âp\ chipâyâḡ/iḡ$

My Lord hides Himself, and my Lord wonderfully reveals Himself: My Lord has encompassed me with hardness, and my Lord has cast down my limitations.

My Lord brings to me words of sorrow and words of joy, and He Himself heals their strife.

I will offer my body and mind to my Lord: I will give up my life, but never can I forget my Lord!

#### XXVI

II. 75.  $\text{ḡḡ}ônkâr\ siwae\ kôḡ\ sirjaiḡ/iḡ$

All things are created by the Om;

The love-form is His body.

He is without form, without quality, without decay:

Seek thou union with Him!

But that formless God takes a thousand forms in the eyes of His creatures:

He is pure and indestructible,

His form is infinite and fathomless,

He dances in rapture, and waves of form arise from His dance.

The body and the mind cannot contain themselves, when they are touched by His great joy.

He is immersed in all consciousness, all joys, and all sorrows;

He has no beginning and no end;  
He holds all within His bliss.

## XXVII

II. 81. *ṁṁsatgur sôṁ dayâ kar dînhâṁ/iṁ*

It is the mercy of my true Guru that has made me to know the unknown;  
I have learned from Him how to walk without feet, to see without eyes, to hear without ears, to drink without mouth, to fly without wings;  
I have brought my love and my meditation into the land where there is no sun and moon, nor day and night.  
Without eating, I have tasted of the sweetness of nectar; and without water, I have quenched my thirst.  
Where there is the response of delight, there is the fullness of joy. Before whom can that joy be uttered?  
Kabîr says: "The Guru is great beyond words, and great is the good fortune of the disciple."

## XXVIII

II. 85. *ṁṁnirgun âge sargun nâcaiṁ/iṁ*

Before the Unconditioned, the Conditioned dances: "Thou and I are one!" this trumpet proclaims.  
The Guru comes, and bows down before the disciple:  
This is the greatest of wonders.

## XXIX

II. 87. *ṁṁKabîr kab se bhaye vairâgîṁ/iṁ*

Gorakhnath asks Kabîr:  
"Tell me, O Kabîr, when did your vocation begin? Where did your love have its rise?"  
Kabîr answers:  
"When He whose forms are manifold had not begun His play: when there was no Guru, and no disciple: when the world was not spread out: when the Supreme One was alone—  
Then I became an ascetic; then, O Gorakh, my love was drawn to Brahma.  
Brahma did not hold the crown on his head; the god Vishnu was not anointed as king; the power of Shiva was still unborn; when I was instructed in Yoga.

I became suddenly revealed in Benares, and Râmânanda illumined me;  
I brought with me the thirst for the Infinite, and I have come

for the meeting with Him.  
In simplicity will I unite with the Simple One; my love will  
surge up.  
O Gorakh, march thou with His music!"

XXX

II. 95.  $\text{ṣiḷyâ tarvar men ek pakherû/iḷ}$

On this tree is a bird: it dances in the joy of life.  
None knows where it is: and who knows what the burden of its  
music may be?  
Where the branches throw a deep shade, there does it have its  
nest: and it comes in the evening and flies away in the morning,  
and says not a word of that which it means.  
None tell me of this bird that sings within me.  
It is neither coloured nor colourless: it has neither form nor  
outline:  
It sits in the shadow of love.  
It dwells within the Unattainable, the Infinite, and the Eternal;  
and no one marks when it comes and goes.  
Kabîr says: "O brother Sadhu! deep is the mystery. Let wise men  
seek to know where rests that bird."

XXXI

II. 100.  $\text{ṣiḷnis' din sâlai ghâw/iḷ}$

A sore pain troubles me day and night, and I cannot sleep;  
I long for the meeting with my Beloved, and my father's house  
gives me pleasure no more.  
The gates of the sky are opened, the temple is revealed:  
I meet my husband, and leave at His feet the offering of my body  
and my mind.

XXXII

II. 103.  $\text{ṣiḷnâco re mero man, matta hoy/iḷ}$

Dance, my heart! dance to-day with joy.  
The strains of love fill the days and the nights with music, and  
the world is listening to its melodies:  
Mad with joy, life and death dance to the rhythm of this music.  
The hills and the sea and the earth dance. The world of man  
dances in laughter and tears.  
Why put on the robe of the monk, and live aloof from the world in  
lonely pride?  
Behold! my heart dances in the delight of a hundred arts; and  
the Creator is well pleased.

### XXXIII

II. 105.  $\dot{\text{ji}}\dot{\text{L}}\text{man mast huâ tab kyon bole}\dot{\text{i}}/\dot{\text{i}}\dot{\text{L}}$

Where is the need of words, when love has made drunken the heart?  
I have wrapped the diamond in my cloak; why open it again and again?  
When its load was light, the pan of the balance went up: now it is full, where is the need for weighing?  
The swan has taken its flight to the lake beyond the mountains; why should it search for the pools and ditches any more?  
Your Lord dwells within you: why need your outward eyes be opened?  
Kabîr says: "Listen, my brother! my Lord, who ravishes my eyes, has united Himself with me."

### XXXIV

II. 110.  $\dot{\text{ji}}\dot{\text{L}}\text{mohi tohi lâgî kaise chute}\dot{\text{i}}/\dot{\text{i}}\dot{\text{L}}$

How could the love between Thee and me sever?  
As the leaf of the lotus abides on the water: so thou art my Lord, and I am Thy servant.  
As the night-bird Chakor gazes all night at the moon: so Thou art my Lord and I am Thy servant.  
From the beginning until the ending of time, there is love between Thee and me; and how shall such love be extinguished?  
Kabîr says: "As the river enters into the ocean, so my heart touches Thee."

### XXXV

II. 113.  $\dot{\text{ji}}\dot{\text{L}}\text{vâlam, âwo hamâre geh re}\dot{\text{i}}/\dot{\text{i}}\dot{\text{L}}$

My body and my mind are grieved for the want of Thee;  
O my Beloved! come to my house.  
When people say I am Thy bride, I am ashamed; for I have not touched Thy heart with my heart.  
Then what is this love of mine? I have no taste for food, I have no sleep; my heart is ever restless within doors and without.  
As water is to the thirsty, so is the lover to the bride. Who is there that will carry my news to my Beloved?  
Kabîr is restless: he is dying for sight of Him.

### XXXVI

II. 126.  $\dot{\text{ji}}\dot{\text{L}}\text{jâg piyârî, ab kân sowai}\dot{\text{i}}/\dot{\text{i}}\dot{\text{L}}$

O friend, awake, and sleep no more!  
The night is over and gone, would you lose your day also?

Others, who have wakened, have received jewels;  
 O foolish woman! you have lost all whilst you slept.  
 Your lover is wise, and you are foolish, O woman!  
 You never prepared the bed of your husband:  
 O mad one! you passed your time in silly play.  
 Your youth was passed in vain, for you did not know your Lord;  
 Wake, wake! See! your bed is empty: He left you in the night.  
 Kabîr says: "Only she wakes, whose heart is pierced with the  
 arrow of His music."

### XXXVII

I. 36. *îḷsûr parkâs', tanh rain kahân pâiyeḷ/iḷ*

Where is the night, when the sun is shining? If it is night,  
 then the sun withdraws its light. Where knowledge is, can  
 ignorance endure?  
 If there be ignorance, then knowledge must die.  
 If there be lust, how can love be there? Where there is love,  
 there is no lust.

Lay hold on your sword, and join in the fight. Fight, O my  
 brother, as long as life lasts.  
 Strike off your enemy's head, and there make an end of him  
 quickly: then come, and bow your head at your King's Durbar.  
 He who is brave, never forsakes the battle: he who flies from it  
 is no true fighter.  
 In the field of this body a great war goes forward, against  
 passion, anger, pride, and greed:  
 It is in the kingdom of truth, contentment and purity, that this  
 battle is raging; and the sword that rings forth most loudly is  
 the sword of His Name.  
 Kabîr says: "When a brave knight takes the field, a host of  
 cowards is put to flight.  
 It is a hard fight and a weary one, this fight of the  
 truth-seeker: for the vow of the truth-seeker is more hard than  
 that of the warrior, or of the widowed wife who would follow her  
 husband.  
 For the warrior fights for a few hours, and the widow's struggle  
 with death is soon ended:  
 But the truth-seeker's battle goes on day and night, as long as  
 life lasts it never ceases."

### XXXVIII

I. 50. *îḷbhram kâ tâlâ lagâ mahal rej/iḷ*

The lock of error shuts the gate, open it with the key of love:  
 Thus, by opening the door, thou shalt wake the Beloved.  
 Kabîr says: "O brother! do not pass by such good fortune as



this.”

### XXXIX

I. 59. *ṛisâdho, yah tan thâth tanvure kaj/iṛ*

O friend! this body is His lyre; He tightens its strings, and draws from it the melody of Brahma.  
If the strings snap and the keys slacken, then to dust must this instrument of dust return:  
Kabîr says: "None but Brahma can evoke its melodies."

### XL

I. 65. *ṛiṇavadhû bhûle ko ghar lâweṛ/iṛ*

He is dear to me indeed who can call back the wanderer to his home. In the home is the true union, in the home is enjoyment of life: why should I forsake my home and wander in the forest? If Brahma helps me to realize truth, verily I will find both bondage and deliverance in home.  
He is dear to me indeed who has power to dive deep into Brahma; whose mind loses itself with ease in His contemplation.  
He is dear to me who knows Brahma, and can dwell on His supreme truth in meditation; and who can play the melody of the Infinite by uniting love and renunciation in life.  
Kabîr says: "The home is the abiding place; in the home is reality; the home helps to attain Him Who is real. So stay where you are, and all things shall come to you in time."

### XLI

I. 76. *ṛisanto, sahaj samâdh bhalî/iṛ*

O sadhu! the simple union is the best. Since the day when I met with my Lord, there has been no end to the sport of our love.  
I shut not my eyes, I close not my ears, I do not mortify my body;  
I see with eyes open and smile, and behold His beauty everywhere:  
I utter His Name, and whatever I see, it reminds me of Him;  
whatever I do., it becomes His worship.  
The rising and the setting are one to me; all contradictions are solved.  
Wherever I go, I move round Him,  
All I achieve is His service:  
When I lie down, I lie prostrate at His feet.

He is the only adorable one to me: I have none other.  
My tongue has left off impure words, it sings His glory day and night:

Whether I rise or sit down, I can never forget Him; for the rhythm of His music beats in my ears.  
Kabîr says: "My heart is frenzied, and I disclose in my soul what is hidden. I am immersed in that one great bliss which transcends all pleasure and pain."

#### XLII

I. 79. *ij̣tîrath men to sab pânî haij̣/ị*

There is nothing but water at the holy bathing places; and I know that they are useless, for I have bathed in them.  
The images are all lifeless, they cannot speak; I know, for I have cried aloud to them.  
The Purana and the Koran are mere words; lifting up the curtain, I have seen.  
Kabîr gives utterance to the words of experience; and he knows very well that all other things are untrue.

#### XLIII

I. 82. *ij̣pânî vic mîn piyâsîj̣/ị*

I laugh when I hear that the fish in the water is thirsty:  
You do not see that the Real is in your home, and you wander from forest to forest listlessly!  
Here is the truth! Go where you will, to Benares or to Mathura;  
if you do not find your soul, the world is unreal to you.

#### XLIV

I. 93. *ij̣gagan math gaib nisân gadej̣/ị*

The Hidden Banner is planted in the temple of the sky; there the blue canopy decked with the moon and set with bright jewels is spread.  
There the light of the sun and the moon is shining: still your mind to silence before that splendour.  
Kabîr says: "He who has drunk of this nectar, wanders like one who is mad."

#### XLV

I. 97. *ij̣sâdho, ko hai kân̄h se âyoj̣/ị*

Who are you, and whence do you come?  
Where dwells that Supreme Spirit, and how does He have His sport with all created things?  
The fire is in the wood; but who awakens it suddenly? Then it turns to ashes, and where goes the force of the fire?

The true guru teaches that He has neither limit nor infinitude.  
Kabîr says: "Brahma suits His language to the understanding of  
His hearer."

#### XLVI

I. 98. *ṛiṣâdho, sahajai kâyâ s'odhoṛi/iṛ*

O sadhu! purify your body in the simple way.  
As the seed is within the banyan tree, and within the seed are  
the flowers, the fruits, and the shade:  
So the germ is within the body, and within that germ is the body  
again.  
The fire, the air, the water, the earth, and the aether; you  
cannot have these outside of Him.  
O, Kazi, O Pundit, consider it well: what is there that is not in  
the soul?  
The water-filled pitcher is placed upon water, it has water  
within and without.  
It should not be given a name, lest it call forth the error of  
dualism.  
Kabîr says: "Listen to the Word, the Truth, which is your  
essence. He speaks the Word to Himself; and He Himself is the  
Creator."

#### XLVII

I. 102. *ṛiṭtarvar ek mûl vin thâdâṛi/iṛ*

There is a strange tree, which stands without roots and bears  
fruits without blossoming;  
It has no branches and no leaves, it is lotus all over.  
Two birds sing there; one is the Guru, and the other the  
disciple:  
The disciple chooses the manifold fruits of life and tastes them,  
and the Guru beholds him in joy.  
What Kabîr says is hard to understand: "The bird is beyond  
seeking, yet it is most clearly visible. The Formless is in  
the midst of all forms. I sing the glory of forms."

#### XLVIII

I. 107. *ṛiṭcalat mansâ acal kînhîṛi/iṛ*

I have stilled my restless mind, and my heart is radiant: for in  
Thatness I have seen beyond That-ness. In company I have seen  
the Comrade Himself.  
Living in bondage, I have set myself free: I have broken away  
from the clutch of all narrowness.  
Kabîr says: "I have attained the unattainable, and my heart is

coloured with the colour of love.”

#### XLIX

I. 105. *ṁiṁjo dīśai, so to hai nāhīṁ/iṁ*

That which you see is not: and for that which is, you have no words.

Unless you see, you believe not: what is told you you cannot accept.

He who is discerning knows by the word; and the ignorant stands gaping.

Some contemplate the Formless, and others meditate on form: but the wise man knows that Brahma is beyond both.

That beauty of His is not seen of the eye: that metre of His is not heard of the ear.

Kabīr says: "He who has found both love and renunciation never descends to death."

#### L

I. 126. *ṁimuralī bajat akhand sadāyeṁ/iṁ*

The flute of the Infinite is played without ceasing, and its sound is love:

When love renounces all limits, it reaches truth.

How widely the fragrance spreads! It has no end, nothing stands in its way.

The form of this melody is bright like a million suns: incomparably sounds the vina, the vina of the notes of truth.

#### LI

I. 129. *ṁisakhiyo, ham hūn bhāi vālamās'īṁ/iṁ*

Dear friend, I am eager to meet my Beloved! My youth has flowered, and the pain of separation from Him troubles my breast.

I am wandering yet in the alleys of knowledge without purpose, but I have received His news in these alleys of knowledge.

I have a letter from my Beloved: in this letter is an unutterable message, and now my fear of death is done away.

Kabīr says: "O my loving friend! I have got for my gift the Deathless One."

#### LII

I. 130. *ṁisāin vin dard kareje hoyṁ/iṁ*

When I am parted from my Beloved, my heart is full of misery: I have no comfort in the day, I have no sleep in the night. To whom shall I tell my sorrow?  
 The night is dark; the hours slip by. Because my Lord is absent, I start up and tremble with fear.  
 Kabîr says: "Listen, my friend! there is no other satisfaction, save in the encounter with the Beloved."

#### LIII

I. 122. jîkaum muralî s'abd s'un ânand bhayoṛ/iṛ

What is that flute whose music thrills me with joy?  
 The flame burns without a lamp;  
 The lotus blossoms without a root;  
 Flowers bloom in clusters;  
 The moon-bird is devoted to the moon;  
 With all its heart the rain-bird longs for the shower of rain;  
 But upon whose love does the Lover concentrate His entire life?

#### LIV

I. 112. jîs'untâ nahî dhun kî khabarṛ/iṛ

Have you not heard the tune which the Unstruck Music is playing?  
 In the midst of the chamber the harp of joy is gently and sweetly played; and where is the need of going without to hear it?  
 If you have not drunk of the nectar of that One Love, what boots it though you should purge yourself of all stains?  
 The Kazi is searching the words of the Koran, and instructing others: but if his heart be not steeped in that love, what does it avail, though he be a teacher of men?  
 The Yogi dyes his garments with red: but if he knows naught of that colour of love, what does it avail though his garments be tinted?  
 Kabîr says: "Whether I be in the temple or the balcony, in the camp or in the flower garden, I tell you truly that every moment my Lord is taking His delight in me."

#### LV

I. 73. jîbhakti kâ mârag jhînâ reṛ/iṛ

Subtle is the path of love!  
 Therein there is no asking and no not-asking,  
 There one loses one's self at His feet,  
 There one is immersed in the joy of the seeking: plunged in the deeps of love as the fish in the water.  
 The lover is never slow in offering his head for his Lord's

service.

Kabîr declares the secret of this love.

#### LVI

I. 68. *ṛiḷbhâi kôî satguru sant kahâwâi/iḷ*

He is the real Sadhu, who can reveal the form of the Formless to the vision of these eyes:

Who teaches the simple way of attaining Him, that is other than rites or ceremonies:

Who does not make you close the doors, and hold the breath, and renounce the world:

Who makes you perceive the Supreme Spirit wherever the mind attaches itself:

Who teaches you to be still in the midst of all your activities.

Ever immersed in bliss, having no fear in his mind, he keeps the spirit of union in the midst of all enjoyments.

The infinite dwelling of the Infinite Being is everywhere: in earth, water, sky, and air:

Firm as the thunderbolt, the seat of the seeker is established above the void.

He who is within is without: I see Him and none else.

#### LVII

I. 66. *ṛiḷsâdho, s'abd sâdhnâ kîjai/iḷ*

Receive that Word from which the Universe springeth!

That word is the Guru; I have heard it, and become the disciple.

How many are there who know the meaning of that word?

O Sadhu! practise that Word!

The Vedas and the Puranas proclaim it,

The world is established in it,

The Rishis and devotees speak of it:

But none knows the mystery of the Word.

The householder leaves his house when he hears it,

The ascetic comes back to love when he hears it,

The Six Philosophies expound it,

The Spirit of Renunciation points to that Word,

From that Word the world-form has sprung,

That Word reveals all.

Kabîr says: "But who knows whence the Word cometh?"

#### LVIII

I. 63. *ṛiḷpîle pyâlâ, ho matwâlâ/iḷ*

Empty the Cup! O be drunken!

Drink the divine nectar of His Name!  
Kabîr says: "Listen to me, dear Sadhu!  
From the sole of the foot to the crown of the head this mind is  
filled with poison."

LIX

I. 52. *ṛiḷkhasm na cînhai bâwariḷ/iḷ*

O man, if thou dost not know thine own Lord, whereof art thou so  
proud?  
Put thy cleverness away: mere words shall never unite thee to  
Him.  
Do not deceive thyself with the witness of the Scriptures:  
Love is something other than this, and he who has sought it truly  
has found it.

LX

I. 56. *ṛiḷsukh sindh kî sair kâḷ/iḷ*

The savour of wandering in the ocean of deathless life has rid me  
of all my asking:  
As the tree is in the seed, so all diseases are in this asking.

LXI

I. 48. *ṛiḷsukh sâgar men âḷkeḷ/iḷ*

When at last you are come to the ocean of happiness, do not go  
back thirsty.  
Wake, foolish man! for Death stalks you. Here is pure water  
before you; drink it at every breath.  
Do not follow the mirage on foot, but thirst for the nectar;  
Dhruva, Prahlad, and Shukadeva have drunk of it, and also Raidas  
has tasted it:  
The saints are drunk with love, their thirst is for love.  
Kabîr says: "Listen to me, brother! The nest of fear is broken.  
Not for a moment have you come face to face with the world:  
You are weaving your bondage of falsehood, your words are full of  
deception:  
With the load of desires which you hold on your head, how can  
you be light?"  
Kabîr says: "Keep within you truth, detachment, and love."

LXII

I. 35. *ṛiḷsatî ko kaun s'ikhâwtâ haiḷ/iḷ*

Who has ever taught the widowed wife to burn herself on the pyre  
of her dead husband?  
And who has ever taught love to find bliss in renunciation?

LXIII

I. 39. *ṛiḥare man, dhîraj kâhe na dharaiḥ/iḥ*

Why so impatient, my heart?  
He who watches over birds, beasts, and insects,  
He who cared for you whilst you were yet in your mother's womb,  
Shall He not care for you now that you are come forth?  
Oh my heart, how could you turn from the smile of your Lord and  
wander so far from Him?  
You have left Your Beloved and are thinking of others: and this  
is why all your work is in vain.

LXIV

I. 117. *ṛiḥsâin se lagan kathin hai, bhâḥiḥ/iḥ*

Now hard it is to meet my Lord!  
The rain-bird wails in thirst for the rain: almost she dies of  
her longing, yet she would have none other water than the  
rain.  
Drawn by the love of music, the deer moves forward: she dies as  
she listens to the music, yet she shrinks not in fear.  
The widowed wife sits by the body of her dead husband: she is not  
afraid of the fire.  
Put away all fear for this poor body.

LXV

I. 22. *ṛiḥjab main bhûlâ, re bhâḥiḥ/iḥ*

O brother! when I was forgetful, my true Guru showed me the Way.  
Then I left off all rites and ceremonies, I bathed no more in the  
holy water:  
Then I learned that it was I alone who was mad, and the whole  
world beside me was sane; and I had disturbed these wise people.  
From that time forth I knew no more how to roll in the dust in  
obeisance:  
I do not ring the temple bell:  
I do not set the idol on its throne:  
I do not worship the image with flowers.  
It is not the austerities that mortify the flesh which are  
pleasing to the Lord,  
When you leave off your clothes and kill your senses, you do not  
please the Lord:  
The man who is kind and who practises righteousness, who remains



passive amidst the affairs of the world, who considers all  
creatures on earth as his own self,  
He attains the Immortal Being, the true God is ever with him.  
Kabîr says: "He attains the true Name whose words are pure, and  
who is free from pride and conceit."

## LXVI

### I. 20. *ṛiḷman na rangâyeṛ/iḷ*

The Yogi dyes his garments, instead of dyeing his mind in the  
colours of love:  
He sits within the temple of the Lord, leaving Brahma to worship  
a stone.  
He pierces holes in his ears, he has a great beard and matted  
locks, he looks like a goat:  
He goes forth into the wilderness, killing all his desires, and  
turns himself into an eunuch:  
He shaves his head and dyes his garments; he reads the Gîtâ and  
becomes a mighty talker.  
Kabîr says: "You are going to the doors of death, bound hand and  
foot!"

## LXVII

### I. 9. *ṛiḷnâ jâne sâhab kaisâ haiṛ/iḷ*

I do not know what manner of God is mine.  
The Mullah cries aloud to Him: and why? Is your Lord deaf? The  
subtle anklets that ring on the feet of an insect when it moves  
are heard of Him.  
Tell your beads, paint your forehead with the mark of your God,  
and wear matted locks long and showy: but a deadly weapon is in  
your heart, and how shall you have God?

## LXVIII

### III. 102. *ṛiḷham se rahâ na jâyeṛ/iḷ*

I hear the melody of His flute, and I cannot contain myself:  
The flower blooms, though it is not spring; and already the bee  
has received its invitation.  
The sky roars and the lightning flashes, the waves arise in my  
heart,  
The rain falls; and my heart longs for my Lord.  
Where the rhythm of the world rises and falls, thither my heart  
has reached:  
There the hidden banners are fluttering in the air.  
Kabîr says: "My heart is dying, though it lives."

LXIX

III. 2. jĩjo khodâ masjid vasat haij/iĩ

If God be within the mosque, then to whom does this world belong?  
If Ram be within the image which you find upon your pilgrimage,  
then who is there to know what happens without?  
Hari is in the East: Allah is in the West. Look within your  
heart, for there you will find both Karim and Ram;  
All the men and women of the world are His living forms.  
Kabîr is the child of Allah and of Ram: He is my Guru, He is my  
Pir.

LXX

III. 9. jĩs'ĩl santosh sadâ samadrishtij/iĩ

He who is meek and contented., he who has an equal vision, whose  
mind is filled with the fullness of acceptance and of rest;  
He who has seen Him and touched Him, he is freed from all fear  
and trouble.  
To him the perpetual thought of God is like sandal paste smeared  
on the body, to him nothing else is delight:  
His work and his rest are filled with music: he sheds abroad the  
radiance of love.  
Kabîr says: "Touch His feet, who is one and indivisible,  
immutable and peaceful; who fills all vessels to the brim with  
joy, and whose form is love."

LXXI

III. 13. jĩsâdh sangat pĩtamj/iĩ

Go thou to the company of the good, where the Beloved One has His  
dwelling place:  
Take all thy thoughts and love and instruction from thence.  
Let that assembly be burnt to ashes where His Name is not spoken!  
Tell me, how couldst thou hold a wedding-feast, if the bridegroom  
himself were not there?  
Waver no more, think only of the Beloved;  
Set not thy heart on the worship of other gods, there is no worth  
in the worship of other masters.  
Kabîr deliberates and says: "Thus thou shalt never find the  
Beloved!"

LXXII

III. 26. jĩtor hĩrâ hirâilwâ kĩcad menj/iĩ

The jewel is lost in the mud, and all are seeking for it;

Some look for it in the east, and some in the west; some in the water and some amongst stones.  
But the servant Kabîr has appraised it at its true value, and has wrapped it with care in the end of the mantle of his heart.

#### LXXIII

III. 26.  $\dot{\text{p}}\dot{\text{î}}\dot{\text{â}}\text{yau din gaune kâ ho}\dot{\text{î}}/\dot{\text{î}}\dot{\text{â}}$

The palanquin came to take me away to my husband's home, and it sent through my heart a thrill of joy;  
But the bearers have brought me into the lonely forest, where I have no one of my own.  
O bearers, I entreat you by your feet, wait but a moment longer: let me go back to my kinsmen and friends, and take my leave of them.  
The servant Kabîr sings: "O Sadhu! finish your buying and selling, have done with your good and your bad: for there are no markets and no shops in the land to which you go."

#### LXXIV

III. 30.  $\dot{\text{p}}\dot{\text{î}}\dot{\text{â}}\text{re dil, prem nagar kâ ant na pâ}\dot{\text{y}}\dot{\text{â}}\dot{\text{î}}/\dot{\text{î}}\dot{\text{â}}$

O my heart! you have not known all the secrets of this city of love: in ignorance you came, and in ignorance you return.  
O my friend, what have you done with this life? You have taken on your head the burden heavy with stones, and who is to lighten it for you?  
Your Friend stands on the other shore, but you never think in your mind how you may meet with Him:  
The boat is broken, and yet you sit ever upon the bank; and thus you are beaten to no purpose by the waves.  
The servant Kabîr asks you to consider; who is there that shall befriend you at the last?  
You are alone, you have no companion: you will suffer the consequences of your own deeds.

#### LXXV

III. 55.  $\dot{\text{p}}\dot{\text{î}}\dot{\text{â}}\text{ved kahe sargun ke â}\dot{\text{g}}\dot{\text{e}}\dot{\text{î}}/\dot{\text{î}}\dot{\text{â}}$

The Vedas say that the Unconditioned stands beyond the world of Conditions.  
O woman, what does it avail thee to dispute whether He is beyond all or in all?  
See thou everything as thine own dwelling place: the mist of pleasure and pain can never spread there.  
There Brahma is revealed day and night: there light is His garment, light is His seat, light rests on thy head.

Kabîr says: "The Master, who is true, He is all light."

LXXVI

III. 48. णिःतु surat nain nihârî/iḷ

Open your eyes of love, and see Him who pervades this world I  
consider it well, and know that this is your own country.  
When you meet the true Guru, He will awaken your heart;  
He will tell you the secret of love and detachment, and then you  
will know indeed that He transcends this universe.  
This world is the City of Truth, its maze of paths enchants the  
heart:  
We can reach the goal without crossing the road, such is the  
sport unending.  
Where the ring of manifold joys ever dances about Him, there is  
the sport of Eternal Bliss.  
When we know this, then all our receiving and renouncing is  
over;  
Thenceforth the heat of having shall never scorch us more.

He is the Ultimate Rest unbounded:  
He has spread His form of love throughout all the world.  
From that Ray which is Truth, streams of new forms are  
perpetually springing: and He pervades those forms.  
All the gardens and groves and bowers are abounding with blossom;  
and the air breaks forth into ripples of joy.  
There the swan plays a wonderful game,  
There the Unstruck Music eddies around the Infinite One;  
There in the midst the Throne of the Unheld is shining, whereon  
the great Being sits—  
Millions of suns are shamed by the radiance of a single hair of  
His body.  
On the harp of the road what true melodies are being sounded!  
and its notes pierce the heart:  
There the Eternal Fountain is playing its endless life-streams of  
birth and death.  
They call Him Emptiness who is the Truth of truths, in Whom all  
truths are stored!

There within Him creation goes forward, which is beyond all  
philosophy; for philosophy cannot attain to Him:  
There is an endless world, O my Brother! and there is the  
Nameless Being, of whom naught can be said.  
Only he knows it who has reached that region: it is other than  
all that is heard and said.  
No form, no body, no length, no breadth is seen there: how can I  
tell you that which it is?  
He comes to the Path of the Infinite on whom the grace of the  
Lord descends: he is freed from births and deaths who attains

to Him.

Kabîr says: "It cannot be told by the words of the mouth, it cannot be written on paper:

It is like a dumb person who tastes a sweet thing—how shall it be explained?"

### LXXVII

III. 60. *ṛiḥcal hamsâ wâ des' jahânṛi/iḥ*

O my heart! let us go to that country where dwells the Beloved, the ravisher of my heart!

There Love is filling her pitcher from the well, yet she has no rope wherewith to draw water;

There the clouds do not cover the sky, yet the rain falls down in gentle showers:

O bodiless one! do not sit on your doorstep; go forth and bathe yourself in that rain!

There it is ever moonlight and never dark; and who speaks of one sun only? that land is illumine with the rays of a million suns.

### LXXVIII

III. 63. *ṛiḥkahain Kabîr, s'uno ho sâdhoṛi/iḥ*

Kabîr says: "O Sadhu! hear my deathless words. If you want your own good, examine and consider them well.

You have estranged yourself from the Creator, of whom you have sprung: you have lost your reason, you have bought death.

All doctrines and all teachings are sprung from Him, from Him they grow: know this for certain, and have no fear.

Hear from me the tidings of this great truth!

Whose name do you sing, and on whom do you meditate? O, come forth from this entanglement!

He dwells at the heart of all things, so why take refuge in empty desolation?

If you place the Guru at a distance from you, then it is but the distance that you honour:

If indeed the Master be far away, then who is it else that is creating this world?

When you think that He is not here, then you wander further and further away, and seek Him in vain with tears.

Where He is far off, there He is unattainable: where He is near, He is very bliss.

Kabîr says: "Lest His servant should suffer pain He pervades him through and through."

Know yourself then, O Kabîr; for He is in you from head to foot.

Sing with gladness, and keep your seat unmoved within your heart.

## LXXIX

### III. 66. jî:nâ main dharmî nahîn adharmî/iḷ

I am neither pious nor ungodly, I live neither by law nor by sense,  
I am neither a speaker nor hearer, I am neither a servant nor master, I am neither bond nor free,  
I am neither detached nor attached.  
I am far from none: I am near to none.  
I shall go neither to hell nor to heaven.  
I do all works; yet I am apart from all works.  
Few comprehend my meaning: he who can comprehend it, he sits unmoved.  
Kabîr seeks neither to establish nor to destroy.

## LXXX

### III. 69. jî:satta nâm hai sab ten nyârâ/iḷ

The true Name is like none other name!  
The distinction of the Conditioned from the Unconditioned is but a word:  
The Unconditioned is the seed, the Conditioned is the flower and the fruit.  
Knowledge is the branch, and the Name is the root.  
Look, and see where the root is: happiness shall be yours when you come to the root.  
The root will lead you to the branch, the leaf, the flower, and the fruit:  
It is the encounter with the Lord, it is the attainment of bliss, it is the reconciliation of the Conditioned and the Unconditioned.

## LXXXI

### III. 74. jî:pratham ek jo âpai âpî/iḷ

In the beginning was He alone, sufficient unto Himself: the formless, colourless, and unconditioned Being.  
Then was there neither beginning, middle, nor end;  
Then were no eyes, no darkness, no light;  
Then were no ground, air, nor sky; no fire, water, nor earth; no rivers like the Ganges and the Jumna, no seas, oceans, and waves.  
Then was neither vice nor virtue; scriptures there were not, as the Vedas and Puranas, nor as the Koran.  
Kabîr ponders in his mind and says, "Then was there no activity: the Supreme Being remained merged in the unknown depths of His own self."  
The Guru neither eats nor drinks, neither lives nor dies:

Neither has He form, line, colour, nor vesture.  
 He who has neither caste nor clan nor anything else—how may I  
 describe His glory?  
 He has neither form nor formlessness,  
 He has no name,  
 He has neither colour nor colourlessness,  
 He has no dwelling-place.

#### LXXXII

III. 76. *ṛiḷkahain Kabîr vicâr keṛ/iḷ*

Kabîr ponders and says: "He who has neither caste nor country,  
 who is formless and without quality, fills all space."  
 The Creator brought into being the Game of Joy: and from the word  
 Om the Creation sprang.  
 The earth is His joy; His joy is the sky;  
 His joy is the flashing of the sun and the moon;  
 His joy is the beginning, the middle, and the end;  
 His joy is eyes, darkness, and light.  
 Oceans and waves are His joy: His joy the Sarasvati, the Jumna,  
 and the Ganges.  
 The Guru is One: and life and death., union and separation, are  
 all His plays of joy!  
 His play the land and water, the whole universe!  
 His play the earth and the sky!  
 In play is the Creation spread out, in play it is established.  
 The whole world, says Kabîr, rests in His play, yet still the  
 Player remains unknown.

#### LXXXIII

III. 84. *ṛiḷjhî jhî jantar bâjai/iḷ*

The harp gives forth murmurous music; and the dance goes on  
 without hands and feet.  
 It is played without fingers, it is heard without ears: for He is  
 the ear, and He is the listener.  
 The gate is locked, but within there is fragrance: and there the  
 meeting is seen of none.  
 The wise shall understand it.

#### LXXXIV

III. 89. *ṛiḷmor phakîrwâ mângi jâyi/iḷ*

The Beggar goes a-begging, but  
 I could not even catch sight of Him:  
 And what shall I beg of the Beggar He gives without my asking.  
 Kabîr says: "I am His own: now let that befall which may befall!"

LXXXV

III. 90. jî:naihar se jiyarâ phât rej/iĵ

My heart cries aloud for the house of my lover; the open road and the shelter of a roof are all one to her who has lost the city of her husband.

My heart finds no joy in anything: my mind and my body are distraught.

His palace has a million gates, but there is a vast ocean between it and me:

How shall I cross it, O friend? for endless is the outstretching of the path.

How wondrously this lyre is wrought! When its strings are rightly strung, it maddens the heart: but when the keys are broken and the strings are loosened, none regard it more.

I tell my parents with laughter that I must go to my Lord in the morning;

They are angry, for they do not want me to go, and they say: "She thinks she has gained such dominion over her husband that she can have whatsoever she wishes; and therefore she is impatient to go to him."

Dear friend, lift my veil lightly now; for this is the night of love.

Kabîr says: "Listen to me! My heart is eager to meet my lover: I lie sleepless upon my bed. Remember me early in the morning!"

LXXXVI

III. 96. jîjîv mahal men S'iv pahunwâ/iĵ

Serve your God, who has come into this temple of life!

Do not act the part of a madman, for the night is thickening fast.

He has awaited me for countless ages, for love of me He has lost His heart:

Yet I did not know the bliss that was so near to me, for my love was not yet awake.

But now, my Lover has made known to me the meaning of the note that struck my ear:

Now, my good fortune is come.

Kabîr says: "Behold! how great is my good fortune! I have received the unending caress of my Beloved!"

LXXXVII

I. 71. jîgagan ghatâ ghaharânî, sâdhoj/iĵ



Clouds thicken in the sky! O, listen to the deep voice of their roaring;  
 The rain comes from the east with its monotonous murmur.  
 Take care of the fences and boundaries of your fields, lest the rains overflow them;  
 Prepare the soil of deliverance, and let the creepers of love and renunciation be soaked in this shower.  
 It is the prudent farmer who will bring his harvest home; he shall fill both his vessels, and feed both the wise men and the saints.

### LXXXVIII

III. 118. *ijâj din ke main jaun balihârî/ij*

This day is dear to me above all other days, for to-day the Beloved Lord is a guest in my house;  
 My chamber and my courtyard are beautiful with His presence.  
 My longings sing His Name, and they are become lost in His great beauty:  
 I wash His feet, and I look upon His Face; and I lay before Him as an offering my body, my mind, and all that I have.  
 What a day of gladness is that day in which my Beloved, who is my treasure, comes to my house!  
 All evils fly from my heart when I see my Lord.  
 "My love has touched Him; my heart is longing for the Name which is Truth."  
 Thus sings Kabîr, the servant of all servants.

### LXXXIX

I. 100. *ijîkôî s'untâ hai jñânî râg gagan menî/ij*

Is there any wise man who will listen to that solemn music which arises in the sky?  
 For He, the Source of all music, makes all vessels full fraught, and rests in fullness Himself.  
 He who is in the body is ever athirst, for he pursues that which is in part:  
 But ever there wells forth deeper and deeper the sound "He is this—this is He"; fusing love and renunciation into one.  
 Kabîr says: "O brother! that is the Primal Word."

### XC

I. 108. *ijîmain kê se bûjhaunî/ij*

To whom shall I go to learn about my Beloved?  
 Kabîr says: "As you never may find the forest if you ignore the tree, so He may never be found in abstractions."

## XCI

### III. 12. णिऽsanskrit bhâshâ padhi lînhâ/िऽ

I have learned the Sanskrit language, so let all men call me wise:

But where is the use of this, when I am floating adrift, and parched with thirst, and burning with the heat of desire?

To no purpose do you bear on your head this load of pride and vanity.

Kabîr says: "Lay it down in the dust, and go forth to meet the Beloved. Address Him as your Lord."

## XCII

### III. 110. णिऽcarkhâ calai surat virahin kâ/िऽ

The woman who is parted from her lover spins at the spinning wheel.

The city of the body arises in its beauty; and within it the palace of the mind has been built.

The wheel of love revolves in the sky, and the seat is made of the jewels of knowledge:

What subtle threads the woman weaves, and makes them fine with love and reverence!

Kabîr says: "I am weaving the garland of day and night. When my Lover comes and touches me with His feet, I shall offer Him my tears."

## XCIII

### III. 111. णिऽkotîn bhânu candra târâgan/िऽ

Beneath the great umbrella of my King millions of suns and moons and stars are shining!

He is the Mind within my mind: He is the Eye within mine eye.

Ah, could my mind and eyes be one! Could my love but reach to my Lover! Could but the fiery heat of my heart be cooled!

Kabîr says: "When you unite love with the Lover, then you have love's perfection."

## XCIV

### I. 92. णिऽavadhû begam des' hamârâ/िऽ

O sadhu! my land is a sorrowless land.

I cry aloud to all, to the king and the beggar, the emperor and the fakir—

Whosoever seeks for shelter in the Highest, let all come and

settle in my land!  
Let the weary come and lay his burdens here!

So live here, my brother, that you may cross with ease to that  
other shore.  
It is a land without earth or sky, without moon or stars;  
For only the radiance of Truth shines in my Lord's Durbar.  
Kabîr says: "O beloved brother! naught is essential save Truth."

#### XCV

I. 109. jîsâîn ke sangat sâsur âî/iî

Came with my Lord to my Lord's home: but I lived not with Him and  
I tasted Him not, and my youth passed away like a dream.  
On my wedding night my women-friends sang in chorus, and I was  
anointed with the unguents of pleasure and pain:  
But when the ceremony was over, I left my Lord and came away, and  
my kinsman tried to console me upon the road.  
Kabîr says, "I shall go to my Lord's house with my love at my  
side; then shall I sound the trumpet of triumph!"

#### XCVI

I. 75. jîsamajh dekh man mît piyarwâî/iî

O friend, dear heart of mine, think well! if you love indeed,  
then why do you sleep?  
If you have found Him, then give yourself utterly, and take Him  
to you.  
Why do you loose Him again and again?  
If the deep sleep of rest has come to your eyes, why waste your  
time making the bed and arranging the pillows?  
Kabîr says: "I tell you the ways of love! Even though the head  
itself must be given, why should you weep over it?"

#### XCVII

II. 90. jîsâhab ham men, sâhab tum menî/iî

The Lord is in me, the Lord is in you, as life is in every seed.  
O servant! put false pride away, and seek for Him within you.  
A million suns are ablaze with light,  
The sea of blue spreads in the sky,  
The fever of life is stilled, and all stains are washed away;  
when I sit in the midst of that world.  
Hark to the unstruck bells and drums! Take your delight in love!  
Rains pour down without water, and the rivers are streams of  
light.  
One Love it is that pervades the whole world, few there are who

know it fully:

They are blind who hope to see it by the light of reason, that  
reason which is the cause of separation—  
The House of Reason is very far away!  
How blessed is Kabîr, that amidst this great joy he sings within  
his own vessel.  
It is the music of the meeting of soul with soul;  
It is the music of the forgetting of sorrows;  
It is the music that transcends all coming in and all going  
forth.

### XCVIII

II. 98. jîritu phâgun niyarânî/i;

The month of March draws near: ah, who will unite me to my Lover?  
How shall I find words for the beauty of my Beloved? For He is  
merged in all beauty.  
His colour is in all the pictures of the world, and it bewitches  
the body and the mind.  
Those who know this, know what is this unutterable play of the  
Spring.  
Kabîr says: "Listen to me, brother' there are not many who have  
found this out."

### XCIX

II. 111. jîNârad, pyâr so antar nâhî/i;

Oh Narad! I know that my Lover cannot be far:  
When my Lover wakes, I wake; when He sleeps, I sleep.  
He is destroyed at the root who gives pain to my Beloved.  
Where they sing His praise, there I live;  
When He moves, I walk before Him: my heart yearns for my Beloved.  
The infinite pilgrimage lies at His feet, a million devotees are  
seated there.  
Kabîr says: "The Lover Himself reveals the glory of true love."

### C

II. 122. jîkôî prem kî peng jhulâo rej/i;

Hang up the swing of love to-day! Hang the body and the mind  
between the arms of the Beloved, in the ecstasy of love's joy:  
Bring the tearful streams of the rainy clouds to your eyes, and  
cover your heart with the shadow of darkness:  
Bring your face nearer to His ear, and speak of the deepest  
longings of your heart.  
Kabîr says: "Listen to me, brother! bring the vision of the  
Beloved in your heart."







KABIR  
AND  
THE KABIR PANTH

BY

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## PREFACE

The following pages represent the result of inquiries extending over the last ten years. The gradual way in which such information, as is given, has been acquired and the number of times that first impressions have had to give way to subsequent discoveries would be sufficient warning that this representation of the subject is little likely to be free from errors. My hope is that this study will do something to increase the interest already felt by many in the various religious sects that have been called into existence in India through the efforts of distinguished teachers.

I have tried to avoid dogmatising on questions that call for fuller investigation ; but we have at any rate in the teaching of Kabir an attempt to break down the barriers that separate Hindus from Muhammadans, and we have probably in the Kabir Panth a religious system that owes something to Hindu, Muhammadan and Christian influences.

(iv)

If Christ had been an Indian, would not his Gospel have been welcomed by many who now refuse to listen ?

For help in this undertaking I am principally indebted to my Mali, Badlu Dass, who is himself a member of the Panth. He has visited all places of interest in connexion with the Panth, has introduced me to many Mahants and conducted inquiries with great intelligence. The Rev. Ahmad Shah, who is now engaged in bringing out an edition of the *Bijak*, has made many valuable suggestions and has also superintended the copying of various Kabir Panthi MSS. Mr. U. R. Clement and the Rev. Prem Chand have also rendered valuable assistance, while the Rev. B. H. P. Fisher of this Mission has kindly seen these pages through the Press.

G. H. WESTCOTT.

S. P. G. MISSION HOUSE  
CAWNPORE.

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Kabir, as represented in the picture hung in the  
Kabir Charan Math, Benares.

*Frontispiece.*

A Potter at work, to illustrate Sakhi (9).

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A group of Kabir Panthis, in camp at the Magh  
Mela, Allahabad.

*to face p. 104.*

## CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

Century A. D.	Hindu.	Christian.
1100	Ramanujā 1090-1150 (?)	
1200		
1300	Ramanand 1300-1400 (?)	Wyckliffe 1324-84 Jordanus 1321
1400	Gorakh Nath 1420-1485 (?)	Erasmus 1467- 1536.
	Kabir 1440-1518	Luther 1483-1546
	Nanak 1469-1538	Cranmer 1489- 1555
	Chaitanya 1486-1527	
1500	Vallabha Swami 1520	Fr Xavier 1506- 1552
	Dadu 1544-1603	J. Xavier goes to Lahore 1596.
	Tulsi Dass 1544- 1624	

Sankaracharya was born in 783 and died in 828.

## Chapter I.

### THE LIFE OF KABÍR.

It is generally allowed that of all the great Hindú Reformers Kabír and Tulsí Dáss have had the greatest influence for good among the uneducated classes of Northern and Central India. Kabír has been fittingly described by Sir W. W. Hunter as the Indian Luther of the 15th century.

Among those who acknowledge their indebtedness to Kabír as a spiritual guide are Nának Sháh of the Panjab, the founder of the Sikh community; Dádú of Ahmedabad (1544)<sup>1</sup> founder of the Panth that bears his name, and Jag Jíwan Dáss of Oudh (1760) the founder of the Sat Námí sect. Among religious teachers whose doctrine is said to be largely based upon the teaching of Kabír are Bribhan, the founder of the Sádih community (1658), Bábá Lál of Málwá and Shivá Naráin of Ghazipur.

Of these Nának Sháh is the teacher with whose name the English reader is most familiar and it is therefore well in his case to enlarge

(1) All the dates given in the text refer to the year Anno Domini.

somewhat upon a bald assertion of indebtedness.

In the *Janam Sákhí*<sup>2</sup> Kabir is mentioned as a Bhagat equal in merit to Nának himself, and other Bhagats are exhorted to follow his example. On more than one occasion Nának quotes with emphasised approval verses attributed to Kabir.

The *Adi Granth*<sup>3</sup>, the sacred book of the Sikhs, gives much information concerning the life of Kabir and the character of his teaching. The interest which Nának felt in Kabir was probably enhanced by the fact that he had enjoyed personal intercourse with the reformer.<sup>4</sup>

In modern days the number of those who have in one way or another come under the influence of Kabir is very great. In the Census Report for 1901 the number of Kabir Panthis alone is returned as 843,171 and the actual number is probably considerably larger, as in the United Provinces many Kabir Panthis

(2) *Janam Sakhi* (Evidence or Story of birth) is the name given to the accounts of Nának, current among his followers. A translation of two such accounts will be found in Trumpp's edition of the *Adi Granth*.

(3) *Adi* first, principal. *Granth* book. The term *Granth* is used by several sects to denote their authoritative writings. The quotations from the *Adi Granth* are taken from Trumpp's translation.

(4) Nának is said to have been 27 years of age when he met Kabir. As Nának was born in 1469 the year of meeting will have been 1496, the very year in which Sikandar Lodi, the Emperor of Delhi, visited Jaunpur and other cities in that neighbourhood.

seem to have been returned as Rámánandís and the figures for the Panjab are not included.<sup>5</sup>

There is no doubt as to the greatness of Kabír's influence as a religious teacher ; he has also been described as the founder of Hindí literature. The hymns of Kabír are still sung by many a wandering minstrel, while his pithy sayings are frequently employed to win the attention of a dreamy audience or to clench a lengthy argument.

Unfortunately the material for a life of Kabír is miserably scanty. If we confine our attention to traditions of historical value, we are left in uncertainty as to the place and date of his birth, his name, the religion to which he was attached by birth, the state of life in which he lived, married or single, and the number of years that he resided in any particular place. It is true that many legends have gathered round his name, but however interesting these may be from various points of view they can hardly be said to meet the needs of those who desire accurate information.<sup>6</sup>

(5) This total is distributed as follows :—Central Provinces, 493,393 ; United Provinces, 215,771 ; Central India 124,600 ; Bombay Presidency, 9,407.

(6) It is stated in the Benares Gazetteer that Kabir was born at Bellura, a village in the district of Azamgarh. According to the belief of Kabir Panthis he was born in 1398 and died in 1518. The latter date is probably correct ; the former is probably dictated by a desire to make him contemporaneous with Rámánand who is supposed to have lived in the 14th Century.



It is admitted by all Kabír Panthis that Kabír was brought up as a child in the house of Nirú, a Muhammadan weaver. In the *Janam Sàkhi* Nanak is reported to have told Babar that Kabír was a Muhammadan weaver. In the *Adi Granth* occur these lines :—

By caste a weaver and patient of mind : utters  
Kabir with natural ease the excellencies of Rám.<sup>7</sup>

In one of his best known Hymns Kabír says that he will shortly give up weaving and devote himself entirely to singing the praises of Hari.<sup>8</sup> In another hymn he says that he had in a previous birth been born as a Brahmin, but had been re-incarnated as a *Jukíha* (Muhammedan weaver) because he had in that life neglected the worship of Rám (*Rám Bha-jan*).

In none of the writings that can be traced directly to Kabir is any account given as to the manner of his birth, but the following legends have long been current in this country :—

The first legend relates that his mother was a Brahmin widow who went with her father on a

(7) In such passages Kabir seems to apply the name Rám to the supreme God and not to the incarnation of Vishnú. He writes in the Bijak that the true Master did not take birth in the family of Dasrath.

(8) Kabir likens the process of birth, death and re-birth to the movements of the shuttle. This passage may be interpreted as the expression of a hope that he will shortly obtain deliverance from the trials of transmigration.

pilgrimage to the shrine of a famous ascetic. To reward the devotion of the pilgrims the ascetic prayed that the woman might become the mother of a son. The prayer of so holy a man could not fail to find fulfilment and in due course the Brahman widow became the mother of Kabír. The mother to escape dishonour exposed the infant, who was discovered and adopted as her own by the wife of a weaver.<sup>9</sup>

According to another version of this story Rámánand, who was the ascetic referred to, said that he could not recall his blessing but would arrange that the birth should not be after the usual manner, but that the infant should issue from the palm of its mother's hand.<sup>10</sup> His promise was realised and the infant after birth was placed on a lotus flower in the midst of the Lahár Tank. It was there discovered by Nimá, the wife of Nirú, and by her taken to her husband's house.

The second account is more poetical in character and runs thus :—

(9) Most of the legends contained in this Chapter are taken from a Hindi pamphlet entitled *Kabír Kāsauti*, published at Bombay in 1885. This pamphlet is the joint production of five members of the Kabir Panth and is based upon information gleaned both from books and oral tradition.

(10) This legend enables the Hindu section of the Panth to explain the name Kabír as a corruption of Kar-Bir or the hero (born from) the hand (of a Brahmin woman).

Kabír descended from heaven to earth.<sup>(1)</sup> The lotus flower was blooming in the place where Kabír was born. The bees were tired of humming. Peacocks, larks and other kinds of birds in their flight passed circling round the tank. Thunder and lightning were in the air when Kabír became manifest in the heart of a lotus flower, in the midst of the Lahár Tank. A feeling of thirst overcame Nimà, the newly wedded wife of Nirú, the weaver as after the marriage ceremony she was making her way to her husband's house. She approached the tank but was much afraid when she there beheld the child. She thought in her heart 'this is probably the living evidence of the shame of some virgin widow.' Nirú suggested that they might take the child to their house, but Nimá at first demurred, thinking that such action might give rise to scandal. Women would ask, "Who is the mother of a child so beautiful that its eyes are like the lotus"? However laying aside all fears they took pity on the child. On approaching the house they were welcomed with the songs of women, but when the women saw the child dark thoughts arose in their hearts and they began to ask "How has she got this child"? Nimá replied that she had got the child without giving birth to it and

(1) In the *Kabír Kasauti* this phrase occurs—*Sewak hokar utre is Pirthiwimanhi* "becoming a servant he descended upon this earth."

the women then refrained from asking further questions.

The mystery surrounding the birth of the child was further deepened when Nirú called in a Qázi<sup>12</sup> and requested him to open a Qorán and find for the child a name. He found the name Kabír, and also from the same root, Akbar, Kubrà and Kibriyá. On finding these names the Qázi was much perplexed and bit his nails, for was not the term Kabír a title applied to God? News of what had taken place soon spread, and after a short while five or six more Qázis arrived upon the scene. All opened the Qorán, but with the same result. They closed the book in silent astonishment. It was impossible, they all agreed, that a title of such dignity should be given as a name to a weaver's child. They opened the Qorán again and found the names, Zindà, Khinjar, Pír and Haqqá. Thereupon they said to Nirú, 'You must in some way destroy this child.' Nirú in obedience to their order took the child within the house to put him to death, but before he had time to carry out his intention the child gave utterance to this *Shabda* :—

"I have come from an unknown place. Máyá has deceived the world; no one knows me. I

(12) Qázi, a Muhammadan judge, whose services are requisitioned in connexion with births, marriages and other legal matters.

was not born of a woman, but manifested as a boy. My dwelling was in a lonely spot nigh to Kási,<sup>13</sup> and there the weaver found me. I contain neither heaven (air) nor earth, but wisdom only. I have come to this earth in spiritual form and of spiritual significance is my name. I have neither bones nor blood nor skin. I reveal to men the *Shabda* (word). My body is eternal. I am the highest being. These are the words of Kabír who is indestructible."

Thus were the Qázís defeated in their object and the name Kabír was given to the child.<sup>14</sup>

As a boy Kabír gave great offence to both Hindú and Muhammadan playmates. When in the course of play he cried out "Rám, Rám" and "Hari, Hari," the Muhammadans called him a *Káfir* (unbeliever.) To this charge he retorted that he only was a Káfir who did evil. One day he put a *tilak* on his forehead and a *jáneo* round his neck and cried out "Nárain, Nárain." This action roused the ire of the Brahmins, since they regarded it as an infringement of their privileges. To their protest he objected :—

"This is my faith, my tongue is Vishnu, my eyes are Nárain, and Gobind resides in my heart. What account will you give of your actions after

(13) Kási, the Hindu name for Benares.

(14) For further comments on this legend see Chapter II.

death ? Being a weaver, I wear a thread. You wear the sacred thread, and repeat the Gyatri and Gitá daily, but Gobind dwells in my heart. I am a sheep, you are shepherds; it is your duty to save us from sin. You are Brahmins, I am a weaver of Benares. Hear my wisdom. You daily search after an earthly king, while I am contemplating Hari.”<sup>15</sup>

He was further taunted with being a *nigura*, one without the benefit of a spiritual guide. He was determined to remove what he, as well as they, regarded as a reproach. He desired to become the *chela* (disciple) of Rámánand but felt that there were difficulties in the way which could only be overcome by means of some artifice.

He knew that if only he could gain possession of the *mantra* peculiar to this sect, his initiation must necessarily follow. He learnt that Rámánand regularly visited a certain bathing *ghát* and determined to lie down upon the steps of that *ghát* in the hope that Rámánand might step on him by accident. His hope was realised and the holy man in his astonishment exclaimed “Rám, Rám.” Kabír knew that no words would rise so readily to the lips of this holy man as the *mantra* of his order and so claimed that as he was already in possession of the *mantra* he

(15) *Adi Granth*, Trumpp's translation, p, 661.

could no longer be refused admission to the order.<sup>16</sup>

When Kabír announced that he had become the chela of Rámánand, both Hindus and Muhammadans were dismayed and a joint deputation went to inquire of Rámánand whether it were true that he had received a Muhammadan boy as one of his disciples. Rámánand asked them to produce the boy. The people took Kabír to him. Rámánand on his arrival raised the curtain which screened him from the public gaze and asked the boy when he had made him his disciple. Kabír answered, "Various are the *mantras* that Gurús whisper into the ears of their disciples, but you struck me on the head and communicated to me the name of Rám." The *Swámi* recalled the circumstance, and drawing aside the curtain clasped him to his breast and said, "Beyond all questioning you became my disciple." The members of the deputation returned home disappointed. Kabír returned to the weaver's house and set to work on the loom. When any Sádhu came to the house he used to have the ground prepared after the manner of Hindus and got food cooked for them in vessels not previously used. He himself would wait upon them while

(16) Kabír Panthis in conversation speak of their *mantra* as "Rám Rám," but it is a mistake to suppose that these words constitute the *mantra* either of their Panth or of the Rámánandis. These *mantras* may not be disclosed to the uninitiated.

they took their food. His mother, Nimá, was annoyed at these proceedings which, she said, were not in accordance with the customs of the family.

From the time of his initiation Kabír is said to have regularly visited his Gurú and, as years went on, to have taken part in religious disputations with distinguished Pandits who came to do battle with his master. According to tradition Kabír was not possessed of any great amount of booklore, but in any case he must have gained through instruction, conversation and participation in religious disputations a considerable knowledge of Hindu philosophical thought and familiarity with such questions as arose out of the meeting of Hindu with Muhammadan beliefs.

It appears from legends of uncertain date that he continued to work as a weaver, giving part of his earnings to Nirú and spending the rest in charity and more especially in giving food to Sádhus. Stories are told as to how on several occasions he mysteriously disappeared for a while from his father's house and in miraculous ways supplied the needs of others.

By some Kabír is said to have been married to a woman, named Loi, and to have had by her two children, a son Kamál and a daughter Kamáli. The circumstances which gave rise to this



conjecture are thus related in *Kabir Kasauti*.

One day Kabír when he was some thirty years of age was walking along the bank of the Ganges when he came to a cottage belonging to a *Bankhandi Bairági*.<sup>17</sup> He went up to the cottage and there sat down. After some time a girl, about twenty years of age, also arrived. To her question as to who he was, Kabír replied 'I am Kabír.' She again inquired as to his caste and sect (*Bhesh*). To both questions he returned the same answer, 'Kabír'. The girl observed that though many Sants had come to that place none of them had ever given such a name for themselves, their caste or sect. Kabír said that in saying this she had said what was perfectly true.<sup>18</sup> Meanwhile more Sants arrived. Presently the girl brought forth from the house a large supply of milk which she divided into seven shares. Five shares she gave to the Sants, one to Kabír and the remaining share she kept for herself. Kabír placed his share on the ground. The Sants drank theirs and asked Kabír why he also did not drink his. Kabír

(17) *Bankhandi* is an epithet applied to Bairagis who live in the *jangal*.

(18) The meaning of this legend appears to be that there is only one God and that all men are his servants and will one day be brought into close union with Him. Religious distinctions are therefore out of place. The religious reformer may have hoped that Hindus and Muhammadans would lay aside all prejudice and accept as a title for the one true God the comparatively unknown term, Kabír (The Great One).

replied that he was keeping it for a Sádhu, now on his way, travelling from the other side of the Ganges. The girl said, "Sir, drink your share, I have plenty left for him." Kabír made answer "My food is the Word of God." (*Ham Shabda ahàri hain*). Shortly afterwards the Sádhu arrived and the milk was given to him. The Sants asked the girl (Loí) of her parentage and how she came to be living in so lonely a spot. Loí replied that she had no parents living, that she had been brought up by a Sant, but that now he too was dead and she was living alone. They inquired the name of the Sant and the circumstances under which she had come to be living with him.

The girl, Loí, replied, "The Sant was a *Bankhandi Bairáji* and he lived on milk alone. In reply to questions concerning me he used to say, 'I was bathing one day in the Ganges when a basket struck against me. I opened the basket and found in it a female infant. I took the infant to my home and reared it by means of a wick soaked in milk. Having found the infant wrapt in clothes I gave it the name of Loí (blanket). Such is the account that the Swámi would give to the Sants.'

Loí having observed the gravity of Kabír said to him. "Swámi, give me such teaching as will bring me peace of mind." Kabír was pleased

with the obvious sincerity of the girl and instructed her thus, "Always repeat *Satyá Nám* (the true Name) and spend your days in the service of the Sants." In obedience to this teaching she laid aside all worldly thoughts, went to Kásí and passed her time in the service of the Sants. Nimà thought that Kabír had brought home with him a wife and asked for what purpose he had married her as they did not live together as husband and wife.

On another occasion Kabír was walking along the bank of the Ganges, accompanied by Shaikh Taqqí, when the latter suddenly caught sight of the dead body of a child floating down the stream. The Shaikh suggested that Kabír should call the child. Kabír whispered something into its ears, whereupon it at once began to weep. Shaikh Taqqí allowed that Kabír had worked a miracle. On account of its beauty Kabír named the child *Kamàl* (Perfection) and made it over to Loi who reared it. The child regarded Loi as its mother and others seeing the child in Loi's lap regarded Kabír as a married man.

Some time afterwards Kabír happened to be in the house of a neighbour when his infant daughter died. Kabír sought permission to remove the dead body to his house. The mother, who had heard how he had brought *Kamàl* back to life, after some persuasion induced the father

to give his consent. Kabir recalled the child to life by means of *Shabda*, called her *Kamàli* and made her over to Loi to be reared. Both children worked at the loom and addressed Kabir as *Swàmi ji*.

One day when Kamàli was now 20 years of age she happened to be drawing water at a well, when a Pandit came up and asked for a drink. Having quenched his thirst he asked whose daughter she was. He was greatly horrified when he learnt that she was the daughter of a weaver and exclaimed 'You have broken my caste.' Kamàli was at a loss to understand for what reason he had become so angry, and persuaded him to come and discuss matters with Kabir. Before either had had time to explain matters, Kabir, who could read the thoughts of men's hearts, exclaimed, "Before drinking water think on these things. What is defilement ? Fishes, tortoises, blood, salt, rotten leaves and the carcasses of dead animals are all to be found in water. Crores of men have been slain by Kàl ; at every step you take, you tread upon the dead body of some man and yet from such earth the vessels from which you drink are made. At meal times you take off your clothes for fear of defilement and wrap yourself in a *dhoti* that has been woven by a weaver. The fly that visits the dung hill settles on your food. How can

you prevent this ? Dispel such illusions from the mind ; study the Vedas and take refuge in Rám."

At the Pandit's request Kabir gave him further instruction in the doctrine of *Satyá Nám* and gave him Kamáli in marriage.

The plain speaking of Kabir and his general disregard for the conventions of society raised him up enemies on every side. According to Kabir Panthi traditions it was Shaikh Taqqi who voiced the feelings of Muhammadans <sup>19</sup>. This famous Pír came before the Emperor, Sikandar Lodí and accused Kabir of laying claim to Divine attributes. He urged that such conduct merited the penalty of death. The Emperor issued a warrant for his arrest and sent men to bring him to the court. Not till evening could the men who were sent persuade Kabir to accompany them. Kabir stood before the Emperor in silence. The Qází exclaimed, "Why do you not salute the Emperor, you *káfir* ?" Kabir replied, "Those only are Pirs who realise the pains of others, those who cannot are *káfirs*." The Emperor asked him why, when ordered to appear in the morning, he had not come till evening. Kabir replied that he had seen a sight which arrested his attention. The Emperor asked what kind of a sight could justify him in

(19) On chronological and other grounds it seems highly improbable that Shaikh Taqqi played the part assigned to him in this legend. See Chapter II.

disregarding his commands. Kabír rejoined that he had been watching a string of camels passing through a street narrower than the eye of a needle. The Emperor said that he was a liar. Kabír replied, "O Emperor, realise how great is the distance between heaven and earth. Innumerable elephants and camels may be contained in the space between the sun and the moon, and all can be seen through the pupil of the eye which is smaller than the eye of a needle." The Emperor was satisfied and let him go, but the people murmured and complained that the Emperor had disregarded their complaints. Shaikh Taqqí said that it was contrary to the teaching of the Prophet that a man who claimed Divine powers should be allowed to live, and that Kabír should suffer as Mansúr and Shams Tahrezi had suffered of old.<sup>20</sup>

The Brahmins added that he was *be-dharm* because he had associated with a woman of ill fame and Ráe Dass, the *chamár*.<sup>21</sup> Kabír told, the Emperor of his doctrine, but to no effect

(20) Both these men were Sufi saints. Mansúr was cruelly tortured and afterwards hung for saying of himself "I am the Truth". Shams-ud-dín Tahrezi was the *Marshid* (spiritual director) of Jalál-ud-dín, famous as the author of the *Masnavi*. He flourished about 1244.

(21) The *Chamárs* are workers in leather and accounted of very low caste as being associated in their work with the skins of dead animals. Several religious reformers were men of low caste; Ráe Dass was a *chamár*; Sená a barber; Dádú a cotton cleaner; Nábhájí, the author of the *Bhakt Málá* a *dom* (sweeper).

for he sided with the people and gave orders that Kabir should be put to death. Kabir was removed and made fast in chains. He was then placed on board a boat which was filled with stones. The boat sank, but Kabir re-appeared as a boy, floating down the stream on a leopard's skin.<sup>22</sup> He was again captured and now an attempt was made to burn him alive. He was locked up in a hut which was afterwards set on fire. When the flames were extinguished Kabir re-appeared in a form of great beauty. He was now accused of witchcraft and the people demanded that he should be trampled to death by an infuriated elephant. Between the elephant and Kabir there appeared a lion, at the sight of which the elephant took fright.<sup>23</sup> Finally the Emperor asked forgiveness of Kabir and expressed his willingness to undergo any punishment that he might name. To this Kabir replied that a man should sow flowers for those who had sown him thorns.

The stories so far related speak of Kabir as a resident of Kási (Benares). It is natural that his Hindu followers should wish to associate him as closely as possible with their sacred

(22) Bairagis often carry about the skin of a deer or other animal upon which they take their seat upon the ground. It is symbolic of a life spent in places apart from the haunts of men.

(23) See additional Note, "Kabir in History," under Shaikh Abdul Kabir.

city, but there is evidence both from the *Bijak* and the *Adi Granth* to show that he did not at any rate spend the whole of his life in Benares.

In the *Bijak* is found a *Ramaini* which may be interpreted thus :—

“Kabír settled for a while in Manikpur having heard of the praises of Shaiḵh Taqqi. He heard also about Ují in the district of Jaunpur. At Jhusi he heard the names of his Pírs.<sup>24</sup> He heard of twenty-one Pírs in all. They preach in the name of the Prophet. On hearing this I could not refrain from speaking. The people have looked on the shrines and gone astray. The works of Habibi (Beloved) and Nabi (Prophet) are all contrary to law (*harám*). O Shaiḵh Aqardi and Shaiḵh Saqardi, listen to my words. See the beginning as well as the end with open eyes, consider every period of the world's history.”

In the opening lines of this *Ramaini* Kabír seems to be enumerating the places which he had visited in his search for religious guidance : in the closing lines to be grieving over the thought that more honour is paid to the tombs of the dead than to the GOD in whose service their lives were spent.<sup>25</sup>

(24) His Pírs, i. e. Shaiḵh Taqqi and his father Shabán-ul-millat, who were always closely associated together.

(25) For further comments upon this *Ramaini* see Chapter II.



In the *Adi Granth* these lines are put into the mouth of Kabír,  
My Hajj is on the banks of the Gomti: where dwells my Pir, wearing a yellow robe.<sup>26</sup>

Reference is here apparently made to Jaunpur which is situated on the left or northern bank of the Gomti. Jaunpur was the capital of a famous Muhammadan (Sharqi) dynasty. Ibrahim, one of the kings of this dynasty (1412), was a great patron of Muhammadan learning, but was in this respect surpassed by Bibi Rájah, who built a magnificent Jami Mosque, a College and a Monastery. She also appropriated large sums of money for the maintenance of those learned in Theology and the Sciences. With the exception of the Mosque all these buildings were subsequently destroyed by Sikandar Lodi either on religious or political grounds.<sup>27</sup>

We gather from this quotation that Kabír was born elsewhere than in Jaunpur, but that he received religious instruction in that city.

There are many other stories connected with the life of Kabír, but we will only reproduce one more before passing on to consider the manner of his death. This story is of interest

(26) Muhammadan Pirs wear yellow garments.

(27) Jaunpur is said to be a corruption of Javanpur. *Javan* a term applied originally to the Greeks, was subsequently applied to the Muhammadans. The meaning of Jaunpur would therefore be The city of Muhammadans.

as it associates Kabír with Central India where at the present time his influence is most strongly felt.

There lived in the Deccan two brothers, Tatvá and Jivá, who were anxious to find for themselves a spiritual guide. They used religiously to wash the feet of the many Sádhus who visited their house and listened attentively to their teaching. At a loss to discover which of these Sádhus were possessed of real spiritual power they devised the following test. They planted in the courtyard of their house a withered branch of a banyán tree and agreed to accept as their Gurú that Sádhu whose power was such, that the washings of his feet would avail to restore the branch to life. For forty years they waited in vain for one who could satisfy the test and were almost in despair of ever finding the desired Gurú, when Kabír arrived upon the scene. The branch when sprinkled with the water in which his feet had been washed immediately returned to life. Kabír was accepted as their Gurú and gave utterance to these lines :—

The Sádhus are my soul and I am the body of the Sádhus : I live in the Sádhus, as rain lives in the clouds.

The Sádhus are my Atmá, and I am the life of the Sádhus : I live in the Sádhus, as *ghi* lives in the milk.

The Sádhus are my Atmá and I am the bread of the Sádhus: I live in the Sádhus as fragrance lives in the flowers.

All accounts agree that the earthly life of Kabír came to a close at Maghár in the district of Gorakhpur. We are not told whether he had ever previously visited this place, but he may possibly have done so when on a visit to Gorakh-Náth, the famous Yogi and founder of the Shivite sect that bears his name.

There are lines in the *Adi Granth* in which Kabír refers to the austerities practised by Gorakh Náth and speaks of him as having died in spite of all.<sup>28</sup>

Tradition relates that Kabír died in extreme old age, when his body had become infirm and his hands were no longer able to produce the music with which he had in younger days celebrated the praises of Rám. If he had lost the company of earthly friends he felt more closely united, than ever before, to one from whom he would never more be parted. Such appear to be the thoughts which find expression in the following lines, quoted from the *Adi Granth* ;—

Benares has been left by me and my intellect has become little : my whole life is lost in Shivpuri,

(28) Gorakh Náth and another Hindu ascetic, Muchhandar, who is more than once referred to in the *Bijak*, are also by tradition associated with Jhúsi. See Allahabad Gazetteer, p. 190.

at the time of death I have arisen and come to Maghár.

O my King, I am a Bairági and Yogí : when dying, I am not grieved, nor separated from Thee.

The mind and breath are made the drinking gourd, the fiddle is constantly prepared : the string has become firm, it does not break, unbeaten the fiddle sounds.<sup>29</sup>

Sing, sing, O bride, a beautiful song of blessing : King Rám, my husband, has come to my house.

It was the wish of his disciples that Kabír should end his days at Kási where so much of his religious work had been accomplished. All who died in Kási, they urged, would pass immediately into the presence of Rám, while those who died at Maghár would return to this world and assume the form of an ass. Kabír rebuked them for their want of faith. Is the power of Rám so limited that he cannot save his servant because he prefers to die outside Kási, the city of Shivá ?

What Kási? What Maghár? He who dies at Maghár is not dead, when Rám has taken up his abode in my heart : he who dies elsewhere puts Rám to shame.

A difficulty arose with regard to the disposal of his body after death. The Muhammadans

(29) In Kabír literature the soul of man is often compared to a string. His soul is now attuned to sing the praises of God.

desired to bury it and the Hindus to cremate it. As the rival parties discussed the question with growing warmth Kabír himself appeared and bade them raise the cloth in which the body lay enshrouded. They did as he commanded and lo! beneath the cloth there lay but a heap of flowers! Of these flowers the Hindus removed half and burnt them at Benares, while what remained were buried at Maghár by Muham-madans.<sup>30</sup>

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(30) A very similar story is told in connexion with the death of Nának. See Hughes' Dictionary of Islam, p. 598.

## ADDITIONAL NOTE.

### *Kabir in History.*

The following abstracts from standard books of reference will suffice to show that the name "Kabir" is not so rare as has sometimes been supposed. There is reason to question the accuracy of some of the dates<sup>1</sup> and reason to believe that some of Kabir's biographers, working upon the assumption that there was only one Kabir, have unhesitatingly appropriated details from the lives of several.

In *Khazinat-ul-Asfiá* (Treasury of Saints),<sup>2</sup> written by Maulvi Gulam Sarwar and published at Lahore about 1868, mentioned is made of

(1) *Kabir Chishit*, Sufi and inhabitant of Nágore who on account of ill-treatment at the hands of Muhammadans journeyed in the direction of Guj-erat and died there in 1854

(2) *Shaikh Kabir Juláha*, the disciple and successor of Shaikh Taqqi, who is described as being one of the great men of his time and a leader among Theists. He is described as the author of many Hindi writings which prove him to have

(1) Dates may have been transferred from the History of one man to that of another bearing the same name, or difficulty may have been experienced in deciphering dates written in Persian figures, without an accompanying verbal explanation.

(2) In this book Shaikh Taqqi is described as *Hayáh*, the Arabic equivalent of the Persian *Juláha*. He is said to have lived at Manikpur and to have died in 1574.

been a man of great ability. He taught the Sufi doctrine of *Wisál* (Union with God) and preserved silence with regard to the contrary doctrine of *Firáq*. (Separation). He is said to have been the first to write anything about God and his attributes in the Hindi language, and to have been the author of various Hindi poems. On account of his religious toleration he was accepted as a leader by Hindus as well as by Muhammadans and styled by the former *Pir Kabír* and by the latter *Bhagat Kabír*. The date of his death is given as 1594.

(3) *Khwájáh Auláh Kabír* who visited Bokhará and died in 1229.

(4) *Syed Kabir-ul-din Hassan* of the same family as Kabir-ud-din Ismail, who is said to have travelled three times round the world and to have lived to the age of 180. He resided at Uch in Balakh (Baluchistán) where he died in 1490.

(5) *Shaikh Kabír*, the son of Shaikh Munawar and resident of Bajaora, who is simply described as a conceited man and a victim of the opium habit.

In *Sair-ul-Aqtab* (History of Pillar Saints), written by Shaikh Allah Diya, mention is made of

(6) *Shaikh Abdul Kabír* who is said to have been a saint from his mother's womb and to have possessed a great power of foretelling events. He was known as *Shaikh Kabír* or *Bálá Pir* and inherited the priestly robe of the Sufis from his father, Abdul Quddus. He performed many miracles and by

merely shaking the sleeve of his robe was able to cause a lion to appear. He had a taste for singing and was lavish in his hospitality. He had four sons and many disciples. The king of Jaunpur, Sultan Sikandar Lodi, together with his Vizier, Bhura, and Malik Mahmúd, determined to test his powers as a saint. It was arranged that they should visit him one evening, each having previously in his own mind thought of some particular dish. If the Pír supplied the want of each he was to be regarded as a man of God. As soon as they entered his house Kabir brought a dish of venison sandwiches and placed it before the king ; to the Vizier he offered a bowl of soup and some bread and to Malik Mahmúd a dish of sweetmeats. The result was that his guests begged forgiveness for having ever called his powers in question. This Kabir died in 1539. He is said to have been succeeded by his son Shaikh Usmán, who was generally known as Zinda Pír.<sup>3</sup>

In *Mutàkhab-ul-Tawàrikh* by Mullah Abdul Qàdir of Budaon mention is made of

(7) *Shaikh Kabir*, a resident of Multán, who journeyed northwards to Balakh and returned from thence to India and travelled in the company of Akbar. Owing to exhaustion brought on by the severity of his devotions and night watches he is said to have presented the appearance of a drunkard.

(3) The name *Bálá Pír* occurs in the list of the Mahants of the Dharm Dass section of the Kabir Panth and the words *Zinda Pír* in the legend of the naming of Kabir.



Mullah Abdul Qádir himself met this saint at Fatehpur in 1585 A. D.

In *Akhbár-ul-Akhyár* mention is made of

(8) *Amir Kabir Mir Syed Ali Hámdani* who visited Kashmir in 1379 and died there five years later. After his death a dispute arose concerning the disposal of his body between the people of Kashmir, Sultan Muhammad and Shaikh Aqwam-ud-din of Badakhshan. The last named finally secured the body, but the people of Kashmir erected a cenotaph at the place where he died.

In the *Ferishta* mention is also made of

(9) Syed Ahmad Kabir, the Father of Syed Jalál-ud-din, and

(10) *Kabir-ud-din Ismail*, grandson, disciple and successor of Syed Jalál-ud-din, otherwise known as *Mahkdum Jahanian* or *Jahán Gusht Sháh* from the fact that he travelled extensively to Mecca, Balakh etc. Kabir-ud-din Ismail also travelled extensively and died in 1421.

(11) At Jaunpur there is a small Masjid, built in memory of Diván Sháh Kabir who was one of four brothers, all of whom lie buried in the same plot of ground. This Masjid, which was built during the reign of the Emperor Humayan, is situated in the Muhalla Tár Talá.

## Chapter II.

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### THE LIFE OF KABÍR (*Contd.*).

The traditional life of Kabir has a poetical beauty which in its power to commend a Muhammadan Saint to Hindù followers may be thankfully regarded as a prophecy of the greater reconciliation of conflicting faiths to which so many of us look forward. The veil that has been drawn over the first beginnings of an important religious movement we would reverently raise, trusting thereby to add additional lustre to the brave efforts of a distinguished champion of religious truth.

Prof. Wilson, the distinguished Sanskrit scholar, to whose investigations every English student of Indian religious thought owes so deep a debt of gratitude, writes of the improbability, not to say impossibility, of Kabir's having been a Muhammadan, and with no more respect does he treat Col. Malcolm's suggestion that he belonged to the Sufi sect. Later writers have been content to yield to authority and to accept as established truth the judgement of a great scholar.

Did we believe that Prof. Wilson had carefully investigated all the documents that are

now available to students, we should hardly presume to question the accuracy of his judgment, but we cannot help feeling that in the immensity of the tasks which he imposed upon himself he has overlooked some part of the evidence, or possibly too readily accepted the statements of fellow workers in the same field.

Any one who has read Prof. Wilson's account of Kabír's life would carry away the impression that Nábháji, the author of the *Bhakta Mala*, had recorded some at least of the legends which have found a place in the previous chapter. Nábháji himself, to judge from the carefully printed edition of the *Bhakta Mala* now current in India, is only responsible for the following statement :—

"Kabír refused to acknowledge caste distinctions or to recognise the authority of the six schools of Hindù philosophy, nor did he set any store by the four divisions of life (*Ashráṁ*) prescribed for Brahmins. He held that religion without Bhakti was no religion at all and that asceticism, fasting and almsgiving had no value if unaccompanied by worship (*Bhajan*, hymn singing). By means of Ramainís, Shabdas and Sákhis he imparted religious instruction to Hindus and Muhammadans alike. He had no preference for either religion, but gave teaching that was appreciated by the followers of both.

He spoke out his mind fearlessly and never made it his object merely to please his hearers."

This short account describes a man who had no great sympathy with Brahminical teaching, who believed in a personal God and in salvation by faith rather than by good works, and who delivered a message, regarded as God's message, to Hindús and Muhammadans alike.

This is all that is stated in the text, but to the text is appended a commentary written by a later hand<sup>1</sup>. In this commentary it is stated that Kabír in his desire to wear a *Khanti* round his neck and a *tilak* on his forehead (to attract a Hindú audience) made up his mind to become a disciple of Rámánand and achieved his purpose as described in the previous chapter<sup>2</sup>; that Muhammadans objected to the repetition of 'Ram, Ram,' by a co-religionist and asked Rámánand whether it were true that he had received a *julahá* as his disciple; that Rámánand at first denied that he had done so but when confronted with Kabír acknowledged his mistake. Mention is also made of the fact

(1) According to one account Nābhāji wrote his account of the *Bhagats* in Sanskrit and asked his disciple Priya Dass to provide it with a commentary. Priya made a beginning and then handed over the MS to Gobardhan Nath. Finally the commentary was completed by Narain Dass, a disciple of Gobardhan Nath and published in 1769.

(2) We gather from the legend that Kabír was received into the Rámánandi Sect as a Hindú and that trouble arose subsequently when it was discovered that he was really a Muhammadan.

that Kabír was charged before the Emperor, Sikandar Lodi, and refused on that occasion to salute the Emperor, that he was sentenced to death and was in succession thrown into the Ganges, committed to the flames and exposed to the fury of an elephant, but all to no purpose. It is added that the Emperor, thwarted in his desire to destroy Kabír, recognised that he had acted wrongly, asked Kabír's forgiveness and offered to compensate him for the injuries inflicted.

Nábhájí may have been acquainted with the legends now appended to his statement and his editor may have known of other legends not recorded, but we have no right to assume such knowledge, nor are we yet in a position to say at what time other legends gradually became current. All that we know is that such are now to be found in various writings of unknown date, but accepted as authoritative by members of the Kabír Panth.

We are inclined to accept both of the theories advanced by Col. Malcolm and to believe not only that Kabír was a Muhammadan by birth but also that he was associated with the Sufi order ; and that the great object of his life was to break down the barriers that separated Hindús from Muhammadans. We believe that in his desire to achieve this object he actually

took up his residence in Benares and associated there with the followers of Rámánand. We can well imagine that his teaching gave offence both to orthodox Muhammadans and to orthodox Hindús, and it is probable that both parties welcomed the opportunity afforded by Sikandar Lodi's visit to Jaunpur in 1495 to wait upon him with a request that he would rid them of one who despised tradition when in conflict with the truth.

Sikandar Lodi is represented by Muhammadan historians as one who was zealous for the faith and had on one occasion put to death a distinguished pandit, Jodhan by name, because he refused to allow that Islam had a monopoly of spiritual truth. Fortunately for Kabír Muhammadan rulers were wont to allow Sufis considerable license in their criticism of the faith, especially when such Sufis combined personal piety with poetical talent. When we read how the enemies of Kabír reminded the Emperor of the fate that had befallen Mansùr and Sháms Tabrezi who were both distinguished Sufi saints, we feel that they had some knowledge of this weakness and feared lest Kabír might on such grounds escape the death penalty which alone would satisfy their embittered feelings. Their fears were realised, for we gather from the legend that the Emperor con-

promised the case ; he spared the life of Kabír, but banished him from the city where his teaching had given so great offence.

That Kabír had been brought up in a Muhammadan family was probably a fact too well known to allow of contradiction. All that his Hindú followers could do was to suggest that he was not of Muhammadan origin, but only a Muhammadan by adoption. The name Kabír was also too well established to allow of any alteration. It only remained to explain its origin in a way that would commend itself to those who accepted the story of the virgin birth. Such an explanation was to be found in the fact that Al Kabír is one of the 99 names of God in use among Muhammadans. The name Kabír occurs in the Qorán six times as a title of Allah and once as a title of Al-Rabb.

The legend that calls attention to this fact presents a curious blend of Hindú and Muhammadan procedure. It is customary for Muhammadans to open a Qorán and give to the child the name on which the eye of the reader may first chance to fall ; it is customary for Hindús to bestow upon a child a name containing three words usually beginning with the same letter and so similar in sound. This name is suggested by the position of the stars at the time of birth and is known as the *Ràs* or astronomical

name. The three names, Akbar, Kubrá and Kibriyá said to have been found by the Qàzi in the Qorán are all derived from the same root KBR 'great.' Of these three names however only one, Kibriyá, is to be found in modern Qoráns. Of the three names Zinda, Khinjar and Pír, the first and third are Persian words and as such not found in the Qorán. Khinjar is probably a corruption of Khizar the name of the saint who is in the Qorán associated with Moses.

A legend containing impossible details can hardly be regarded as a literal representation of historical fact.

Muhammadan tradition asserts that Kabír had a son, Kamál by name. This name also is of Arabic origin and so a source of difficulty to those who regard Kabír as a Hindu *sádhyé*. There is a word *kammal*, a corruption of *kambal* (blanket) and in one version of the Kamál legend it is stated that Kabír caught sight of the child floating down the stream, wrapt up in a blanket and cried out, not "Kamál, Kamál" but "Kammal, Kammal."

Muhammadan tradition implies that Kabír like other Sufí leaders was a married man, but as, in accordance with Muhammadan custom, no mention is made of his wife's name, Hindús were free to supply her with a Hindi name and chose Loi which also means a blanket.



There is a possible reference to his wife in the following lines contained in the *Adi Granth*.

The first wife was ugly, of low caste, of ill-boding feature : wicked in the house of her father-in-law and in her father's house ;

The present wife is beautiful, intelligent, of auspicious features, easily child-bearing.

These lines may be interpreted to mean that Kabír had lost his wife, but found comfort in closer union with God ; or they may mean that the soul at first united with a material body rejoiced in the thought of becoming spiritually one with God.

In certain respects the legendary life of Kabír presents remarkable parallels to incidents in the life of Christ. After an account of the virgin birth we read that Kabír, as a boy, meets and worsts in argument a learned Pandit ; he is criticised for associating with the outcasts of society ; he miraculously supplies the poor with bread ; he incurs the hostility of the religious leaders of his time ; he raises from the dead a boy and a girl and is ministered to by women. The full account of his appearance before Sikandar Lodi presents in many details a striking resemblance to Christ's trial before Pilate.

The books containing these legends are of comparatively late date and the writers may

have been influenced by a desire to assimilate the life of Kabír to that of Christ.

Many of the legends, especially some which have not been mentioned in this chapter seem to have originated in a desire to explain the circumstances under which some of Kabír's best known sayings were first spoken, or to associate the memory of Kabír with persons and institutions held in special reverence by Hindûs. Several appear in different forms and nearly all contain details which must raise difficulties in the minds of all who are not overcredulous.

In the Dabistán, a Persian history, said to have been written by Mohsin Fani of Kashmir in the reign of Akbar, it is stated that Kabir was a weaver and a Muwáhíid *i.e.* a believer in one God. It is further stated that in his desire to find spiritual guidance he visited Muslim as well as Hindû sages, and finally became a disciple of Rámánand under the circumstances already recorded in this legend. Mention is also made of the following story :—

One day when certain Brahmins were expatiating on the purifying qualities of the Ganges water, Kabír filled his wooden cup with water from the river and offered it to them to drink. They were horrified at the thought of drinking out of the cup belonging to a low caste man ; upon which Kabír remarked, " If the Ganges

water cannot purify my cup, how can I believe that it can wash away my sins ? ”

The statement that Kabír was a Juláhá and Muwáhíd is confirmed by Abul Fazl and has never been contradicted. What we have to determine is the exact meaning of the statement. Hindús have assumed that Kabír in early life actually followed the profession of a weaver and have quoted his use of weaving metaphors by way of illustration. This he may have done, but we must also bear in mind that it was customary for Muhammadans of that age to attach to their personal names the name of the profession with which their family had originally been associated. The term Muwáhíd was not, so far as I can learn, ever applied by Muhammadans to those whom they regarded as idolaters. It implies that he was a Theist and not a Pantheist. The prevailing impression that Kabír was a Pantheist appears to be based upon two false assumptions, (1) that he is responsible for all the teaching given by his Hindù followers at a later age and (2) that all the statements contained in the Bijak represent his personal views. There is reason to believe that insufficient care has been taken in studying the context in which certain sayings occur; reason to fear that Kabír has been credited with the argument of Máyá whom he at all times ruthlessly condemns.

Great interest attaches to the mention of Shaikh Taqqi. According to the Hindú legends Shaikh Taqqi was the rival and opponent of Kabír, while Muhammadans regard him as his Pír. In the *Ramaini* quoted in the previous chapter there is probably a reference to two Shaikh Taqqis whom later writers have not been always careful to distinguish.

Shaikh Taqqi of Mánikpur Kará was a *najáf*, (cotton cleaner) by profession and belonged to the Chistia order of Suffis. He is said to have died at Bhandarpur in 1545 but there is probably some mistake about the date. In the *Aina Oudh* it is stated that this Shaikh Taqqi was the disciple and successor of Shaikh Nathan Dáná who himself succeeded Shaikh Khwájah Kargh and that the last named died in 1305. Shaikh Taqqi was succeeded by his son Makán who founded a village in the Fatehpur district which is called after him Makanpur. His descendants are still to be found in that and the neighbouring villages. From the statement contained in the *Ramaini* it appears that Kabír visited Mánikpúr and remained there for some time in attendance upon the Shaikh or his successors.

The Mánikpur referred to is situated on the Northern bank of the Ganges, between Fatehpur and Allahabad. It was for a short time the

Military head quarters of the Emperor Sikandar Lodi. Near Mánikpur, but on the Southern bank of the river is Kará generally known as Karà Mánikpur, at that time a city of considerable importance, the Muhammadan capital of the surrounding country Kará.

Kará Mánikpur is the head quarters of a sect, called Malúk Dássis. Members of this sect when on pilgrimage to Jagannáth are required to visit the Math of the Kabír Panthis and to receive there *Kabir ka Taráni* which consists of a piece of bread and a spoonful of sour rice water.<sup>3</sup>

At the same time it would seem that Kabir was more closely associated with Shaikh Taqqi of Jhùsi<sup>4</sup> or his successors in office. This Shaikh was the son of Shaban-ul-Millat and belonged to the Soharwardiá order of Sufis. He died in 1429 (A. H. 785) and his tomb at Jhùsi is still a place of pilgrimage.<sup>5</sup> Kabir is said to have been a young man of about 30 years of age when he first made the acquaintance of the Shaikh. At the time he desired to have as his Pir one whose hand would ever remain over

(3) Malúk Dáss is said to have been born in 1574. The Granth of this sect includes *Gyán Dipak*, *Sukh Nidán* and *Malúk Dáss ki Bhakti*. The two first are Kabir Panth writings. See Wilson, R. S. P. 102.

(4) Jhùsi stands near the confluence of the Ganges and the Jumna, in the immediate neighbourhood of Allahabad.

(5) In the *Aina Oudh* the father of Shaikh Taqqi is said to have been born in 1261.

him to protect him from all evil. Shaikh Taqqi promised to help him in this way and proved true to his word, for even in the remote regions of Balkh and Bokhára Kabír saw the protecting hand of his Pír stretched over him as that of a guardian angel.<sup>6</sup> When Kabír returned from his wanderings and repaired to Jhúsi to pay his respects to his Master he felt the pangs of hunger and asked that he might have some food. The Shaikh provided him with some vegetables, cooked rice and some skimmed milk spiced with caraway seeds. Kabír regarded these supplies as inadequate to the occasion and exclaimed :—

Ság, bhát, jirwáni máthà

Hamre Pír ke yehi hàtà.

Vegetable, rice, skimmed milk spiced with caraway :  
These things only can be had in the market of my Pír.

The Shaikh was vexed with his ingratitude and replied:—

Yih chhor aur kya khàh hai màti,

Toh upar pare che màs ki táti.

Beside this what would you eat, earth?

May six months disease come over you.

As the result of this curse Kabír for six months suffered severely from attacks of diarrhoea. He rolled on the ground in agony and the two empty water courses in which he was

(6) The people of Jhúsi were not sure that Kabír actually visited those distant lands. They thought it possible that he merely closed his eyes and visited them in imagination.

then compelled to pass his time are still to be seen, the one bearing the name of Kabir Nálá and the other that of Lotan Nálá. At the end of six months he was once more permitted to approach his Pir. He apologized for his past ingratitude and received a blessing from his Master. Kabír besought the Shaikh to bestow upon him such a blessing that he might be enabled to remove those differences of belief which separated Hindús from Muhammadans. Shaikh Taqqi regretted that this lay beyond his power, but said that he would bring it about that both Hindús and Muhammadans should regard Kabír himself with reverence. Kamal, the son of Kabír when he heard of his father's request went to Shaikh Taqqi and requested him as his Pir to release him from all further obligations to his father for he could never bring himself to look with favour upon Hindús. The Shaikh gave Kamál permission to go and settle at Jalálpur, some ten miles distant from Jhusi.

Kabír was sorrowful when he learnt of his son's determination and exclaimed,

Dubba bans Kabir kà upjà put Kámál  
The family of Kabir became extinct when his son  
Kamal was born.<sup>7</sup>

(7) A similar saying occurs in the *Adi Granth*: The progeny of Kabir dead; there was born a son Kamál. Having given up the remembrance of Hari, he has brought wealth to the house.

Previous to the mutiny there was at Jhusi a large Mosque, associated with the memory of Shaikh Taqqi and endowed with landed property, bringing in an annual income of Rs. 100,000. After the mutiny the Mosque was destroyed and the lands confiscated.<sup>8</sup>

The various allusions to persons and places contained in the Ramaini quoted in the previous chapter have been a great cause of perplexity to Hindú readers of the Bijak. Manikpur they explained as being the city of the *man* (mind). Of Uji, a village near Kharauná in the district of Jaunpur, famous of old as the residence of some distinguished Muhammadan saint, they had never heard. When the people of Jhusi were asked about the 'Ikkis Pir' (twenty one Pir) they at once made mention of the Akela Per (solitary tree), a large tree that stands alone and under which a Muhammadan saint used to take up his abode. The promptness of their reply suggested that the original text might have been emended by some Hindú who had never heard of the Akela Per. Shaikh Akardi and Shaikh Saqardi who became a still greater cause of perplexity were according to local tradition the Tujáwar or caretakers of Shaikh Taqqi's shrine, who were regarded by

(8) Most of the information concerning Jhusi traditions was supplied by Shah Fida Hussain, Government Pensioner, resident in Jhusi.



the people with so great respect that they were popularly known as Shaikhhs.

We have probably written enough to show that it is not impossible that Kabír should have been both a Muhammadan and a Sufi. The picture of Kabír which forms the frontispiece of this volume and which is more likely to have been painted by a Hindú than by a Muhammadan represents him as having Muhammadan features, and his grave at Maghar has always been in the keeping of Muhammadans. That a Muhammadan should have been the Father of Hindi literature may indeed be a cause of surprise, but it must not be forgotten that Hindus also have gained distinction as writers of Persian poetry. Kabír, moreover, was a man of no ordinary ability and determination, and the purpose of his life was to get his message accepted by those who were best reached through the Hindi language.

### Chapter III.

#### THE TEACHING OF KABIR.

In the days of Kabir the power of the Brahmins was very great. As some would express it, the whole land was overcast by the dark clouds of priestcraft and sacerdotalism. Brahmanism, invigorated by its triumph over Buddhism, asserted its authority over all, until the Muhammadans invaded the country and gradually extended their influence throughout Northern India. Then people saw that there were men whose views about religion were radically different from those of their own Pandits; they became acquainted with men who were only with difficulty restrained on political grounds from exterminating all who refused to acquiesce in their own religious beliefs.

We are not in a position to say how far religious thinkers were encouraged by the presence of Muhammadans to give expression to the thoughts of their hearts, but there is no doubt that the presence of the followers of Islam stimulated thought on such subjects as caste, spiritual birth and the personality of God. Among the Muhammadans none were more ready than the Sufis to recognise the good in

every form of belief and to dwell upon the love of God towards all his creatures.

Before considering the character of Kabir's teaching we have first to determine what his teaching was. It seems probable that the teaching of Kabir was delivered orally and not reduced to writing till a later age. The earliest writings in which his teaching is recorded are the Bijak and the Adi Granth. It is probable that neither of these books was composed till at least fifty years after the death of Kabir, and they can hardly be regarded as retaining in all passages the actual words of the teacher, much less such words without additions.

Though it is inadvisable to express any definite opinion on such a subject, until the contents of the Bijak have been carefully examined and compared with the productions of a later age, yet there is reason to believe that the teaching of Kabir has gradually become more and more Hindu in form. At any rate we have no right to assume that the teaching of Kabir was identical with that given at the present time by the Mahants of the Panth that bears his name.

So far the contents of the Bijak have only been made known in part, and all who have studied the book allow that it contains many passages that are practically unintelligible to us of a later age, dark riddles which they are un-

able to interpret. An exposition of teaching which is based upon a selection from selections, must of necessity be defective ; and may possibly be misleading, if regarded as an interpretation of the whole. A mind influenced by Christian thought is naturally inclined to dwell upon teaching that seems to have affinity with truths that it is in a position to appreciate. Passages which to the original teacher may have seemed no less important are hurriedly passed over because the reader through lack of knowledge is unable to estimate their value.

Bearing in mind these limitations we will proceed to examine the teaching of Kabír as illustrated by quotations from the *Bijak* and the *Adi Granth*.<sup>1</sup> We shall meet with teaching which will immediately call to mind passages of Scripture ;<sup>2</sup> we shall meet with condemnations of falsehood which, as regards directness of speech, should amply satisfy the feelings of the most militant type of Missionary. We shall admire the Teacher, alike for his sincerity and his courage.

#### THE WORLD AND RELIGION.

There are men who live in the world as though it were their permanent abode ; men

(1) See Additional Note on *Bijak*.

(2) To those who have a knowledge of the subject the references to Sufi teaching will probably appear to be very numerous.

who take thought for the body and pay heed to its desires, as though it were a permanent possession ; men who accumulate riches as though they were free from the thralldom of death. Such men will never obtain true happiness, nor will they unravel the knots by which they are bound, until they look to God for help. He who would know God must die to the world. God is a jealous God who loves not those who entertain in their hearts love for another god. Man cannot serve God and mammon. Only those who give their entire heart to God will realise their true self. The knowledge of God is as a precious diamond, recognised only by those who are spiritually minded. The true servants of God are few in number, and to the worldly minded seem as men who are beside themselves.

All who live in this world are liable to temptation ; the black snake coils itself round the sandal tree. The poison of the snake received into the body works corruption and issues in death. Those alone escape who place their trust in God.

Selfishness and pride of intellect are the enemies of spiritual development.<sup>3</sup> Those only see God who have a forgiving spirit. The strug-

(3) Kabir's condemnation of pride and commendation of humility are much more in accordance with the teaching of Sufi Saints than with the practice of Hindu pandits.

gle against evil is hard to maintain, but slothfulness is fatal. The opportunity lost may not recur. *Now* is the time to prepare for the journey that lies before us.

*Illustrations.*

(1). We are idols of clay, to which the name of man is given ; we are guests of four days, in a very great pit of fuel is our place. G.<sup>4</sup>

(2). The physician has died, the sick man has died, the whole world has died ; One, O Kabir, has not died, for whom is no weeper. G.

(3). O man, thou hast a precious body indeed. Thy flesh is not used. No ornaments are made of thy bones ; no drums are mounted with thy leather. B.

(4). Man in this world is wholly sinful from his very birth, and there are many ready to claim his body. The parents say, "He is our child and we have nourished him for our own benefit." The wife says, "He is my husband," and like a tigress wishes to seize him. The children gaze at him, and like the god of death, keep their mouths wide open for support. The vulture and the crow look forward to his death. The pigs and the dogs wait on the road for his bier to pass on its way to the burning ghat. The fire says, "I shall not leave him, until he is utterly consumed." The earth says, 'I shall obtain him.' The wind thinks of carrying him off. O ignorant people, you speak of this body as

(4) G indicates a quotation from the *Adi Granth* ; B a quotation from the *Bijak*.

your house; do you not see that a hundred enemies hang about your throat. Beguiled by the illusion of this world, you regard such a body as your own. So many desire a share in your body that you will live in trouble all your life. O madmen, you do not wake up to a knowledge of this, but repeatedly say, 'It is mine, it is mine.' B.

(5). Adding kauri to kauri he brings together lakhs and crores.

At the time of departure he gets nothing at all, even his *langoti* is plucked away from him. G.

(6). To the miser wealth is given for the sake of keeping it. The fool says, 'The property is mine.'

When the staff of Yama strikes his head, the matter is decided in a moment. G.

(7). Immense riches and a kingdom which extends from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof could not equal the pleasure arising out of devotion (to God). Of what use then is wealth? B.

(8). Fire does not burn it, the wind does not carry it away, no thief comes near it; collect the wealth of the name of Rám, that wealth is never lost. G.

(9). For gold he is not obtained, Rám is obtained for the price of the heart. G.

(10). Without devotion life is spent to no purpose; without worshipping the Lord in the society of the pious, happiness remains in none. G.

(11) The poor soul of man is tied to this world with many knots. It cannot unloose itself without the help of God. B.

(12) He (God) whom you seek, is near you. He is always near to his devotees and far from those who do not worship Him. B.

(13) Kabír says, Where shall I find a supremely loving saint who will give pleasure, destroy pain and remove all stains of sin? B.

(14) Who whilst living, goes on dying, he lives again; in this wise he is absorbed in space; he who remains in the darkness, unaffected by the darkness, is no more thrown into the sea of existence. G.

(15) Now my mind on the contrary has become eternal; then the mind is known, when one dies when living. G.

(16) At the bank of a river and at a Tirthá there is no reassurance for the mind of him who is clinging to light ways. G.

(17) What is muttering, what austerity, what vows and worship to him in whose heart there is another love? G.

(18) What is muttering, what austerity and control of the passions, what vows and ablutions; so long as the right, loving worship of the Lord is not known? G.

(19) In the heart there is a looking-glass, the face is not seen in it; then only you will see the face when the doubleness of the heart is removed. B.



(20) The pure diamond is sold for plates of gold. He who knows not its value, what will he do with it? B.

(21) The diamond was lying on the road, besmeared with ashes : many in their ignorance passed it by, but the diamond specialist picked it up. B.

(22) Pearls are scattered on the road ; the blind draw near and depart ; without the light of the Lord, the world passes them by. G.

(23) The black snake is in the heart. It has deposited venom in the souls of all ; the few who sincerely worship the true God, will be saved. B.

(24) Why should one suffer a dog to listen to the *Smritis*? why should one sing the praises of Hari in the presence of a *Sakat*? that Rám, Rám is contained in all should on no account be told to a *Sakat* ; why should one suffer a crow to feed on camphor? why should one give a black snake milk to drink? the instruction of the foolish is waste of knowledge ; a maund of soap cannot wash charcoal white. G.

(25) Sandal, restrain thy fragrance, on thy account the wood is cut down ; the living slay the living and regard only the dead. B.

(26) He is naturally called drunk, who is drinking the juice of Rám and meditating on Divine knowledge. G.

(27) If one take nectar and besprinkle a *nim* tree, its nature does not leave it, says Kabír. G.

(28) Venomous snakes have twined round the

sandal tree. What can the sandal do? in every pore venom has soaked in, where shall nectar enter? B.

(29) The snake of separation has attached itself to the body, and darted its fangs into the heart. Into the body of the Sadhu it finds no admission : prepare yourself for what may happen. B.

(30) In the small pond, O fish, the net is spread by the fisherman ; in this small pond thou wilt not escape, think again of the ocean. G.

(31) The pride of intellect is manifold, now a swindler, now a thief ; now a liar, now a murderer ; men, sages and gods have run after it in vain ; its mansion has a hundred gates. B.

(32) In pride there is adversity, in sin there is suffering ; in kindness there is stability, and in forgiveness there is God. B.

(33) Unless you have a forgiving spirit, you will not see God. You may speechify as much as you like, but without a forgiving nature you will never reach Him. B.

(34) He who enters into intimacy with the highest light, he subdues the five senses. Religious merit and demerit, both he discards. G.

(35) What thou art doing tomorrow, do now ; what thou art doing now, do at once : afterwards nothing will be done, when death comes on thy head. G.

(36) Now is the time to prepare, henceforth the path is difficult ; the travellers all hasten to purchase, where there is neither trade nor market. B.

(37) The righteous man does not give up his piety, though he meet with crores of wicked persons : even as the sandal tree is not deprived of its cooling properties though venomous snakes twine round it. B.

(38). With the *Sakat* company should not be kept, one should flee far from him ; if a black vessel is touched, some stain is received. G.

#### RELIGION IN LIFE.

God is one ; how has it come about that there are many religions ? All men are of one blood ; how comes it about that they are separated by religion and by caste ? God is one ; the Hindus are therefore at fault in their worship of many gods. These are in truth the creation of *Máyá* ; they have their origin in sin and are themselves the cause of sin in others.

Muhammadans put their trust in circumcision, Hindus adore the Vedás and the beauties of Nature. The things which are seen are transitory. True worship should have as its object the unseen source of all truth, the unseen Creator of the universe.

The Hindus bathe in sacred streams, go on pilgrimage to sacred places, bow down to images of brass and stone, and think that in so doing they are honouring God. In this they are mistaken. What God desires is purity of heart ;

to rest in symbols that should lead men on to God is to be guilty of idolatry.

Hindús and Muhammadans alike profess to fast, but curb not the desires of the flesh ; they praise God with their lips, but their hearts are far from Him. All such religion is vain.

Muhammadans repeat prayers and texts of scripture which they cannot understand ; Hindús believe in gods who destroy men, sport with milkmaids and assume the form of animals. All such religion is vain.

Vain too are the distinctions of caste. All shades of colour are but broken arcs of light, all varieties in human nature are but fragments of true humanity. The right to approach God is not the monopoly of Brahmins but is freely granted to all who are characterised by sincerity of heart. He who reflects on Brahm is rightly called a Brahmin. The distinctions observed by Hindús are merely productive of that pride which God abhors. The rules regarding impurity deal merely with externals and cleanse not the thoughts of the heart.

Hindús believe in transmigration. If they would be free from the trials of this world, let them meditate on the Supreme and attend the courts of His temple.

Above all things let men speak and practise the truth. Suffer all men to worship God ac-

cording to their convictions. Be not the slaves of tradition and love not controversy for its own sake. Fear not to walk upon unbeaten tracks, if such tracks bring you near to Him who is the truth.

Men are saved by faith and not by works. None can understand the mind of God ; put your trust in Him ; let Him do what seemeth Him good. Spiritual joy is felt, though it cannot be expressed in words. To set forth the glory of God is a task beyond the powers of human language. Those who put their trust in God are no longer subject to fear. Perfect love casteth out fear.

*Illustrations.*

(39) God, light, sound and one woman ; from these have sprung Harí, Brahma and Tripurari. Innumerable are emblems of Shiva and Bhavání, which they have established, but they know not their own beginning nor end. A dwelling has been prepared for them : Hari, Brahmá and Shiva are the three headmen and each has his own village. B.

(40) I and you are of one blood, and one life animates us both ; from one mother is the world born ; what knowledge is this which makes us separate ? B.

(41) All have come from the same country and have landed at one ghat, but the evil influences of this world have divided us into innumerable sects. B.

(42) From whence have Hindus and Turks come? By whom have these ways been started? Having searched and reflected in thy mind tell me. By whom have Paradise and Hell been made? G.

(43) By force and love circumcision is made: I shall not agree to it, O brother. If God will make me a Turk by him will I be circumcised: if a man becomes a Turk by being circumcised, what shall be done with a woman? She must remain a Hindu. G.

(44) If your *Khuda* wished circumcision, he would have sent you circumcised into the world. If by circumcision you become a Muhammadan in that case what should you do with your women. A woman is said to be the half of man; being so, would she remain a Hindu? If by wearing the sacred thread a man becomes a Brahmin then what do your women wear? They by birth are Shudrins, why should you being a *Pande* take the meal placed by them before you? Whence have the Hindus and Muhammadans come? Who has started these religious systems. Think well in your hearts who has obtained heaven. O mad man, give up the illusion of this world. O brethren, you resist (the warnings of conscience.) Kabir is on the road to God and is marching on to his end, forsaking all partial views. B

(45) Is Brahma great, or he by whom he is produced? Is the Veda great or he from whom it is come? G.

(46) What thou seest, that is passing away: whom thou dost not see, on him continue to reflect.

When in the tenth gate the key is given: then the sight of the merciful one is obtained. G.

(47) A well-made picture is of high value: leave the picture and think of the painter. B.

Variously coloured is this immense world: leaving the picture, keep the painter in thy thoughts. G.

(48) O Saints, the world has gone mad; if I tell the truth it comes down upon me to kill me, but believes a lie. I have seen the devout and the pious who regularly bathe in the mornings. They forsake God and worship stones; in them there is no wisdom.....They have commenced to worship brass and stones and are proud of their pilgrimages. They wear garlands, caps and frontal marks and chhaps on their arms, and engage in singing the praises of their gods; they have forsaken God." B.

(49) The beads are of wood, the gods of stone, the Ganges and the Jumna are water. Râma and Krishna are dead. The four Vedâs are fictitious stories. B.

(50) If by worshipping stones one can find God, I shall worship a mountain: better than these stones (idols) are the stones of the flour mill with which men grind their corn. B.

(51) Although I entreat much, even falling at their feet, with tears in my eyes, the Hindus do not forsake idol-worship and the Muhammadans are too stiff-necked to hear anything. B.

(52) For the sake of bathing, there are many Tirthâs, O foolish mind; for the sake of worshipping

there are many idols. Kabir says, No emancipation is thus obtained, emancipation is in the service of Hari. G

(53) If by immersion in the water salvation be obtained, the frogs bathe continually. As the frogs, so are these men, again and again they fall into the womb. G.

(54) A stone is shaped by the hammer and formed into an image, with breasts and feet ; If this image be true, then it will eat the hammer. G.

(55) Kabir says, I am completely at a loss ; Is the Tirthà great or the servant of Hari? G.

(56) As long as the sun does not rise the stars sparkle ; so as long as perfect knowledge (of God) is not obtained men practice ritualism. B.

(57) The water is near but the cattle do not drink in wading through it. By continually remembering Hari water issues. That water is pure, says Kabir. G.

(58) Within his heart is filthiness ; though he bathe at a Tirthà, he will not go to Paradise. By the belief of the people nothing is effected, Rām is not ignorant. G.

(59) The Hindus fast on the 11th of the light half of each month for singhára (a sort of fruit) and milk. They give up food during the day, but do not curb the evil passions of their heart and take meat. The Muhammadans keep fasts, repeat the *namáz* and (early in the morning) cry aloud "Bismil"



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like the crowing of a cock.....Kabir says, "O saints do not call on Râma or Khudâ." B.

(60) O Moulvi, what books are you explaining? Although day and night you remain babbling and jabbering you have not found out the one (true) religion. B.

(61) All have exclaimed, Master, Master, but to me this doubt arises; How can they sit down with the Master, whom they do not know? G.

(62) The mind knows everything and knowingly commits vices; what is the good of the lamp, if with it in his hand a man falls into the well? G.

(63) Follow the true Sâhib (God) who will uphold you in all your trials. He was not born in Dasrath's family and did not oppress the king of Lankâ. Jasodâ did not fondle him in her lap and he did not enter the womb of Devâkî. He did not ravage the world. He did not descend into *Pâtâl* to deceive Bali. He did not fight with King Bali nor did he kill Hiranyaksh, throwing him down on the ground. He did not assume the form of a boar nor did he destroy the Kshattriyas. He did not hold the Gobar Dhana on the tip of his fingers nor did he remain in the jungle with the milkmaids (of *Muttra* and *Brindaban*). He is neither *shalgrâmâ*, nor any other stone; he is not fish, nor tortoise, dwellers in the water. He died not at *Dwarâwati* nor was his corpse buried at *Jagannâth*. Kabîr proclaims, let none follow such teachings; he whom

they believe to be of gross and material elements is of subtle principles. B.

(64) Brahma is dead with Shiva who lived in Kāshi; the immortals are dead. In Muttra Krishna, the milkman, died. The ten incarnations are dead. Machhindra Nāth, Gorakh, Dattātreyā and Vyās are no longer living. Kabir says, with a loud voice; "All these persons have fallen into the slip-knot of death." B.

(65) Whilst dwelling in the womb, there is no clan nor caste; from the seed of Brahm the whole creation is made.

Say, O Pandit, When were the Brahmins made; by saying, "I am a Brahmin," thy life and religion are lost.

If thou art a Brahmin born of a Brahmin woman; why hast thou not come in another way?

Whose art thou, the Brahmin? Whose am I, the Sudrā; whose blood am I? whose milk art thou?

Kabir says, Who reflects on Brahm, he by me is called a Brahmin. G.

(66) Colour proceeds from colour, yet behold all are but one; of what colour then is life? Think well of this. G.

(67) By the touch of others you Brahmins consider yourselves polluted. Let me ask you, who is lower than you? You are puffed up with pride. Great pride never produces any good. How will he who is called the vanquisher of the proud bear with your pride?

62 THE TEACHING OF KABÍR.

(68) There is impurity in water, impurity in earth; there is impurity at the time of birth, there is impurity in the hour of death, there is impurity in destruction (corruption of the body ?)

In the eyes is impurity, in the speech is impurity and in the ears impurity.

In rising and sitting impurity clings to man, impurity falls into the food.

The way of ensnaring every one knows, but few only the way of escape.

Kabir says, those who reflect in their heart on Rám, in them no impurity is found. G.

(69) As fixed and movable things, as worms and moths, in many and various ways have we been born.

Many such houses will be inhabited by us, till at length we return to the womb of Rám. G.

(70) Having wandered through the 84 lakhs of wombs he has come into the world ; now having gone out of the body he has no spot nor place. G.

(71) Kabir says, Meditate thou on the Supreme. Go to his house, that thou come not again. G.

(72) Clear away the pain of birth and death, the pleasure of works, that the soul may be liberated from rebirth. G.

(73) To be truthful is best of all, if the heart be truthful. A man may speak as much as he likes : but there is no pleasure apart from truthfulness. B.

(74) He who has no check upon his tongue, no truth in his heart : with such a one keep

not company. He will kill you on the highway. B.

(75) No act of devotion can equal truth ; no crime is so heinous as falsehood ; in the heart where truth abides, there is my abode. G.

(76) If you are a true dealer, open the market of veracity ; keep clean your inward man, and repel oppression to a distance. G.

(77) Put a check upon the the tongue ; speak not much ; associate with the wise ; investigate the words of the teacher. G.

(78) Let truth be your rate of interest, and fix it in your heart ; a real diamond should be purchased ; the mock gem is waste of capital. G.

(79) I have examined the religious doctrines of Muhammadans and Hindús. They do not lay aside their bigotry for the sake of relish for their tongues. B.

(80) Kabír cries aloud to his fellows, "Ascend the sandal ridge ; whether there be a road prepared or not, what matters it to me ?" G.

(81) O God, thou knowest thine own movements, I have no power to know them. Kabír says, "In this the world has erred and has been led into doubt." B.

(82) Thy name is my support, as the flower will grow out of the lotus stalk. Kabír says, I am the slave of thy house, vivify or kill me, as it pleases thee G.

(83) As many as are making efforts, they are drowned ; the ocean is not crossed by them.

64 THE TEACHING OF KABÍR.

Though they be performing works, and many abstinences, their mind is burnt by egotism. G.

(84) Kabír says, I am a sacrifice to my own Gurú, by whom I remain in connexion with the society of the pious. G.

(85) O Madhava, my thirst for water does not cease ; in drinking the water the fire increases still more.

Thou art the ocean, I am the fish of the water ; I dwell in the water ; without the water, I am done for. G.

(86) In me there is nothing mine ; whatever there is, that is thine. In entrusting what is thine to thee, what remains mine ? G.

(87) If a dumb person eats molasses, what can he say about it when questioned ? G.

(88) If I make the seven oceans ink, if I make the trees my pen, if I make the earth the paper, the glory of Harí cannot be written ? G.

(89) If fear of God springs up, fear goes ; then fear is absorbed in the fear of God.

If the fear of God subsides, then fear again cleaves to man ; when a man loses the fear of God, fear springs up in his heart ; he dies. G.

(90) Where the fearless one is, there is no fear, where fear is, there Harí is not ; Kabír says, having reflected in his mind ; "Hear this, O ye saints." G.

(91) On the day on which I died, on that day joy sprang up. The Lord met with me, Govind honours his own companion. G.

(92) Death of which the world is afraid, is joy to my mind ; by death the full perfect joy is obtained. G.

### THE WAY TO GOD.

Kabir was a great believer in quiet reflection as a means of approach to God.

He recognised that the ancient scriptures of both Muhammadans and Hindûs were of a certain value, but felt that their value had been greatly overestimated.

Through the understanding of the heart and mind man becomes conscious of God's existence. Thoughts and feelings are expressed in words, words are composed of letters. All that is of use in communicating to man a knowledge of God has a significance that may well be regarded as sacred. What is multiform now will hereafter be seen to be single. The 52 letters<sup>5</sup> will give place to the one letter which denotes man's union with God. The revelation of God, given in Rám, surpasses all other revelations in simplicity and purity, but the unity of Truth has not as yet been fully apprehended.

Through his own powers man cannot attain to a knowledge of God; but God will reveal Himself to those who listen to his voice. He

(5) Kabir probably reckoned that there were 52 consonants in Sanskrit and Arabic, the sacred languages of Hindûs and Muhammadans.

alone overcomes doubts and truly lives who has welcomed this message in his heart.

Strange and sad it seems to those who have experienced a knowledge of the Truth that men should be content to grope on still in darkness.

Men are not equally endowed with spiritual insight. The mass of men must seek guidance of those who have, through a knowledge of God, discovered for themselves the way. The Hindus trust in vain to those who wear the symbol of sacrifice while they lead lives of pride and self-indulgence. Helmsmen of this kind will never bring the boat to the haven where it should be. Others there are who practise all kinds of austerities, but mistaking the means for the end find not the true path. Those who escape not themselves from death, are unable to impart to others the gift of life.

The true guide is one whose love is fixed on God; who recognises his own worthlessness apart from God; who lives for others and god-like himself has entered into life. For such a one death has lost its terrors. He is the true ascetic and walks in the path of life.

*Illustrations.*

(93) O Qāzi, What book is expounded by thee; all such as are pondering on the book are killed; no one has obtained true knowledge; give up the book, adore Rām, O foolish one; thou art practis-

ing heavy oppression. Kabir puts his trust on Ràm; the Turks are consumed and defeated.

(94) Thou expoundest the book right that Allah is no woman or man; but by reading and perusing nothing is effected, when there is no information in the heart. G.

(95) By the Turk God is known from worship, by the Hindù from the Veda and Puranas; in order to form the mind divine knowledge should be read to some extent. G.

(96) Thou shouldst ride on thy own reflection; thou shouldst put thy foot into the stirrup of tranquility of mind. Kabir says, Those are good riders who keep aloof from the Veda and Qoran. G.

(97) I know that reading is good, but better than reading is meditation; the attachment to Ràm I do not give up, though people revile me. G.

(98) The 52 letters are joined together by me, but I am not able to know one letter; Kabir tells the word of the true one; who becomes a Pandit, he remains fearless.

The profession of the Pandit is for the sake of the people; he who is skilled in divine knowledge, he reflects the truth. In whose heart such an understanding is; he will know it, says Kabir. G.

(99) Remove doubt, put aside the paper; having investigated the 52 letters apply thy mind to the feet of Hari. G.



(100) As the stars at dawn pass away, so the world passes away; these two letters (Rām) do not pass away, them Kabir has seized. G.

(101) There are many words and there is a great difference between them: accept the true word. Kabir says he who has found the true word, has no pleasure in this life. B.

(102) My word is of the word; hear it, go not astray; if man wishes to know the truth, let him investigate the word. G.

(103) By the power of the word the sin of this world is destroyed. The word makes kings forsake their kingdoms. He who has investigated the word has done his work well. B.

(104) Without hearing the word it is utter darkness; say, whither shall anyone go; without finding the gateway of the word, man will ever be astray. G.

(105) Without the word the Shāstras are blind. Say whither shall one go? They do not find the gateway of the word but grope on still in darkness. B.

(106) There are many words, but take the pith of them; he who takes not the essence, says Kabir, will live a profitless life. G.

(107) Doubt has triumphed over the whole world. No one has overcome it. He who finds out the word will overcome it. B.

(108) Think whence the world has come and where has it established itself. Kabir says, I am a

lover of the word which has shown me the unseen (God). B.

(109) I have wept for this world but no one has wept with me; he alone will weep with me who understood the word. B.

(110) All speak of God, but to me this doubt arises, how can they sit down with God whom they do not know? B.

(111) Thou pasturest us, never bringing us to the other side; Thou art a Brahmin, I am a weaver of Kāshi, understand my divine knowledge. Thou petitionest Kings and Rājās, my meditation is with Hari. G.

(112) The jogis, ascetics, austere devotees and Sānyasis wander about at many Tirthas; those with plucked out hair, those with munj cord, the silent ones, those who are wearing plaited hair, all are dying at the end; the Tantras are attended to by them, but not Rām; on whose tongue is put the name of Rām. What can Yāmā do to him? The Shastras, Vedas, astrology and many, many grammars they know; they know the Tantras, Mantras and all medicines, yet at the end they must die; they enjoy dominion, an umbrella and many beautiful women; betel, camphor, perfume and sandal, yet at the end they must die; all the Vedas, Puranas and Smritis are searched by them but in no wise are they spared; Kabír says, Utter Rām, he extinguishes birth and death. G.

(113) "The Pundits are in error by reading the Vedas. They have no common sense. They daily go through their morning and evening rites and other ceremonies with great punctuality and regularity. They have caused the Gayatri to be read and repeated in the four yugs; ask them who has obtained freedom from sin by doing so? They consider themselves polluted by the touch or others: ask them who is lower than they are?" B.

(114) Who wear dhotis of three yards and a half and three fold cords; on whose necks are rosaries, and in whose hands are white lotas; these cheats of Benares are not called the Saints of Hari Having scoured the vessels they put them on, having washed the wood they light it; digging out the earth they make two fire places, but eat whole men. G.

(115) If by wandering about naked union with Harí be obtained; then every deer of the forest will become emancipated.

What are the naked? What are those with skins? When they do not know the Supreme ?

If by shaving the head, perfection is obtained; the sheep is emancipated, no one is lost.

Kabir says, Hear, O man and brother; without the name of Rám no one has obtained salvation. G.

(116) In our house the string of the body is continually stretched out; on thy breast is a sacrificial thread; Thou readest the Veda and Gyatri; in our heart dwells Govind.

On my tongue is Vishnú, in my eyes Narayan,  
in my heart dwells Govind; when at the gate of  
Yámá he will ask thee, O fool, What wilt thou say  
to Mukand?

We are the cattle, thou art the cowherd, O  
Lord, who art our keeper through the several births

(117) What can he do whose teacher is blind?  
The blind pushes the blind and both fall into a  
well. B.

(118) How is it possible to reach the city when  
the guide cannot point out the road; when the boat  
is crazy, how shall the passengers get clear of the  
ghat? G.

(119) The man who fixes his love on the true  
teacher is contained in him. They could not be  
separated they have two bodies but one spirit. B.

(120) I am the worst of all, every one is good  
except me; who considers himself in this light, he  
is my friend. G.

(121) The tree bears not fruit for itself, nor  
for itself does the stream collect its waters; for the  
benefit of others alone does the sage assume a bodily  
shape. G.

(122) The body is wounded by a spear; the  
head is broken off and left in the flesh; it cannot be  
extracted without the loadstone; a thousand other  
stones are of no avail. G.

(123) From heaven and hell I am freed by the  
favour of the true Gurú; I remain in the wave of  
the lotus foot at the end and the beginning. G.

(124) In this society thou wilt not die; if thou knowest his order, thou wilt be united with the Lord. G.

(125) Death, by which the whole world is frightened; that death is lighted up by the word of the Gurú. G.

(126) Making divine knowledge and meditation his patched quilt, and the word the needle, he puts the thread into the head of the needle; making the five elements his deer-skin he walks in the way of the Gurú. G.

## ADDITIONAL NOTES.

### *The Bijak.*

The *Bijak* (Account Book or Invoice) is recognised as the authoritative exposition of Kabír's teaching. It was probably produced about 1570, or some 20 years before the teaching of Nának was embodied in the *Adi Granth* by Gurú Arjun, the fifth Gurú of the Sikh Community. Most of the sayings attributed to Kabír in the *Adi Granth* are also to be found in the *Bijak*, though the editor of the *Granth* has not scrupled to re-arrange the subject matter.

There are several printed editions of the *Bijak*. The two best known editions are both supplied with a commentary, the one by Maharajah Bishwa Nath Singh of Rewah\* and the other by Baba Puran Dass. The former edition has been printed at Benares, Lucknow and Bombay, and also without the commentary at Gaya; the latter at Lucknow and Allahabad (1905). Of the former it is said that "the editor has tried to expound the *Saguna Upasana* of Ráma through the teaching of Kabír, where by the term *Saguna Upasana* is meant the religious contemplation of Ráma as the embodiment of all good

\*In the life of Kabir by Munshi Mohan Lall, Kayasth of Lucknow, a work which is largely based upon Anurag Sagar, it is stated that Kabir visited Turkistan and on his return spent some time with the Maharajah of Rewah by whom he was most hospitably received. In return for kindness received Kabir promised the Maharajah who at the time was childless that his descendants should sit upon his throne for 42 generations.

qualities." This edition is not well thought of by Kabir Panthis. The author of the second Commentary, Baba Puran Dass, lived at Nagjhari, in the district of Burhanpur, C. P., and flourished about 1837.

The Rev. Prem Chand of the Baptist Mission, Monghyr, had another edition printed in Calcutta in 1890. The editor of this edition writes:—

"Some thirty years ago I was lent a manuscript copy of the *Bijak*, taken from the Murshidabad edition. This I had copied out and afterwards compared my copy with others from different parts of the country. I found in these a certain number of *Dohas* (couplets) which were not in my copy and these I had printed at the end of the book. The other poetical pieces were the same in all editions. I corrected various clerical errors and separated words which had been allowed to run into one another and added a few foot-notes to make the meaning clear to any ordinary Hindi scholar."

This edition contains 83 *Ramaini*, 113 *Shabda*, 33 hymns of various kinds and 364 *Sakhis*. To these have been added 60 *Sakhis* found in other editions.

The Rev. Ahmad Shah in the translation of the *Bijak* that he has now in hand will probably throw additional light on literary problems connected with this book.

*The Doctrine of Shabda (Word.)*

A doctrine which might be so described is taught in many of the Hindu religious sects, but it is not

easy to determine in each particular case either the origin or character of this teaching.

In the writings of Kabir three thoughts seem to underlie such teaching (1) All thought is expressed in language, (2) Every letter of the alphabet, as a constituent part of language, has significance, and (3) The plurality of letters and words now in use will appear as one, when the *Máyà* that deludes men in their present condition shall have been overcome. The two-lettered *Rám* seems to Kabir the nearest approach in this world to the unity of Truth or the letterless one.

A distinguished Sanskrit scholar explained to me the Hindù conception of *Shabda* somewhat in this way. Man desires knowledge. Knowledge is obtainable by means of (1) Perception and (2) Inference. These two channels are acknowledged by all and to them are added by some (3) *Shabda*, sound (including the voice of the teacher?) and (4) *Upa-ram* or reasoning by analogy.

By Mimansists all verbal information is regarded as authoritative in itself, unless it can be shown to be derived from a corrupt source. Those who deny that the Vedàs are eternal or self-derived should prove that the source from which they are derived is tainted. The Mimansists do not believe in a personal God but there are others who accept this teaching and also believe in the personality of God. Such regard the Vedas as a God-given revelation.



The term *Shabda* does not occur in the Vedās, but in one Hymn *Vak* (Speech) is personified.

For further information this scholar referred me to the third volume of John Muir's Original Sanskrit Texts, which deals with the Vedās, their origin, inspiration and authority.

It is not improbable that this doctrine, as set forth in the literature of the Kabir Panth has been influenced by the writings of St. John, as is confessedly the case as regards the teaching of the Rādhi Swāmi Sect of modern origin. In the Hindi translation of the New Testament Logos (Word) is represented by *Bachan* and not by *Shabda*.

## Chapter. IV

### SÁKHIS ATTRIBUTED TO KABÍR.

All Kabír Panthis have at their command a considerable number of Sákhis or rhyming couplets, bearing witness to the truth.<sup>1</sup> The rhythm of many of these is very fine, with the result that important teaching given in this form is easily remembered.

It is not at all likely that all the Sákhis attributed to Kabír were really uttered by him, but most of them are in substance consistent with teaching to be met with in the Bijak. A good linguist would probably, on linguistic grounds, reject many as of later origin.<sup>2</sup>

Many of the Sákhis embody teaching such as was current among Sufís and embodied in Persian poetry. Some suggest verses of the Bible or Qorán, some in a slightly different form have been attributed to other authors and may be regarded as expressing truths generally current in the country. We may safely credit Kabír with a considerable amount of originality

(1) Sakhi is the corruption of a Sanskrit word meaning evidence.

(2) For the benefit of Hindí scholars this collection of Sakhis has also been printed in the original Hindí. A collection of 2,500 Kabír Sakhis has been published at the Advocate Press, Lucknow, price One Rupee.

and, even where originality seems unlikely, feel grateful to him for the genius with which he has given expression to old thoughts.<sup>3</sup>

In making this selection I have been guided by the judgement of Kabír Panthis and also by own judgement as regards the subject matter and the rhythm of the original. I have allowed a certain number of Sákhis to retain their place in this collection in spite of the fact that they have been previously quoted.

(1) My Lord's a store supplier great, in merchandise he deals; nor beams nor scales, in his own hands this great world weighs and feels.  
*Fallon.*

Sháms Tabrez wrote :—

Who is that person who weighs and distributes without scales or measure, yet his measuring and distribution is correct ?

(2) He who made the whole world, that Gurú was manifested; the Gurú who saw him with his eyes, that Gurú revealed Him to men.

Cf 1 Jn. i 3-1.

(3) One poor spirit bound with many ties; in its own strength it cannot escape, till *God* rescue it.

(3) It has seemed best to omit all reference to possible sources, until so complicated a subject has been more thoroughly investigated.

*Piw*, the word translated God, is a term applied to husband by wife ; the loved one.

(4) The chelá whose Gurú is blind, while he himself is more blind ; the blind one gives a push to his blind fellow ; they both fall into the well.

Neither understands the truth ; one pushes this way, the other another ; both come to grief.

(5) The soul (Atmá) and the great soul (Paramátmá) for many ages remained apart ; the true Gurú came as a dealer (*dallál*) and made of them a beateous mixture.

(6) A sinner from my birth, in sin from head to foot I lie ; O generous giver, comforter, but listen to my cry. (*Fallon*)

With the reading in the ordinary Hindi text, translate second line, "O God, remover of pain, deliver me".

(6) A Gurú should be as a knife grinder ; the rust of a life time he removes in a moment.

(7) Regard your Gurú as a knife grinder, let him grind your heart ; cleansing the heart from all impurity, let him make it bright as a mirror.

(8) Kál hovers over the head, Kál comes not into sight ; Kabír says, Lay bold of the Gurú's words (the Mantra) that he may rescue your soul from death.

(9) The Gurú is the potter and the disciple the vessel ; he removes all defects. He places the

support (*sahárà*) within before with blows he fashions the vessel into shape.

The *Hahúrú* or *Sahúrú* is an instrument of wood or stone which with one hand the potter holds within the jar while with the other he strikes. In this way, the wall of the jar is able to resist the force of the blows administered by the other hand from without. The public may be deceived into thinking that the Gurú is cruel in his treatment of the chelá. See picture of Potter.

(10) As he revolves his rosary, life passes away and he knows not the secrets of his heart ; throw away the rosary of the hand and revolve the rosary of the heart.

There is a double play upon words :— *Man*=heart, *manku*=rosary ; *Pher*=secrets, *Pher* also=revolve.

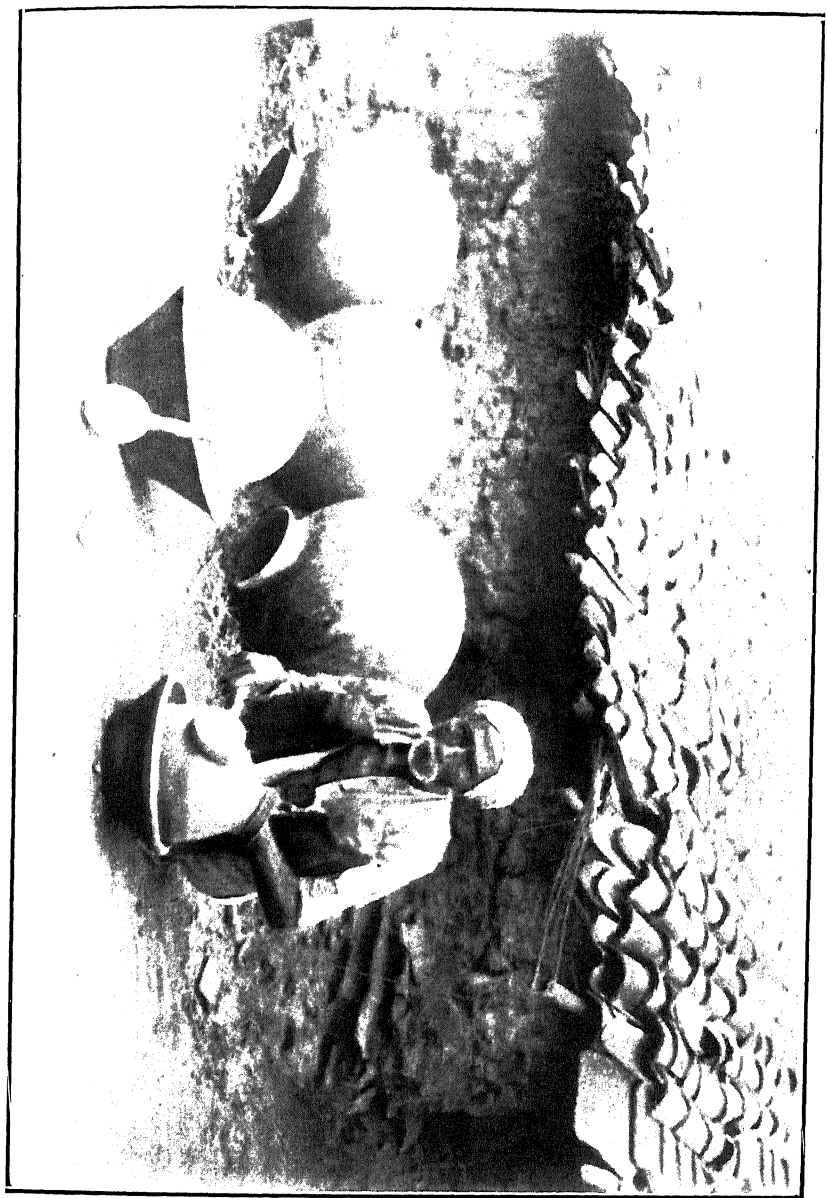
(11) A man steals an anvil, and offers a needle as alms ; he climbs aloft to see how distant is the chariot.

The man who makes this miserable offering thinks that God will be so pleased with his generosity that he will at once send a chariot to fetch him to heaven.

Fallon translates thus :—

He steals an anvil and a needle gives in charity ; he then the house top mounts to see how far's heaven's chariot sent for me.

(12) Apart from life, life comes not into existence, life lives on life ; refuse not to have pity on life ; Pandit, take thought on this.



is completed.

(14) A man may be a great preacher, as the vulture soars in the sky ; but its food is on the earth ; does flying in the air make of it a saint ?

Preaching in itself is useless, unless the life corresponds. The vulture may fly in the sky, but on the earth it devours refuse and so can never be respected.

(15) Whatever I have is not my own it is thine ; it is thine own that I give thee ; what have I ?

(16) Strain your water before you drink it ; test your Gurú before you commit yourself to him.

(17) The humble obtain salvation to a man, so many as are submissive ; those sink who are puffed up with the pride of high birth.

The reference here is to the ocean of rebirths ; the humble-minded reach the further shore in safety ; the proud sink in the waters and escape not from the troubles of this world.

(18) When the Gurú is covetous, his disciple will be grasping ; both employ trickery ; both will be drowned in their folly, having boarded a ship of stone.



## 82 SÁKHIS ATTRIBUTED TO KABÍR.

The chela to protect himself from the greed of the Gurú conceals the extent of his possessions. At first he was tricked into owning that he had property, but not a second time ; he tricked the gurú. In this way both fail to cross the ocean of rebirths. In one of the Kabír legends, it is said that Kabír was placed on board a boat loaded with stones that it might sink in mid stream, but he miraculously escaped. The idea may have been suggested by this *sūlhi*.

(19) From one country have they come ; at one *ghát* have they disembarked. They have breathed the air of the world, and on twelve paths have they gone their way.

*Bārah bāt* is a proverbial expression, scattered, dispersed, cast to the winds. All men are of one blood, all are born of human parentage, caste distinctions, invented of men, are productive of much evil. Fallon translates :—

All from one country come, alighted also at one port ; by winds of wordly passion driven, all scattered are in sport.

(20.) The lascivious, the ill-tempered and the covetous, for such devotion to God is impossible. Brave is the man who for devotion to God is ready to give up caste and family.

(21) Small is the door of devotion (*Bhakti*), as the tenth part of a mustard seed. The heart of man is swollen with pride to the size of an elephant, how can he pass within ?



knowledge of the true Gurú, whatever their caste, are *chamárs*.

*Rom rom* the hairs on the human body ; there is no spot where there is no hair, no point at which the great do not display pride.

(23) The worship of a devotee and the water of a torrent in the rains, both flow deep ; but that only should be called a river which continues to flow in the hot weather (Jeth = June.)

The devotee whose devotion depends upon prosperity is no true devotee.

(24) He who sows for you thorns, for him do you sow flowers ; you will have flowers at the time of flowering ; he will find a *trisul*.

Trisul may signify a large thorn or it may mean that such a one will be punished by Shiva.

(25) Do not oppress the weak, their sighs have great power ; by the puffs of the bellows iron is converted to flames (*or* is utterly consumed.)

If the puffs from the skin of a dead animal can do so much, how much more will the sighs of the living effect. The skin of goats, buffaloes and bullocks are used as bellows.



(26) Be true to God and loving to his servants whether your hair be long or entirely removed.

Many Bairāgis shaved their heads. To Kabír such matters were of trivial importance.

(27) The *ghat* in which love dwells not, know that *ghat* to be a burning *ghat* (Masán); that heart is as the blacksmith's bellows which breathe, but have no life.

There is here a play upon the word *Ghat*. *Ghat* which=a vessel, is often used of the human heart. *Ghat*, is also used, as=ghat, the burning *Ghat* where the bodies of the dead are burnt.

(28) Love grows not in the fields nor is it on sale in the bazar; the man devoid of love will be bound and cast into hell. (*Yámpúr*, the city of Yám.)

(29) He may drink the cup of love who gives his all (lit. his head) to God; the covetous cannot give all, but only know the name of love, or He drinks the cup of love who lays down his life for others; he who works for reward, merely speaks of love.

(30) A man may read many books before he dies and yet not be a Pandit; he is a Pandit who understands the two and a half letters which form the word Love.

(31) There is no work of merit equal to truth and no sin equal to falsehood; in whose

heart Truth dwells, in his heart dwells God himself.

(32) Those who say and do not are great liars ; in the end, when God holds his Durbár, they will be thrust out.

*Dhalikka khànà* is a phrase applied to badmashes, thrust out of all respectable society.

(33) When the sun rises, darkness disappears; before the wisdom of the Gurú the corrupt thoughts of men disappear ; covetousness destroys sound judgement and pride devotion to God.

(34) Weeds destroy the crops ; the ignorant destroy the assembly ; covetousness spoils devotion, as a mixture of earth destroys the value of saffron.

(35) Those who sought found, diving down into deep waters ; the heron in its helplessness remained sitting upon the bank.

Fallon gives a different version of this *Sálhí* which he translates :—Who in deep waters, plunged and sought have found ; but foolish me sat by the shore, through fear of being drowned. This form of the saying is attributed to Dharm Dáss.

(36) All say 'Lord, Lord' (*Sáhib*), but my fear is of a different kind ; when I know not God by sight, where can I take my seat or how shall I sit down with a God whom I have not known ?

(37) The house of God is distant, as is a tall palm ; he who climbs to the top, tastes of heaven ; he who falls is ground to pieces.

(38) What you would do to-morrow, do to-day ; what you would do to-day do at once ; in a moment the deluge (*Parlai*) will come, then what time will there be for doing.

*Parlai* is used of the destruction with which each of the several ages closes.

(39) When I went in search of evil men, none appeared to view ; when I searched my own heart, I felt that none were so evil as myself.

(40) Full knowledge of God is not attained when the heart has not been united with God ; devotion is simply that of imitation, the colour is not fast.

(41) A cage with nine doors, in it a bird like air ; that it should remain there is the marvel ; what wonder if it escape ?

(42) In times of trouble men remember God, but not in times of ease ; should they remember God in times of ease, would they ever experience trouble ?

(43) Live on friendly terms with all, be ready to speak about all ; in word agree with all men, but abide in your own abode.

The rhythm of this Sákhi is so fine that I cannot refrain from printing it in Roman character :—

Sab se hiliye, sab se miliye, sab ke lijiye naun ;  
Hànji, Hánji, sab se kahiye, basiye apne gáun.

This saying is generally interpreted to mean that men should be tolerant of religious beliefs differing from their own, though in no hurry to surrender traditional beliefs.

It has also been rendered thus:

Associate with all on friendly terms ; address every one with respect (give them their full titles) ; agree with every one in what he says, and you will have a village of your own to live in, *i.e.* Humour the public and you will soon have them in your power.

(44) Upon seeing the mill revolving, Kabír wept ; the grain that falls between the stones can never escape entire.

(45) All men speak of the mill, but none make mention of the pin ; the grain that abides by the pin, even its hair is not disturbed.

The two stones of the mill are heaven and earth, nearly all who live upon the earth are overcome of evil ; the few who escape are those who abide by the pin, *i.e.* those who call upon God.

(46) The Brahmins of this age are objects of ridicule ; give not to them alms : they with their families will go to hell, and take with them their employers (*i.e.* those who give them fees or alms.)

(47) The company of the saints will make your burdens light ; the company of the evil means quarrelling throughout the eight watches.

This saying is by Fallon attributed to Tulsi Dass.

(48) That day is blessed which causes you to meet a holy man ; as you embrace him fervently, sin is driven from the body.

A saying similar to this is to be found among the Muhammadan traditions (*Hadís*).

(49) Through association with a Sádhu comes remembrance of God ; that hour is recorded to a man's credit in his account with God ; all the rest is as valueless as air.

(50) The mirror of God is the body of the Sádhu ; he who wishes to see, let him see the invisible in him (the Sádhu.)

(51) The Sádhu is the river, love is the water ; in that place wash your body ; Kabír says, Be clean, in company with the Sádhus.

As people wash their clothes on the banks of a river, so should they seek purity of heart through associating with Sádhus.

(52) The tree does not store its fruit for its own use, nor the river its water ; for the benefit of others has the Sádhu adopted human form.

(53) *Yam* roars like a lion, cries aloud Kabír ; were not the Gurú merciful, *Yam* would tear and rend.

(54) He who has chosen a bodily Gurú and has failed to recognise the true Gurú; time after time he rises and sinks, ensnared in the ocean of existence.

A bodily gurú is one who is a gurú in outward appearance, one merely qualified to give instruction as to ritual, sacrifice, alms etc., and not to give spiritual counsel.

(55) The Chelá should be willing to give everything to his Gurú ; the Gurú should refuse to take anything from his Chelá.

Many gurus frequently visit the houses of their chelás and by noisy demonstrations in which they are assisted by Bairágis and curses extort offerings from those who at first declined to give.

(56) The true Gurú took the arrow of the Shabda and prepared to shoot ; that which he shot with love found its home within the body.

(57) You are the wife of one, but have become the prostitute of many ; say with whose corpse will you be burnt ? for you are the wife of many.

There is one God whom men should love ; what will be the fate of those who love false gods ?

(58) The true Gurú is a great money changer, testing the good and the evil ; rescuing from the world the good, he takes it under his own protection.

(59) As the snake when it sees the man who has received the *mantra*, lowers its hood ; so Kâl, awed by the name written on the *Pàn* leaf, turns his head away.

90 SÁKHIS ATTRIBUTED TO KABÍR.

The second line contains a reference to the consecration of the Pán leaf by the Head Mahant. See Ch. VI.

(60) The Chakwi remains apart from her mate throughout the night, in the early morning they meet ; the man who remains apart from God meets him neither by day nor night.

(61) He who removes another's head, removes his own ; in God's Durbár the account will have to be settled.

(62) The power that cannot be described, the form that imparts life (the vision of God is life), whoever becomes one with him (as milk with water) ; that man, says Kabir to Dharm Dass, Kál cannot destroy.

Union with the true God who has neither form nor shape leads on to the development of man's true self over which death has no power.

(63) He who reproaches me is my friend ; he supplies the soap to wash my dirty linen.

The man who is reproached pays heed to what is said and reforms. A similar saying is attributed to the Sufi saint, Imám Ghizálí, who used the word 'washerman' instead of 'soap.'

(64) Made articles are quickly destroyed and once destroyed are not put right ; by an admixture of vinegar milk is curdled and cannot again be turned to milk.



(65) For man to assume a body is difficult ; it cannot be done twice. The ripe fruit that falls to the ground, cannot again be attached to the tree.

Hindus who believe in transmigration explain this as meaning that many ages will elapse before any particular person will again enter the world as a man.

(66) We know not what the quarter of a second may bring and yet we make plans for the morrow ; death comes suddenly as the hawk pounces down on the partridge.

(67) The gardener comes to the garden and seeing him the buds cry out, "The full-blown flowers are culled to-day, to-morrow our turn will come."

(68) The earth said to the potter, why do you trample on me ? the day will come when I shall trample on you.

The potter tramples on the earth to make it workable and plastic.

(69) All help the strong ; no one helps the weak. A breeze gives fresh life to the fire, but extinguishes the candle.

(70) What place has the coward on the wrestling ground ? when wrestler meets with wrestler then is a real contest.

(71) Consider him a wrestler, striving to attain the favour of God, who though crushed to pieces, refuses to give up the struggle.

In the second line reference is made to an instruction often given to a wrestler by his trainer, 'Crush him to pieces.' (*Us ke purze purze dila kar do*).

(72) The days of yore are gone ; he loved not God (Harí) ; of what use is remorse, when the birds have eaten all the crops ?

These words are often used of a 'ne'er do well,' when on the point of death.

(73) The wood that has already been burnt (in the process of conversion into charcoal) that too cries out. "If I go to the blacksmith's forge, I shall be burnt a second time."

Sinners die once in this world and a second time in the world to come.

(74) Remain apart from the world, as water refuses to mingle with oil ; deposit your heart where is neither death nor the dungeons of *Kál*.

(75) Who saves his head, loses his head ; who severs his head, finds a head ; as the wick of a candle gives additional light when trimmed.

The head is regarded as the most precious of human possessions ; a man will give his head for a friend.

(76) The pearl is found in the oyster, the oyster is in the sea ; the diver brings him up ; with no one else is the power.

There is probably here a play upon words. The word translated Diver may also mean, One who lives through death, or conquers after a hard struggle.

(77) Consider the parable of the sieve ; it suffers the flour to pass, but retains the husk ; so men let pass what is good and swallow what is useless.

*Sar*=that which passes through the sieve ; *Asar*=that which is retained.

(78) Consider the sugar cane press ; the juice flows out, the fragments of cane remain.

His heart is wanting in wisdom who retains thoughts of no value and disregards spiritual mysteries.

(79) All Sādhús are in appearance alike, resembling a field of poppies ; some few thinkers are as red flowers, the rest are perfectly white.

It is the white poppy that is cultivated in Indian fields for the production of opium.

(80) Holy men will not relinquish holiness, though they associate with crores of unholy men ; though snakes may cling to the sandal tree, it will never lose its coolness.

(81) Ask not a Sādhú about his caste, but about his knowledge of God ; when you are determining the price of a sword, there is no need to consider the sheath.

The sword is what you want, it matters little of what kind or of what colour the sheath may be.

(82) The methods of a Sādhú should be those of a winnowing fan ; he should lay hold

94 SÁKHIS ATTRIBUTED TO KABÍR.

of the weighty matters and let subjects of little moment fly away.

(83) Kabir says ; to associate with a Sádhu is like sitting near a seller of perfumes ; though the seller sell you nought, yet you enjoy the scent of his perfumes.

(84) As an ant is carrying off a grain of rice, it falls in with a grain of *dāl*. Kabir says ; both you cannot carry away, take the one and leave the other.

(85) A madman was beating the hole of a snake, but the snake was not hit ; fool, it is not the snake's hole that bites ; it is the snake that devours men.

(86) Where is the boundary of the heavens ? what is the weight of the world ? what is the caste of a Sádhu ? What is the price of the Alchemist's stone ?

(87) The dog of a Sádhu is virtuous, while evil is the mother of one who becomes not the chela of a gurú ; the one sits and hears the praises of Hari ; the other speaks evil of gurús.

(88) Learn to distinguish the honest man and the thief from their manner of speech ; all the works that are within proceed forth by way of the mouth.

Cf St Matt. xii 34. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

(89) In the midst of the highest heaven there is a shining light ; he who has no gurú cannot reach the palace ; he only will reach it who is under the guidance of a true Gurú.

(90) Feel no care ; be free from care ; the giver is powerful ; the beasts of the field, the birds and the insects have neither wealth nor store house.

(91) The tortoise takes care of its egg ; without breasts it supplies its needs ; so God provides for all and makes provision for the three *loks* (earth, heaven and hell).

(92) Whatever I did, you did ; I did nothing myself ; should man say, I did it, it was in your strength that it was done.

Cf. Phil. ii. 13.

Sháms-i-Tabrez, the famous Sufi, is said to have raised a man from the dead. Three times he addressed the corpse, saying, In the name of God, I bid thee rise. These words had no effect. He then said, 'In my name I bid thee rise' and the man rose. The idea is that man's real power lies in the consciousness of his union with God. So long as he addressed God as one apart from himself, his prayer was disregarded.

(93) Everything is from God and nothing from his servant ; he can change a mustard seed into a mountain and a mountain into a mustard seed.

(94) Should all the earth be turned into paper and all the trees into pens; should the seven seas be turned into ink, yet could not an account of God be written.

(95) In blessings, O God, thou surpassest all, in thy dealings with men thou art without a rival; God is chief of all kings, and yet He lived upon earth as a *faqír*.

(96) We shall not die, though all creation die; we have found one that quickeneth.

These lines form part of an introduction to a *Bhajan*.

(97) Whoever forsakes what is false and productive of pride and becomes as dust on the road, he will find God.

(98) The difference between the true and the false Sádhu is as that between the Ām (mango) and the Babúl trees; the former bears life-producing fruit, the latter thorns.

*Phal* (fruit) is often used of the results of action.

(99) When you see a Sádhu approaching, run, touch with your hands his feet (and apply them to your forehead). It may be that in this form God himself will meet you.

(100) All say 'Rám, Rám,' but there is a difference in the saying; one associated with many, another was absorbed in one.

The writer seems to be here distinguishing between Rám, the son of Dasráth, and Rám, as used as a title of the one true God.

(101) O Náráyan, there have been countless mighty rulers in this world; they used to speak of I and mine, but when they died they took not away with them a single straw.

(102) If a man be meek, humble, respectful and obedient to Sādhús, in his heart I dwell, as a fish dwells in the water.

(103) Water stays not at a high level, but descends; he who stoops down can raise up the water and drink; he who remains standing must go away with thirst unquenched.

(104) Only the guru is found, but no disciple (every one presumes to teach, none are willing to learn); there is some hope of success, when a disciple is found.

(105) What is the use of greatness? the palm is a tall tree, but none sit under its shade and its fruit is out of reach.

(106) If you wish to worship Rám, worship him at once; when will you find another opportunity? The grass that now is fresh and green will shortly be dried as fuel.

(107) Thou camest into this world for gain; gamble not away thy life, weigh carefully in thy mind, this moment will not return again.

## Chapter V

### THE KABÍR PANTH.

The Kabir Panthis of Northern and Central India recognise two main divisions of the Panth, one with headquarters at the Kabir Chaura in Benares and a branch establishment at Maghár, and a second, founded by Dharm Dass, with headquarters in the Chattisgarh District, in the Central Provinces. The former is known as *Bàp* (Father) and the latter as *Mai* (Mother). The relations between these two divisions have at times been strained. The Math at Puri, where, in the worship of Jagannath, distinctions of caste are disregarded, is respected by both as a place of pilgrimage.<sup>1</sup>

It is impossible in the light of present information to determine the date at which either of these divisions first came into existence, but both were probably founded by Hindú disciples of Kabir.

As already stated Kabir died and was buried at Maghár, in the district of Gorakhpur. The

(1) The division of the Panth into twelve branches, as given in Wilson, R. H. seems to be quite fanciful. There are other branches at Bombay, in Gujerat, etc., but it is doubtful whether these regard themselves as independent of these two main divisions. Of these two divisions, that which bears the name of Dharm Dass, though barely mentioned by Wilson, is the more influential at the present time.



shrine at Maghár which has always been in the charge of Muhammadans was restored in 1567 by Nawab Fidae Khan, the officer in command of the imperial army which occupied the city in that year.<sup>2</sup>

There are at the present time two Maths at Maghár, one for Muhammadans, containing the shrine, and another for Hindus, in the enclosure of which is a hole in which Kabír is said to have sat, awaiting death.<sup>3</sup> Each of these Maths which adjoin one another, has accommodation for 50 Sadhús, though as a rule only one Fakír or Sadhú lives in each.<sup>4</sup> About 50 Hindú Sadhus live in the neighbouring villages of Balwa and Khurswal where the Panth has property in land.<sup>5</sup>

At Maghár there are more Muhammadan than Hindú Kabír Panthis. The two sections have little in common, except their devotion to Kabir their Master. Each section receives *Prasád* in its own Math.

(2) From 1300 to 1567 A. D. Maghar was the capital of the Samet Rajputs.

(3) It is stated in the *Basti Gazetteer* that a Hindu Mahant first arrived at Maghar in 1764 A. D. According to Kabir Chaura traditions the first four Mahants were buried at Maghar. See Additional Note.

(4) The Hindu Math is under the management of the Kabir Chaura Mahant. The present Mahant, Gur Prasad Dass, is specially interested in the superintendence of agricultural operations. In the absence of the Mahant the Pujari is placed in charge of the Kabir Chaura Math.

(5) This land is chiefly under rice cultivation. In 1900 the land at Balwa supplied the Kabir Chaura Math with 750 maunds of rice and the Maghar Math with 500 maunds.

In connexion with the Muhammadan Math a largely attended Mela is held on the last day of Aghan (November). In connexion with this Mela a sacred feast is held. The Mahant proceeds to the shrine, followed by the Díwán, carrying in both hands a large dish (*Thambe*) containing *Khichri* (cooked rice mixed with *dál*) and by a *Bandálí* carrying an earthenware vessel (*Karwa*) containing water and covered over with a white cloth. Upon reaching the shrine these vessels are placed upon the ground and frankincense is burnt upon the tomb, in a fire of coddung.<sup>6</sup> The Mahant repeats certain prayers in which all present take their part.<sup>7</sup>

At the conclusion of the prayers he takes his seat upon the ground while the Díwán gives to each of the worshippers a small portion of the *Khichri* and the *Bandálí* pours from the spout of the *Karwa* a few drops of the water into the palm of their hands. When all have received, the Díwán and *Bandálí* consume what is left. More prayers are said, after which the Mahant departs and the gathering breaks up.<sup>8</sup>

(6) These ashes are passed through fine muslin and preserved in a brass *lotá*.

(7) The Kabir Panthis apply the term prayer to devotional exercises which might be more accurately described as meditations.

(8) It seemed best to describe this feast here and so complete the account relating to Maghar. The religious feasts of the Hindu Kabir Panthis, which are conducted with considerably more ritual, are described in Chapter VI.

Pilgrims to the shrine are expected to present a rupee to the officer in charge and also an offering of rice and *dál*. They receive in return a small portion of *Khichri* and a pinch of the ashes that result from the burning of the frankincense and coddung.<sup>9</sup>

The Kabír Chaura Math receives its name from the fact that it occupies the site upon which according to tradition Kabír gave instruction to his disciples. The Math consists of two courtyards, connected by a bridge thrown across a narrow lane. The main courtyard contains the preaching platform, the *Mandar*, which is occupied by a pair of wooden sandals (*Khanráon*) intended to represent the feet of the Gurú,<sup>10</sup> the *Gaddi*,<sup>11</sup> the *Samadhs* (tombs)<sup>12</sup> of five Mahants

(9) The Muhammadan members of the Panth wear caps of a different shape to those worn by the Hindu Bairagis.

(10) Originally there was no Mandar (temple) at Kabir Chaura, but in this respect, as probably in others, the Kabir Panthis have gradually assimilated their own arrangements to those of the Maths of other religious orders. The *Dasnámis* worship the feet of Sankaracharya, carved in outline in stone or marble. It was probably in order to escape the charge of idolatry that the Kabir Panthis substituted for the *Chauran Pádúkí* a pair of wooden sandals.

(11) The *Gaddi* is literally the pillow upon which the Guru sits in state. The *Gaddi* of this Math belongs to Kabir, his representative upon earth sits behind and not upon it.

(12) When practicable the Mahants are buried within the precincts of their Math. It is the custom of this, as of several other religious orders, to bury and not burn the bodies of their dead. The custom which may be due to Muhammadan influences is explained by saying that the bodies of Sants who have died to the world have already been purified and do not require the cleansing of fire.

and quarters for Sádhus. The courtyard across the lane which occupies the traditional site of Niru's house is made over to the female Bairágis, known as *Mai Log*.<sup>13</sup> This court contains the Samadhs of three Mahants.

The room in which the Gaddí is placed is immediately opposite the entrance gate. Over the Gaddí hangs the picture of Kabír which has been reproduced as the frontispiece of this volume. In this picture Surat Gopál and Dharm Dáss, the founders of the two main divisions of the Panth, are represented as kneeling before Kabír while Kamál stands behind with a fan in his hand. On one side of the picture hangs a portrait of Rámánand and on the other a picture of Rangí Dáss, the late Mahant, who died eight years ago.

Above the pictures are hung what appear from the distance to be armorial bearings, but are in reality designs in coloured cloth, intended to symbolise the five elements (earth, air, fire, water and *ákháis*) and the nine doors or points of entrance into the human body. In front of the Gaddí are placed two flower vases and upon the wall at the side hangs a rosary, composed

(13) The female devotees are given the title of Mother because all Sadhus are required to treat them with the respect due to a mother from her son. When a married man is received into the order of the *Dandis* he applies his lips to the breast of his wife to indicate that henceforth he stands to her in the relation of son to mother.

of a thousand beads, which is reserved for the use of the Mahant.

Daily service is conducted in the Math, morning and evening, by the *Pujári*. In the morning the *Sádhús*, so soon as they have bathed, assemble in front of the Mandar. Here takes place the first part of the service which includes the performance of *Arti*<sup>14</sup> and the washing of the Gurú's feet. After this the various Samadhs and the Gaddí are visited and the *Sádhús* return to the Mandar for the concluding portion of the service. The morning service is said to occupy thirty minutes and the evening service an hour.

The water in which the wooden sandals have been washed, known as *Charan Mitra*, is poured into a brazen vessel. Three teaspoonfuls of this water together with three *tulsi*<sup>15</sup> leaves, are given to all who visit the Math during the day. At 8 p. m. the doors of the Math are closed and any *Charan Mitra* that remains over is offered in the first place to such *Sádhús* as have not previously received it. The vessel is then presented to the Mahant who after drink-

(14) In *Arti* fire, usually the flames of burning camphor, is waved before the object of worship.

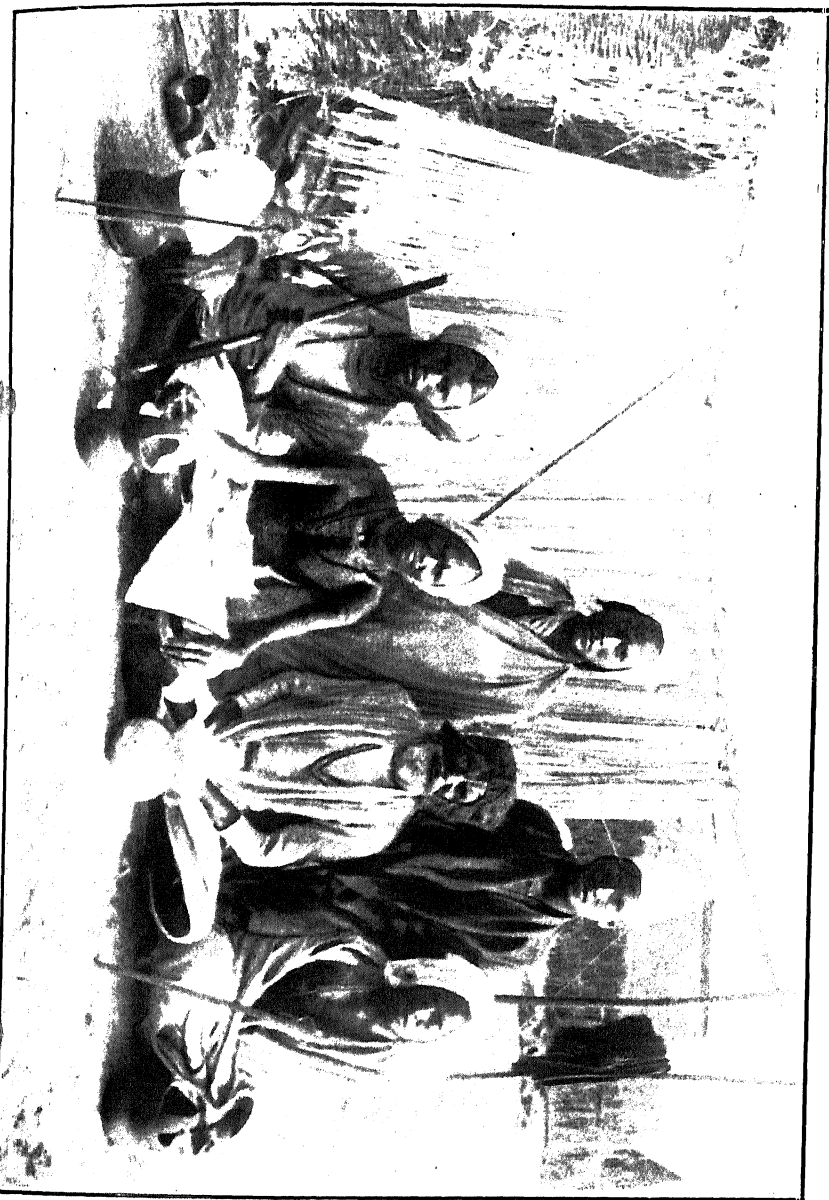
(15) The *Tulsi* leaf is sacred to Vishnu. Many Kabir Panthis feel that in thus showing reference to Vishnu they are disregarding the teaching of Kabir, as by *Rám* he meant not the incarnation of Vishnu, but the supreme Deity.

ing what remains rinses out the vessel with fresh water and consumes that also.

An annual Melá which lasts over four or five days is held at this Math in the month of January. On this occasion the large courtyard is crowded with devotees. Those who wish to become Bairágis observe a fast for twelve days, eating in the evening a little *gur* (crude sugar) and rice cooked in milk. These candidates are admitted as Bairágis at the celebration of the Jot Pershád, which, from a religious point of view, constitutes the principal purpose of the Melá.<sup>16</sup> Of the possessions belonging to the Math the Kabír Panthis regard the *topí* (cap) and *schlí* woollen necklace of Kabír, the *Khanràon*, the picture of Kabír and the Bijak as those of greatest value.

The principal officers of the Math are the *Mahant*, the *Díwán*, the *Kotwál* and the *Pujári*. The *Mahant* is responsible for the general arrangements and should be a man of learning, qualified to give religious instruction; the *Díwán* is the business manager; the *Kotwál* is responsible for the maintenance of discipline, while the

(16) It is said that the *Jot Pershad* was originally celebrated in this Math once a month, but that this custom was discontinued on account of a quarrel that arose between Puran Dáss and the contemporary Mahant of the Dharm Dáss section, in consequence of which the latter refused to supply Puran Dáss with something which was regarded as essential for the proper conduct of this service. For an account of the Jot Pershad see Chapter vi.



tion were originally at Bāndogarh in the neighbourhood of Jubbulpore ; from this place they were transferred to Koodarmāl and once again in recent years to Dhāma Kherā.

Dharm Dāss, the founder of this section, is said to have first met Kabír at Benares and to have been rebuked by him for worshipping idols. He met him subsequently at Brindában, but failing to recognise him said, " Your words resemble those addressed to me by a Sádhu whom I once met at Benares. " On this occasion Kabír adopted stronger measures and threw into the river the idol which Dharm Dāss was worshipping. Once more Kabír appeared to him in his house at Bāndogarh. Dharm Dāss was a *bunniádh* by caste and possessed of considerable wealth. Kabír again rebuked him for practising idolatry and asked him how he could worship an idol made out of the same stone as the weights which he made use of in his business. On this occasion Dharm Dāss acknowledged the force of his arguments and both he and his wife became his disciples. According to the account given in *Sūkrit Dhyán* Dharm Dāss was the son of one Mahesh, and was as an infant saved from death by Gyáni



(i. e. Kabír) who entered into his body. He was originally called Judáwan, but objected to this name and received from Kabír permission to change it to Dharm Dáss. Naráyan Dáss, his son, refused to accept Kabír as his Gurú, but through the grace of Kabír a second son was born in 1516 and named Churáman.<sup>17</sup> This son was installed upon the Gaddí by Kabír himself. Upon the occasion of his installation Kabír foretold that his descendants should sit upon the Gaddí for 42 generations (*Bans*), and declared that the right to communicate the *Mantra* would be confined to his descendants. In accordance with Kabír's instructions the Head Mahant of this section marries and lives with his wife till a son is born. After the birth of the son the wife becomes a *Bairàgi*. The Mahant holds office for a period of 25 years and 20 days and is then succeeded by his son.<sup>18</sup> In one case the son is said to have died and as the mother had become a *Bairàgi* the Mahant

(17.) This date has apparently been chosen to bring the birth of Churáman within the lifetime of Kabír. No mention is made of the age at which Churáman was installed as Mahant. No importance can be attached to dates mentioned in connexion with the establishment of the Panth. Ugránám is said to be the 13th Mahant. If eleven Mahants occupied the Gaddí for twenty years each and one Mahant for three, the Panth would appear to have been founded 278 years previous to the installation of Ugránám, i. e. about 1625.

(18.) The Mahant's son alone is a member of the Panth by birth and is initiated by his father. All other members become the children of the Mahant through the reception of the *Mantra*.

lived with another woman by whom he had a son.<sup>19</sup> The father of the present Mahant died after holding office for a period of three years only, and many wished that one of his disciples, Jugla Nand, should officiate as Mahant during the remainder of his term of office. To this proposal the majority of the members strongly objected on the ground that he was not a descendant of Dharm Dáss, and Ugranám was duly installed. His grandmother, known as Dádí Sáhí, who was responsible for this proposal, still exercises authority at Koodarmal, and Ugranám reigns in the newly established Math at Dháma Kherá. Jugla Nand with other discontented Sádhus retired to Bombay, where he has published various books bearing upon the Panth. Kabír is said to have given instructions to Dharm Dáss regarding the *Chauká* and the *Jot Prasád*.

The Kabir Panth exists as a protest against the religious exclusiveness of the twice-born castes. As a natural result few but Sudras whose cause it champions have associated themselves with the movement. The Panth contends for a truth which forms part of the Gospel of Creation, viz. that all men have spiritual powers

(19) The boy who died is said to have been Ohuráman who returned to the world, but retired after a short stay as he was unwilling a second time to sit upon the *Gaddi*.

which should find their natural expression in communion with God, now in this life.<sup>20</sup>

The sons of the twice-born as they come to years of discretion are invested with the sacred thread (*Janco*) and reminded thereby of their spiritual privileges and responsibilities. The members of this Panth wear round their necks a *Kanthis* (rosary) formed of beads made of Tulsi wood.<sup>21</sup> This *Kanthis* is naturally associated with thoughts of prayer and in this way reminds those who wear it alike of their relation to God and of the promises which they made at the time of their initiation.<sup>22</sup> Permission to

(20) The exclusive spirit which finds expression in caste and against which Kabir and others fought, has by no means been expelled from the minds of *Kabir Panthis*. Members of the lowest castes, such as Mehtars, Doms and Dhobis, should, they consider, join sects such as that of *Shiva Narayan* and not be permitted to wear *kanthis*.

(21) The *kanthis* of the *Kabir Panthis* is formed of beads made of Tulsi wood, which are usually strung on string of very inferior quality. This defect may result in the loss of the beads, and no member of the Panth is under such circumstance allowed to worship or eat food till the beads have been replaced. They are, however, allowed to wear instead of the *kanthis* one large bead (*hira*) strung on substantial thread. Those who live in places where a lost *kanthis* cannot be easily replaced usually avail themselves of this alternative. Some *kanthis* are made of material other than wood, e.g. grass or coconut fibre. Some *Satnamis* wear a wristlet made of string in lieu of a *kanthis*.

(22) Prayer as offered by the *Kabir Panthis* is of an elementary character. One says that they pray that they may obtain salvation (*mukhti*); another says that he sings the praises of Narayan in the morning and in the evening prays for protection against evil spirits. The latter spoke of our Church Services as "practice", and regarded them as valuable in as much as they helped to form a habit of punctuality. It would be a great mistake to suppose that prayer means for a *Kabir Panthi* the same as it does for a Christian.

At the time of prayer members of the Panth make on their forehead the mark (*Tilak*) of Vishnu, using for the purpose a special kind of earth mixed with water or with water only.

wear a *Kanthi* is granted to women as well as to men, for they too are spiritual beings; but no woman may assume a *Kanthi* previous to marriage nor may she become the disciple of her husband's Guru.<sup>23</sup>

To Brahmins at the time of investiture with the sacred thread is communicated the Brahminical *Mantra* which they are not allowed on any account to communicate to those who are not Brahmins.<sup>24</sup> In like manner at the time of initiation a *Mantra* is whispered into the ear of Kabir Panthis. This *Mantra* serves as a bond of union between members of the Panth and also suggests a position of privilege.<sup>25</sup>

Brahmins wear upon their forehead the sign of the God whom they worship. Kabir Panthis

(23) If disciples of the same Guru they would be regarded as brother and sister and so their marriage would become unlawful. This, however, appears to be a later refinement as Dharm Dass and his wife were both the disciples of Kabir. They would probably argue that this was a matter of necessity, as at that time there was only one Guru whereas in modern days there are many.

(24) The spiritual life of Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas is recognised from the time when they receive the *mantra* from their Guru and are invested with the sacred thread. From that time they are subject to the rules of caste, only those who have reached years of discretion are admitted as members of the *Panth* with the possible exception of children, both of whose parents are already members.

(25) The Initiatory *Mantra* of the Kabir Panth is said to contain five words which represent one name or revelation of the one true God. Should the *chela* at the time of initiation fail to catch the words on account of nervousness or the noise of music, he may have it repeated to him by some other member of the Panth, provided that this is done in a solitary place where there is no chance of the words being overheard by others.

also wear such a mark (*Tika*), as shown in the frontispiece.

In the days of Kabír a knowledge of religious truth was practically confined to those who were acquainted with one or other of the two sacred languages, Arabic and Sanskrit. These two languages were employed both in public and private worship with the result that the worship of the masses was too often a mere repetition of phrases which were unintelligible to those who used them. Kabír urged that religious books should also be written in the vernacular that all might obtain that knowledge of God which was essential to spiritual progress.

Again to the illiterate masses teaching contained in books was inaccessible, and so it is that we find Kabír laying great stress on the importance of oral teaching. Few men are qualified to become scholars, but all are required to be good; therefore he urged his disciples to associate with good men and through conversation with them to acquire such knowledge as is necessary. The study of books, he thought, was too often productive of pride; to display learning and intelligence scholars were often tempted to enlarge upon topics of little spiritual value, while in private conversation heart speaks to heart of its own spiritual needs. Such were the views of Kabír and in consequence the Gurù in

this Panth occupies a position of extraordinary importance.

Kabír was a poet of no mean order and gladly consecrated his literary gifts to the service of God. He knew that religious instruction given in the form of poetry was easily remembered; he knew too that the singing of *Bhajans* (Hymns) was an occupation in which the people of India took peculiar pleasure. It only remained for him to compose hymns which his followers could sing. This he did, and up to the present day his hymns enjoy great popularity with the people and in the Panth occupy a prominent position in all acts of public worship.

As the Brahmins are required to repeat the Gyatri daily, so are members of this Panth required to use the following hymns, in the morning and evening respectively :—

*Morning Hymn*:—Kabír said—Spiritual and material blessings attend those who wait upon the Darwesh ; their account is safe. Love of you pervades the whole body of your devotees. You are starvation, unmoved by desire, a mendicant. You walk in no one's footsteps, you seek ease in no abode. The whose universe is your body. You are boundless (a stream without banks). You pervade the Universe constantly. The love which you cause is profound. The empty Universe is in me, says the Gurú

(Kabir). If we do honour by fire to the true name, the body becomes pure. Dharam Dàs taking the Gurú's arm walked and found Kabír.

*Evening Hymn.*—Evening having come on, the day having closed, the duck broke into wailing : "O drake, let us go to that country where Day and Night are unknown." If separation takes place at night, the duck is to be met with in the morning, but he who is separated from the name (of God) regains it neither during day nor night. Hear, O Gurú, Treasury of kindness, I beseech you with clasped hands. Mercy, humility, devotion, equality, good nature, constancy, these are the ornaments of a devotee. Devotion to the one without beginning is adornment. The only name, the only Gurú, is Kabír, the highest *Pír*.<sup>26</sup>

Anxious as Kabir was to claim for all men spiritual privileges he was no less anxious to impress upon those who desired to become religious that they must live in a way consistent with their profession.

All, therefore, who desire to become members of the *Panth* are required to renounce polytheism and to acknowledge their belief in one only God (*Parameshwar*). They must also pro-

(26) For these *bhujans* in their original form see Crooke's *Tribes and Castes of N.-W. P. and Oudh*, Vol. III pp. 75-6. For the translation in the text I am indebted to a resident of Cawnpore who locally enjoys a reputation as a Hindi poet.

mise to eat no meat and drink no wine ; to bathe daily and sing hymns to God, both morning and evening ; to forgive those who trespass against them up to three times ; to avoid the company of all women of bad character and all unseemly jesting in connexion with such subjects ; never to turn away from their house their lawtul wife ; never to tell lies ; never to conceal the property of another man ; never to bear false witness against a neighbour or speak evil of another on hearsay evidence.<sup>27</sup>

One prominent trait in Hindu character, viz. personal devotion, finds ample scope for exercise in the devotion to their Gurú required of all members of the Panth. All who wish to approach God must, they say, become the disciple of some Gurú and to this Gurú when once chosen, the disciple must wholly submit himself, mind, soul and body. To Kabir, as the chief Gurú, many of the *bhajans* used in public worship are addressed, and marked reverence is also shown to the living Gurú, as God's representative upon earth.

(27) In requiring such promises from his followers Kabir doubtless indicates those defects in Hindu social life which to him appeared most detrimental to the development of religion. To the promise to eat no meat the greatest importance is attached in all the Vaishnavite sects, as such a habit is supposed to develop the material and injure the spiritual part of human nature. This belief with reference to eating flesh makes them slow to realise that Christianity, which regards such questions as matters of indifference, can be really a spiritual force.



## ADDITIONAL NOTE.

### *List of the Kabir Chaurá Mahants.*

Name of Mahant.	Samádh at.	Years of office.	Approximate date of Instal- lation.
Shyám Dáss	Maghar	28	1491 ?
Lál Dáss	Maghar	22	1519 ?
Hari Dáss	Maghar	18	1541 ?
Surat Gopál Dáss	Jagannáth	35	1559
Gyán Dáss	Jagannáth	25	1594
Sital Dáss	Gayá	24	1619
Sukh Dáss	Nirú Tila	20	1643
Huláss Dáss	Nirú Tila	26	1663
Mádhó Dáss	Nirú Tila	20	1689
Kokil Dáss	Nirú Tila	21	1709
Rám Dáss	Nirú Tila	29	1730
Mahá Dáss	Nirú Tila	22	1759
Hari Dáss	Nirú Tila	20	1781
Sukh Dáss	Kabir Chaurá	27	1801
Saran Dáss	Kabir Chaurá	16	1828
Puran Dáss	Kabir Chaurá	18	1844
Nirmal Dáss	Kabir Chaurá	22	1862
Ranghir Dáss	Kabir Chaurá	15	1884
Gur Prasád Dáss		8	1899

The above list so far as the name of Mahant, place of Samádh and tenure of office are concerned was supplied by a Bairagi at Benares.

The existence of the first three Mahants is highly problematical.

Surat Gopal (A D 1559) is generally regarded as the founder of the Panth. It is possible that he and the two Mahants who succeeded him did not have their headquarters at Benares, but that the Niru Tila compound was acquired during the Mahanti of Sukh Dáss. Bulwant Singh, and his son and successor, Cheit Singh, were patrons of the Kabir Panth. The former died in A. D. 1770. The Kabir Chaura Compound may have been acquired in their time.

Though seven Mahants are said to have been buried in the Niru Tila court of the Math at Benares only three Samádhs are conspicuous at the present time. (see p. 102.)

*List of Dharam Döss Mahants.*

Name.		Approximate date of Installation	
Chúrámání	Nám	...	1694
Súdarshan	Nám	...	1714
Kulpati	Nám	...	1734
Pramodh	Nám Gurú Bálá Pir		1754
Kewal	Nám	...	1774
Amol	Nám	...	1794
Surat Sanehí	Nám	...	1814
Haqq	Nám	...	1834
Pák	Nám	...	1854
Praghat	Nám	...	1874
Dhíraj	Nám	...	1894
Ugra	Nám	...	1897
Dayá	Nám		

The above have already appeared. Those to follow are:—

Gridhmaní Nám	Akah Nám
Prakàsh Nám	Kanthmani Nám
Uditmaní Nám	Santokh Nám
Mukundmaní Nám	Chátrik Nám
Adh Nám	Dadhí Nám
Udai Nám	Neh Nám
Gyàn Nám	Adí Nám
Hansmani Nám	Mahá Nám
Sukrit Nám	Nij Nám
Agrmaní Nám	Sáhí Dáss Nám
Ras Nám	Udhawa Dáss Nám
Gungmani Nám	Karunra Nám
Páras Nám	Uddhar Nám
Jágrat Nám	Drigh Nám
Bhringhmani Nám	Mahámaní Nám

The dates have been calculated on the assumption that each Mahant held office for 20 years and 25 days, except Dhiraj Nám who is known to have died after three years tenure of office. One Mahant stated that the regular tenure of office was for 25 years and 20 days. On such a calculation the date of Churámaní would be thrown back to A. D. 1654. In the Kabír Chaurá section the average tenure of office has been for 23 years.

The *Sukh Nidán* is said to have been written during Pramodh Nam's tenure of office.

## Chapter VI.

### THE KABÍR PANTH (*Contd.*)

This Panth, like other religious institutions of the kind, is founded on a double basis. Members may live as householders in their own homes, or renounce the world and attach themselves permanently to one of the Monasteries belonging to the order. Those belonging to the latter class are known as Bairágis. A married man may leave his wife, whom he is henceforth to regard as his mother, and become a Bairági, provided that he is the father of at least one son. Women, as well as men, may become Bairágis, if found properly qualified after a probationary period of two years.<sup>1</sup> Conventual buildings exist both at Kabír Chaura and Maghár. The householders perform an important function in the economy of the order, inasmuch as they contribute largely to the support of the Bairágis.

There are a large number of branch establishments, each of which is presided over by a Mahant who spends most of his time in travelling round to visit the disciples who acknowledge

(1) Female Bairágis are usually widows or the wives of men who have become Bairágis. At Maghar there are said to be about 25 female Bairágis.

him as their *Gurù*.<sup>2</sup> He is supposed to visit his *Chelas* at least once a year, to note the progress they have made, to give instruction to them and to their families, and to examine and to receive into the order, if found qualified, such candidates as may be brought to him. On such occasions he is entertained by members of the Panth and also provided with travelling expenses.

The Mahants of the branch establishments receive authority to teach and initiate new members from the Head Mahant of the section to which they belong. At the time of appointment they are given to eat a betel leaf (*Bira*)<sup>3</sup> as a pledge that they undertake faithfully to perform the duties of their office.<sup>4</sup> Each Mahant receives a document, bearing the seal of the Head Mahant, and known as the *Panja Parwāna*. Upon this document are entered the names of all disciples admitted by him into the order. The Mahant is required to check this list at each place that he visits and to present it

(2) The Mahants are not allowed to shave; the Bairagis must either shave entirely or not at all.

(3) In ancient days a *pan* leaf (*Bira*) was thrown down as a challenge. This custom is referred to in the *Rāmāyāna*.

(4) One of the Mahants at Lucknow assumed office when 14 years of age. Normally when a minor is nominated for succession an unbeneficed Mahant is associated with him in office, till he is able to perform the duties unassisted.

annually to the Head Mahant both for inspection and the entry of new names.<sup>5</sup>

As signs of authority the Mahant receives a red *topi*, a necklace of black wool, known as *Seli*,<sup>6</sup> and a special rosary known as the *Pānch Māl*.

On the occasion of his annual visit to Headquarters the Mahant is required to present twelve cocoanuts and twelve rupees on his own account and one cocoanut and one rupee for each new name that he wishes to have entered on his Parwana. He also makes over to the Diwán all offerings made at the Chauka Arti services at which he has officiated during the year.

A Mahant upon appointment is required to make an offering of cocoanuts. Kabir Panthis explain the peculiar significance attached to cocoanuts in the Panth in the light of the following facts :—(1) it has a face resembling that of a man, (2) its surface is divided into three parts recalling Brahma, Shiva and Vishnu, (3) its

(5) On the occasion of a visit to any place the Mahant recites at celebration of the *Chauka Arti* all the names entered either upon his own *Parwana* or those of his predecessors in office, and writes the words '*Chalana har gaya*' against the names of any who have died. In the case of a deceased Mahant the phrase used is '*Samadhi le li*'.

(6) The *Seli* is very similar to that worn by certain followers of Nanak. In each case there are five tassels attached to the *Seli*. In the Kabir Panth *Seli* there are three tassels placed together in the centre with one on either side; in the Nanak *Seli* the five tassels are placed at regular intervals. For shape of *Topi* see frontispiece.

flesh is formed gradually as human flesh is formed and (4) it differs from other fruits in containing no seed.<sup>7</sup> The breaking of the cocoanut is regarded as a bloodless sacrifice, a peace offering presented to Niranjan to secure for members of the Panth admission into heaven.

The ordinary Mahants are not men of great learning, though they have usually committed to memory a certain number of sayings attributed to Kabír and possibly also some book of which they have managed to secure a copy. Want of learning is in some sort atoned for in the opinion of their followers by a detailed knowledge of the ritual to be observed in the performance of religious ceremonies. The more learned Mahants have generally some knowledge of Tulsi Dáss's *Rámáyana* and *The Bhágawad Gita*.

Before giving an account of the ceremony of initiation and the two sacramental meals, the *Chauká Arki* and the *Jót Prasád*, it seems best to explain two terms which are especially associated with the initiation ceremony and the *Jót Prasád*. The two terms in question are *Charan Mitra* and *Parwàna*.

*Charan Mitra*, the *amrita* of the feet, is the name given to the water in which have

(7) Do they wish to imply that the cocoanut represents God made man, the word become flesh?

been washed the feet of the Head Mahant, Kabir's representative upon earth. This water is mixed with fine earth and then made up into pills. These pills may either be swallowed whole, or pounded up, mixed with water and drunk.

*Parwána* (Passport) is the name given to the betel leaf specially prepared at head quarters at the time of a celebration of the *Jót Prasád*. A pile of betel leaves, sixteen handbreadths in height is arranged upon the ground. At night time a pewter saucer is placed upon a specially prepared spot and the dew collected in this vessel is known as *amar*, water derived from heaven direct. In the morning the Mahant meditates in front of the pile of betel leaves and with the *amar* writes upon the topmost leaves the secret name of God. The betel leaves thus consecrated are made up into small portions, about a quarter of an inch square, and distributed among the Mahants for use at a celebration of the *Jót Prasád* or for presentation to a candidate at the time of his initiation. The *Parwána* is said to represent the body of Kabir.

The ceremony of initiation is one of considerable solemnity. The candidate in the presence of the Gurú and other members of the *Panth* makes the required promises and is solemnly warned as to the consequences for



good or evil that will depend upon the way in which he afterwards observes them.<sup>8</sup> While *bhajans* are being sung by those present half of the mantra is whispered into the left ear of the candidate by the Gurú, who afterwards places in his two outstretched hands, placed together, some grass, *pán* leaves and white flowers. A Bairági, taking a brass vessel containing water in one hand, with the other leads the candidate to another quarter of the room where he allows the grass, etc. to fall upon the ground. Having moved a short way from that spot the candidate again places his hands together and into them the Bairagi pours water from the vessel. With the first handful of water he rinses out his mouth; with the second he washes his face. After this the candidate is led back to the Gurú. The Gurú takes up a *Kanthi* and makes it over to a Bairági who takes it round the assembly and presents it to all members of the Panth in turn. All touch it with their hands and it is then returned by the Bairági to the Mahant.<sup>9</sup> The Mahant placing

(8) Most members fear to violate promises made in so solemn a manner, lest the wrath of God should fall upon them. It is said that one, a seller of oil, drank some wine and eat some flesh. He was expelled from the Panth and immediately fell ill. After six months he recovered and was readmitted into the Panth, but after an interval of a year he repeated his offence and died in consequence. Another member who committed a similar offence is said to have lost the use of a hand.

(9) This process is known as *Gawàhí* (Witness).

the *Kanthi* in his open hands does obeisance to the Gaddi and then stretching it between the thumb and first finger of both hands lets it fall over the head on to the neck of the candidate, as he kneels before him.<sup>10</sup> At the conclusion of this ceremony he whispers the whole *mantra* into the right ear of the candidate.<sup>11</sup> So soon as the *mantra* has been communicated the new disciple is warned that he must on no account eat the fruit of the fig tree (*gúlar*). In reply to inquiries as to the reason for this prohibition, he is told that the fruit contains many flies and cannot therefore be eaten without much destruction of life. From amongst the articles of food that have been placed beneath a clean cloth the Gurú then takes a cocoanut and places it in the two hands of the candidate who touches with the fruit his right shoulder, his breast and forehead and returns it to the Gurú with a fee

(10) None but a Mahant may invest anyone with the *Kanthi* of the order. A Cawnpore Mahant once fell into the hands of the police who at once destroyed his *kanthi*. As soon as the Mahant recovered his freedom he invested himself with a second *kanthi*. This irregularity was at once reported to the Head Mahant and the offender and another member of the Panth who was supposed to have connived at his offence, were immediately excommunicated.

(11) In the Kabir Chaura section only one *mantra* is communicated to the candidate, viz. the *Guru Mantra*. In the Dharam Dass section two *mantras* are communicated at the time of initiation, the Gurú *Mantra* and the Tinká Arpan *mantra*, and three more subsequently in response to inquiry, viz. the Páñch Nám, the Sat Nám and the Har Nám. The Gurú *Mantra* in use in the two sections is said to be different in form. In the Kabir Chaura section any reference to Dharam Dass is avoided as far as possible.

of one rupee. The Gurú, having washed the cocoanut with betel leaves dipped in water, breaks it upon a stone. He proceeds with a knife to cut up the flesh of the cocoanut into small portions and deposits them in an open dish. He next pours into the hands of the candidate some *Charan Mitra* which he reverently drinks. The Mahant then takes a *pín* leaf and placing upon it a *parwána*, a portion of cocoanut, some *batása*, *gúr*,<sup>12</sup> raisins and currants, deposits it in the outstretched hands of the candidate who transfers it to his mouth. After the candidate has in this way been received into the Panth all members present receive at the hands of the Guru a betel leaf upon which is placed a portion of the cocoanut, some *batása*, *gúr*, raisins and currants. No portion of the cocoanut may be destroyed or eaten by those who are not members of the *Panth*.<sup>13</sup> Any portion that remains over is carefully preserved by the Gurú and given to *Panthis* in other places that he may visit, with a statement as to the name and residence of the new disciple at whose initiation it was offered. This ceremony is followed by a feast, in which

(12) *Batása* is a small sugary wafer in common use at religious gatherings; *Gúr* is a preparation of sugar.

(13) A corresponding ceremony exists among other sects but different fruits are used, e. g. the followers of Tulsi Dás partake of a plantain. One plantain only is used for this purpose. If many members are present, it is mixed with other food till the quantity is sufficient. The *Itanmandis* eat the leaf of the Tulsi plant.

members of other religious sects are also permitted to take part. Reverence is paid to the Gurú and Parameshwar and many *bhajans* are sung in honour of Parameshwar and Kabír.

This ceremony which in a measure corresponds to Christian Baptism is known as *Tinkà Arpan*. In the Dharm Dàss section the candidate presents one cocoanut only and one money offering which must not be less than one rupee. In the Kabír Chaura section candidates are required to present no less than sixteen cocoanuts, since they say sixteen sons (*Sút*) were begotten of the Word, and with each cocoanut an offering of money which must not be less than four annas.<sup>14</sup> There is another important difference in the practice of the two sections. In the Dharm Dàss section this ceremony *Tinkà Arpan*, may never be repeated, whereas in the Kabír Chaura section it is performed twice, once by the candidate's personal Gurú and again by the Head Mahant in the Kabír Chaura *Math*. This difference may in part be accounted for by the fact that the Mahants of the Kabír Chaura section are not supplied with a *parwàna* and also by the fact that in this section any Bairági is authorised to initiate new members.

(14) Of the sixteen cocoanuts four are broken at the *Tinkà Arpan* ceremony, six are sent to Maghár, and three are broken at each of the two Chauka Arti ceremonies in the months of Phágun and Bhádon.

Every member of the *Panth* is required to supply the material wants of his Gurú to the best of his ability, and also to pray on his behalf. As on account of such material help the Gurú is benefited by an increase in the number of his chelas, he is not himself allowed to invite others to become members of the *Panth*.

As regards discipline, any disciple who brings discredit on the *Panth* by irregularity of life or who in other ways offends against the traditions of the order is in the first place censured by his Gurú and subsequently, should he refuse to listen to advice, excluded from all religious gatherings. His company is avoided by other members of the *Panth* and his salutations disregarded by the Gurú.

The ordinary members of the *Panth* believe that the souls of *Panthis* after death enter Heaven (*Baikanth*) or Hell (*Narak*) and there remain till they have been sufficiently rewarded or punished for deeds done in the body. They then return to earth, but always apparently clothed in a human body. This succession of lives continues till the soul freed from desire becomes absorbed in God. A member of the *Panth* quoted to me the following saying attributed to Nának :— “We want neither *Baikanth* nor *Narak*, but true life (*púrí zindagí*),

and that is obtained when there are no more links with this earth."<sup>15</sup>

Members of the *Kabir Panth* are encouraged to observe every Sunday as well as the last day of the lunar month (*Puran Mâsi*) as a day of fasting, and having bathed to assemble at 8 o'clock in the evening to join in a service, known as *Chauka*,<sup>16</sup> which takes the form of a religious meal.<sup>17</sup> A piece of ground measuring either 5 or 7 yards square is specially prepared and cleaned. In the centre of this square is measured out a smaller space, 2½ yards square. This inner square is covered over with flour, and in its centre are placed some flowers<sup>18</sup> imme-

(15) We may possibly in this belief see traces of Muhammadan or Christian teaching.

(16) *Chauka* is the term applied to the portion of ground specially prepared for the consumption of food. The ground is divided up into squares, each one of which is occupied by one person.

(17) All who attend the *Chauka* observe a fast throughout the preceding day, but are allowed to drink water or water sweetened with sugar, if they find their thirst oppressive. The majority of those who belong to the *Panth* are content to perform their devotions at home on Sundays and in this case only keep the fast up to midday. The *full* *Chauka* service, followed by a meal as described below is only performed of necessity on two occasions in the year, in the months of *Phâgun* and *Bhâdon*, which roughly correspond to March and August. On these occasions the Mahant himself is necessarily present and all members are required to attend. Observance of the whole day fast is a necessary condition of attendance at a *Chauka* whether the Mahant is present or not.

(18) This specially prepared ground is covered over with an awning (*Chandrolâ*). The colour of the awning, as well as that of the flowers, is white on festal occasions; red when the service is held in memory of the dead. In addition to the flowers that lie upon the *chaukâ* a bunch of flowers is suspen-

diately in front of the service book (*Puno Granth*). The Mahant sits in the enclosure, facing the congregation, with the service book before him. On his right hand within the smaller square are placed (i) a small metal box containing *Charan Mitra* and *Parwána*, (ii) a dish containing 125 betel leaves<sup>19</sup> arranged around the edge with a single leaf in the centre on which is placed a piece of camphor, and (iii) a pillar composed of dough, constructed with a hollow top, in the centre of which is placed a stick enveloped in cotton wool. During the service *ghi* is poured over this stick which is then lighted and serves as a candle throughout the ceremony. On the left hand of the Mahant are placed (i) a dish containing *batása* and *gír*, (ii) a cocoanut and (iii) a brazen vessel (*Khalsa*) containing water.

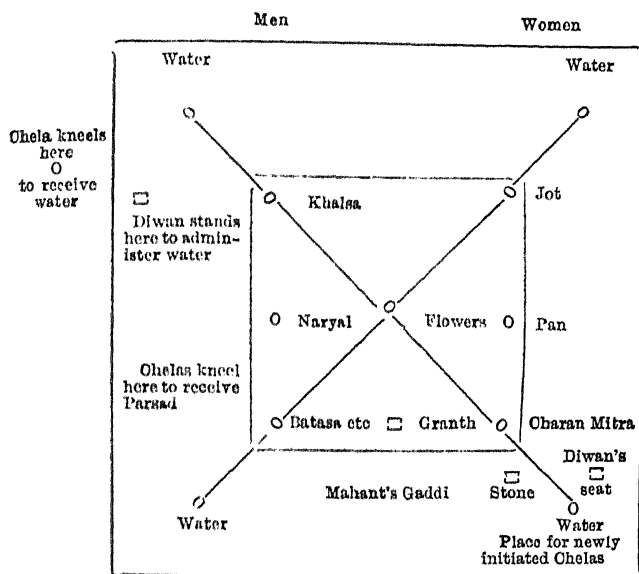
At each corner of the inner portion of the *Chauka* is placed a small earthenware jar con-  
ded from the centre of the awning.

The *Chauka* is arranged by the Mahant. When he is not present the central portion is not overlaid with flour; there is no box containing *Charan Mitra* and *Parwána*; in the place of the dough-made candle-stick is placed a dish on which camphor is burnt, the water is placed in an ordinary *lota* and not in a *khalsa*; for the whole cocoanut are substituted fragments of cocoanut bought in the bazar.

The flour in the centre of the inner portion of the *Chauka* is fashioned to represent nine lotus flowers arranged in a circle. Upon these, which represent the sun, moon and seven planets rest the natural flowers.

(19) To eat a betel leaf on such occasions is equivalent to taking a vow to loyally observe the rules laid down. The Mahant removes to his own lodgings any betel leaves that may be over from the *Chauka* service, but may only eat them himself or give them to another member of the Panth.

taining water ; on this jar rests an earthenware plate containing grain, and over this is placed a lamp (*chiragh*) fed with linseed oil.<sup>20</sup>



The Mahant, at the conclusion of the service, which he reads out of the book, lights the candle which stands in the centre of the candlestick made of dough. He next lights a piece of camphor on a stone that is set beside him

(20) The grain in the plate is to absorb any oil that may fall from the lamp and so preserve the purity of the water. There is a similar arrangement in the case of the Khalsa. The water in the earthenware vessels is used should the supply of water in the Khalsa (a large round brazen vessel) prove insufficient.



and taking the cocoanut pours water over it and then breaks it upon the stone <sup>21</sup>, and finally lights the piece of camphor in the centre of the *pán* dish and while the camphor is burning waves it backwards and forwards (*Artí*.) The dish is then passed round and those present place in it a small offering. These offerings are taken by the Mahant for the use of his *Math*. He then takes half of the flesh of the cocoanut and with a penknife cuts it up into small portions which he places on a pewter plate. All present approach the Mahant in turn <sup>22</sup> and receive into the palm of their right hand a betel leaf, a fragment of cocoanut, a little *gúr* and some *batása*. This they eat as they kneel before him on one knee, exercising the greatest care lest any portion should fall upon the ground. Each man as he retires has water poured upon his hands for cleansing purposes.

When all have received, the Mahant says some prayers privately, then some more aloud, and closes the service with a short address in which he urges all to lead good lives. After

(21) The shell of the cocoanut represents Shaitan (*Kál*) who wishes to keep from men the blessing contained in the milk and milk-formed flesh of the fruit.

(22) On great occasions there may be as many as 200 present, men and women. The men sit on one side and the women on the other facing the Mahant, but come up in any order to receive the *Prasád*. It is said that about a fourth of those present at the Chauka service receive the *Jot Prasád*.

the address the *Gurú* does reverence to the *Chauka*, after which all present do reverence to him. This part of the service which is interspersed with the singing of many *bhajans* usually concludes at about 3 a. m.

After an interval of an hour or so this service is followed by one of a more solemn character known as *Jot Prasàd*.<sup>23</sup> The Mahant's servant takes the dough out of which the candle-stand was formed and mixing with it additional flour, *ghí* and fragments of cocoanut, with the help of others kneads it up again and makes it over to the Mahant. Out of this dough the Mahant makes a number of small wafers, (*puri*), measuring about two inches in diameter. When these have been prepared he calls aloud that *Jot Prasàd* is ready, and all return to their places. The Mahant reads a short address, after which an interval is left for private prayer or meditation. All who feel themselves unworthy to proceed further with the service then retire to a distance. Those who remain approach in turn the Gurú and placing their hands together receive into the palm of the right hand which is uppermost a small pill of *Charan Mitrá* and a portion of *Parwána*, and this disposed of receive into the same hand one of the wafers. They then draw near to the *Díwàn*, who from

(23.) *Jo*, the flame of a candle ; *Prasàd*, consecrated food,

a brazen vessel pours into the palm of their right hand a few drops of water which they drink. After this they retire to a distance and an attendant pours water over both their hands to cleanse them from contact with their lips. This food is regarded as Kabir's special gift and it is said that all who receive it worthily will obtain eternal life.

This service is followed by a substantial meal, which is paid for by subscription, should no wealthy member of the Panth have come forward to defray the cost. <sup>24</sup>

After listening to this account of the service I inquired of the Mahant as to the fate of those who abstained from receiving the gifts of Kabir. He replied that all men on their death-bed could receive from their Mahant *Prasád*, *Charan Mitra* and *Parwána* and that in cases where the Mahant lived at a distance it was usual to place a certain amount of *Charan Mitrá* and *Parwána* with one or more of his

(24.) When a Mahant is not present these services are considerably curtailed, as the officiating chela is only provided with a service book containing a portion of the service, nor is he authorised to do all that a Mahant would do. Even when a Mahant is present the service on Sundays is only said in part and is usually brought to a close at midnight. The full service is read at *Puran Masi*. One of my informants told me that there were generally between 30 and 40 present at the Chauka which he attended on Sundays.

A full *Charuka* service or *Arti Prasád*, followed by *Jot Prasád*, can be held at any time, if some one is willing to defray all expenses, including the cost of the meal that follows in accordance with custom.

Chelas who could be trusted to keep them safe from all pollution. Such supplies could be utilised at the close of a *Puran mási Chauka*, when a Mahant was not present, or in cases of serious illness. Every Mahant, he added, kept by him a certain amount of *Prasad*, but he alone could administer or prepare this.

The Mahant explained further that it was only essential that the dying should receive *Charan Mitra* and *Parwána*; the former testified to the Chela's utter devotion to Kabir, while the latter constituted his passport to the Gurú's heavenly mansion.

Upon the death of a member of the *Panth* two cocoanuts are immediately purchased. One of these is carried by the barber in the funeral procession and placed by the side of the dead body, immediately before cremation or burial; <sup>25</sup> the other is kept in the house and reserved as an offering at the funeral *Chauka* to be held at some subsequent date.

The arrangements in connexion with a Funeral *Chauka* differ from those of an ordinary *Chauka* in that the awning over the prepared ground is of red instead of white material, a piece of white cloth is placed over the *chauka* to represent the dead man's body and the

(25). The bodies of *Bairágis* are buried; those of householders, unless they have received *Bairag*, are usually cremated.

number of betel leaves is reduced to 124, the leaf removed representing the dead man's portion.

At the commencement of the service the Mahant prays silently on behalf of the deceased that he may be preserved from all dangers on his journey. Upon the conclusion of this prayer five funeral *bhajans* are sung, after which all present three times do *bandagi* to the Gurú and to the piece of white cloth that represents the body of the deceased.

The cocoanut which has been specially reserved for this service is next washed by the Mahant and made over to some relative of the deceased or, should there be no relative belonging to the Panth, to some member attached to the same Guru as the deceased. This man after applying the cocoanut to his forehead, shoulders etc. returns it with an offering to the Mahant, who breaks it upon a stone upon which camphor is burning. The rest of the service is conducted in the manner already described. The number of cocoanuts offered varies from one to nine according to the means of the friends and relatives. Each cocoanut involves a separate offering to the Mahant. The flesh of the cocoanut or cocoanuts is made up with flour etc. into small cakes which are sent round to the houses of Kabír Panthis by the hands of Bairágis.

## ADDITIONAL NOTES.

### *The Religious Orders of Islam.*

The various orders of Darweshes in Islam correspond in a measure to the Sects of Hinduism. An interesting account of these Orders will be found in *Essays on Islam* by Canon Sell. From this account it appears that two at least of these Orders were probably established in India previous to the time of Kabir ; the Qādiriyah, founded in 1165, and the Qalandariyah, who were practically Sufis and founded in 1232.

The following details in the organisation of these Orders are worthy of attention in connexion with our subject :—

(1) The extreme respect shown to the Superior of the Order.

“The head of an Order is the spiritual heir of its founder, and is called the Shaikh. ...He is looked up to with the greatest veneration ; in fact absolute obedience to the Shaikh is the very essence of the system. ....The adoration of the Master too often takes the place of the worship of God, and the ideal life of a Darwesh is one which is absolute conformity to the will of the Shaikh. Thus, Thou shalt be in the hands of thy Shaikh as a corpse in the hands of those who prepare it for burial. God speaks to thee through him. Thou art his slave and thou canst do nothing without his order. He

is a man chosen of God. Banish from thy heart any thought to which God or the Shaikh might object."

(2). Branch establishments (Zāwiyah) under the control of a Muqqadim who must be implicitly obeyed by all members of the Order, living in the monastery.

(3). The spiritual guide is called a Pír (Hindu, Gurú). The ordinary members of the Order are called Ikhwān (Brothers), Ashāb (companions), Muríd (Disciples), or generically Darweshes.

(4). There are lay associates, not resident in the monasteries who are in possession of secret signs and words, by use of which they can obtain protection from the community. Lay associates also employ the rosary of the Order.

(5). Once or twice a year the Muqaddims meet in conference to consider questions relating to the well-being of the Order. This meeting is called Hazrat ; of the use of Huzur as applied by Kabír Panthis to the Mahant at Headquarters.

(6). Novitiates are required to prepare themselves for admission into the Order by fasting, spiritual retreat, prayer and almsgiving.

(7). Newly admitted members are said to have entered upon the Tariqa (path, Panth).

(8). All members are required to repeat daily a special form of prayer (Zikr),

Hindu Monastic Orders had been previously formed in India by Sankarāchārya, Rāmanúja Rāmanand etc.

Nanak, a Hindu by birth, was frequently addressed as a Darwesh and associated much with Muhammadans.

*Early Christian influences in Northern India.*

There have been Christians in Southern India from early days and it is quite possible that Hindu reformers, such as Sankarāchārya and Rāmanūja, came in contact with them. The former was possibly indebted to Christianity for some part of his reforming zeal, while Rāmanūja and his disciple Rāmanand<sup>1</sup> seem also to have been influenced by Christian teaching. From ancient times the more religiously disposed Hindus have been accustomed to visit places of pilgrimage in all parts of the country and when on pilgrimage to converse freely with all who enjoyed a reputation for spiritual enlightenment. Christian thought, in varying degrees of purity, may in this way have penetrated regions unvisited by professing Christians.<sup>2</sup>

The first Roman Catholic missionary to India of whose work we have any account was Friar Jordanus of the Dominican Order. He visited the east in 1321-3 and again in 1330. He mentioned Surat, Baroch and Quilon as places well suited to become centres of Missionary effort. The Inquisition, established at Goa in 1560, punished Muham-

(1) In describing Rāmanand as a disciple of Rāmanūja I do not wish to imply that the two were contemporaneous. All that is certain is that Rāmanand belonged originally to the School of Rāmanūja.

(2) For further information on this subject see Dr. Grierson's lecture on *Modern Hinduism and its debt to the Nestorians*.



madans and other strangers who exercised their religion in the countries subject to the King of Portugal.<sup>3</sup> It is probably to the Inquisition that a Kabír Panthi refers when, in describing the evils which the Panth was intended to remedy, he writes that at one time religion was so little thought of that a strange people came from the West and made the observance of religious rites a criminal offence, punishable with death.

We do not as yet know much about the work of Christian missionaries in Northern India previous to 1570,<sup>4</sup> but we know that the Emperor Akbar in 1579 sent an envoy to the Viceroy of Goa, with a request that he would send to his court some Christian teachers, capable of holding controversy with Muhammadan Mullahs. In response to this request Father Rudolf Aquaviva and two others were despatched to the royal court at Fatehpúr Sikri. Rudolf returned to Goa in 1583.<sup>5</sup> At the request of the same Emperor a second deputation, including Hieronymus Xavier a grand nephew of St. Francis Xavier, was sent to Lahore in 1595. For the instruction of non-Christians Father Xavier wrote several books; *Dastán Masíh* (Life of Christ), *Dastán San Pedro* (Life of St. Peter), and

(3) See *The Syrian Church in India* by G. M. Rae pp187-8, 198.

(4) I am informed that Father Felix is engaged in collecting material for a book that should throw interesting light upon the work of the Roman Church in Northern India, including Kashmir and Thibet.

(5) For further details about Father Rudolf's Mission, see *First Christian Mission to the Great Moghul*, by Father Goldie, published by Gill and Son, Dublin.

*Aína Haqq níma* (The mirror of Truth). *Dastán-i-Masîh* was presented by him to Akbar at Agra in 1602 and subsequently published with a Latin translation by Ludovicus de Dieu in 1639. This work is described as "Historia Christi, sed contaminata." Xavier's work entitled *Aína Haqq níma* was published about 1608 and provoked a reply from Ahmad Ibn Zain to which he gave the name "The Divine rays in refutation of Christian error."<sup>6</sup> Dean Prideaux calls this book "The Brusher of the Glass" and Guadagnoli refers to it as *Politor Speculi*. Guadagnoli possibly made use of an Arabic version of the original Persian. The Jesuits were much alarmed at the appearance of this Muhammadan work and invited some one to answer it without delay. Bonaventura Malvasia, a Franciscan friar of Bononia, replied with *Dilucidatio Speculi verum monstrantis* in 1628 and Philip Guadagnoli wrote *Apologia pro Christiana religione* which was published in Latin at Rome in 1631 and translated into Arabic in 1637. This latter essay contained many appeals to Popes and Councils which would carry little weight with Muhammadan and Hindu readers.

(6) I have had an opportunity of examining two interesting publications bearing upon the subject, viz "Controversial Tracts on Christianity and Mahamadanism" by Henry Martyn, edited by Rev. S. Lee, Professor of Arabic in the University of Cambridge and published at the Cambridge University Press in 1824; and a work by Dean Prideaux of Norwich, first published in 1697 entitled "The true nature of imposture, fully displayed in the life of Mahomet." This second work contains an interesting account of all books consulted by the author.

## Chapter VII.

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### THE TEACHING OF THE PANTH.

In considering the teaching of Kabír we confined our attention to two books, the *Bijak* and the *Adi Granth*. In that case we had practically no choice in the matter; these were the only two books which could be regarded as truly representative of the Gurú's teaching. The literature of the Panth is ever on the increase, but the thoughts expressed in most of the writings are very similar.<sup>1</sup> It therefore seems best in this case too to confine our attention to two works which may be regarded as representative of the literature as a whole and to present the reader with an abstract of their teaching. The books selected for this purpose are *Sukh Nidán* and *Amar Mul*, both of which are closely associated with the Dharm Dáss section of the Panth.

The *Sukh Nidán* is highly spoken of by Prof. H. H. Wilson, but we have come across no evidence in support of his statement that its teaching "is only imparted to pupils whose

(1) For a list of the more important writings in connexion with the Panth, see Additional Note.

studies are considered to approach perfection."<sup>2</sup> According to Kabir Panth tradition this book was written about 1729. The character of the language in which it is written, and the subject matter of the treatise afford evidence in support of this tradition. The *Amar Mul* is of still later origin, but more representative of the teaching given at the present time to members of the Panth.<sup>3</sup>

*Abstract of Sukh Nidan.*<sup>4</sup>

Chapter I. The Creator who made all things is king of all. He is the ground, the seed, the root, the branches and the tree itself. Nothing exists apart from him. He has existed in all ages and has admonished all. He is to be found in the heart wherein he has settled. Men have been led astray by Máya. From the heart of man springs good and evil ; charity, faith, right-

(2) Prof. Wilson seems to have regarded Dharm Dass (the servant of religion) as the representative disciple and to have received no information about that section of the Panth which seems in many ways to be the more important of the two.

(3) Each book belonging to the Dharm Dass section, and practically all the literature does belong to this section, is prefaced by a list of Mahants up to the date of production. This practice should throw considerable light upon the date of production, but its value is neutralised by two circumstances. The MSS are generally so badly written that the copyist prefers to copy the list of Mahants from some printed book, while those who do persevere in copying from the original often think it more respectful to the ruling Mahant to bring the list up to date.

(4) For this abstract I am indebted to the Rev. Ahmad Shah.

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eousness, sin, goodness, nearness, distance, *tirath* and fasts.

Chapter II. Dharm Dáss was in the habit of worshipping Sàlig Ráma. He used to bow down to Bhagats and Bairágis and to entertain Sadhus of all kinds. He read the *Bhagawad Gíta* and honoured Gópála in word and deed. He wore a *tilak* on his forehead and round his neck a *mála* of *tulsi* wood. He visited Dwárka, Jaggannáth, Gayá and Benares, but failed to find rest for his soul. He sang the praises of Ráma and Krishna, but all in vain. When he was at Mattra Kabír suddenly appeared before him and asked what he had been doing all his life. Dharm Dáss replied that he had been engaged in worshipping the gods and in visiting places of pilgrimage. Kabír told him that both he and the gods whom he worshipped had been deluded by Máyá; that gods, like Ráma and Krishna who did not even know the hour of their death had no right to be considered omniscient or omnipresent.

Chapter III.—Dharm Dáss was at first disgusted by the teaching of Kabír and thought, 'This low caste man wishes to lead me astray.' He ordered his servant to make a fire that he might prepare food for Sàlig Ráma. Dharm Dáss perceived that numberless ants together with their eggs were being consumed in the fire.

His heart was touched and he began to think that it was sad that the preparation of food for Sálíg Ráma should involve the loss of so much life. Kabír again appeared before him and rebuked him for his cruelty. He implored him to have mercy upon *Jivas*, to put out the flame and save as many lives as possible. He once more explained that Ráma, Krishna and Sálíg Ráma were no gods and that Ráma himself had been responsible for the loss of many lives. Kabír when he saw that Dharm Dáss was much addicted to fasting, rebuked him, saying that without food or rest he could not expect to find God. It was equally futile, he said, to wander about from one place of pilgrimage to another. He should look for one in whose heart was pity and true religion. Dharm Dáss disregarded this advice and continued in his former course.

Chapter IV.—Dharm Dáss next visited Benares and saw there an extraordinary spectacle; learned Pandits and Brahmins worsted in argument by an ordinary man. He thought to himself, "This must be the *Zinda Purush* whom I met before at Mattra." He accordingly asked Kabír, Who are you? Where do you live? Whom do you worship? Who is the Creator of the world and who is the Master of this life?

Kabír replies, I am Sat Purush ; I am peace and comfort ; I am Sukrit ; I am Sat Kabír : I am the Creator of this world. I have created the five elements : I have established three qualities. I am the seed and the tree : I am the possessor of qualities. All are contained in me : I live within all and all live within me.

Dharm Dáss inquires, If you are all things and there is nothing apart from you, how comes it about that there are heaven and hell, Ráma and Krishna, Hindu and Turk ?

Kabír replies—Your questions are reasonable, but remember earth, air, fire, water and ether are but forms of me : the whole universe is made of these. Therefore I am in all and all is contained in me. Kabír then in a lengthy speech explained how the universe came into existence. This speech is practically an exposition of certain *Ramainis* and *Shabdas* contained in the *Bijak*.

Chapter V.—At the conclusion of this speech Dharm Dáss throws his Sálíg Ráma into the river Ganges. He then asked Kabír how he could be described as *Nirákár* (without form) seeing that he is in all things, acts in all things and speaks in all things. Kabír explains at length that Máyá has deceived Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, and that woman has long been notorious for her craftiness. He mourns

for his three sons, Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva, who had been deceived by Máyá, and explains that it is for their sakes, to save them and their descendants, that he has appeared in the world in every age.

Chapter VI.—Dharm Dáss asks, "O Zinda Purush, when there were no fields, no trees, no fruits, no herbs, upon what did you live?" Kabír explains that his body is immortal and requires no material food. He again refers to his three sons and the wickedness of Máyá and relates the efforts made by his sons to remove the effects of Máyá's evil doing.

Chapter VII.—Dharm Dáss next inquires regarding the division of earth and sky, and the institution of places of pilgrimage. Kabír explains that all this is the doing of his three sons whom Máyá had deceived. He explains the character of the various places of pilgrimage and the origin of religious sects and caste. Dharm Dass asks what orders he has for him, that he may obey them. Kabír replies ; My only order for you is that you should save yourself and save others. He concludes by declaiming against false teachers and enlarges on the punishments that await their followers.

Chapter VIII.—Dharm Dáss gives expression to a difficulty that perplexes him. Men journey on pilgrimage to every quarter of the



No man can be saved by the mere singing of God's praises, any more than a parrot can save itself from the cat by singing the praises of God.

Dharm Dáss asks how salvation is to be obtained. Kabír replies :—Be constant, utter not false words, show love to others, associate with good people and especially with Sádhus. Gather wisdom from every source, attend to the wants of holy men : whenever they come to your house, wash their feet and drink the *Charan Mitra* : feed them and supply them with every comfort, learn from them whatever of good they can teach you. I am the Sádhu and all Sádhus dwell in me. If you meet with a true Sádhu, then your thoughts, words and deeds will become perfect. There are men who have disguised themselves as Sádhus, but have no right to the title. Then Dharm Dáss says, O Sat Gurú, now I know that you are the Creator, the true Sádhu and all in all. You are my Master and my place of pilgrimage. I have only one more question to ask : Those who confess their faith in you, dwell in you ; but those who fail to recognise you or decline to obey your commands, what will be the end of

such men ? what has become of those who in old days were accounted sages but knew you not ? Kabír replied, All such have been rewarded according to their works. Some have become stars, some insects or moths, some have become plants. Others have gone to hell and there they will remain for many ages. All such must pass through 84 lakhs of forms before they can obtain salvation. Those who believe in me, become absorbed in me.

Dharm Dáss entreats Kabír to accompany him to his house that he may also instruct his wife and son. When he returned to his house at Bandogarh his wife, Amíní, asked him why he had been absent so long. He tells her that he has found in Kabír him for whom he had been searching so long at places of pilgrimage and bids her also find in him the Creator of the universe, for Kabír had solved for him all the mysteries of this world. Amíní says, 'What answer shall I give to your request ? You know that some say that the creator is without form, others that he is to be found in the persons of Ráma or Krishna.' Dharm Dáss relates his own experiences, after which Amíní too becomes a disciple of Kabír. Food is prepared and a cocoanut and betel leaf are also brought and Kabír prepares for them the *Mahá Prasád*.

*Abstract of Amar Mul<sup>5</sup>.*

Chapter I. Dharm Dass explains that all the souls in the world are overwhelmed with troubles and implores the Sat Gurú to extract with all speed the arrow with which their heart is pierced. In reply to this entreaty the Sat Gurú declares that immortality attaches to those into whose heart the immortal Word has entered. To Dharm Dass's request for an explanation of the mystery of union and separation, the Sat Gurú replies that to obtain Mukhti an understanding of the Letterless One is necessary with the help of the Betel Leaf and the Coconut ; that the Supreme Being is unconditioned as containing the essence of the Letterless One; conditioned as manifesting the Divine mystery to man; that a true belief in the conditioned and the unconditioned and absorption in the Word are required of all who would escape from the power of Yáma and the toils of transmigration.

Without a knowledge of the Name none can safely cross the ocean of existence. To four Gurús has it been given to convey souls safely to the Satya Loka (Paradise), and of these four the chief is Dharm Dáss. It is for him and his 42 descendants to rescue souls from the tyranny

(5) This abstract was prepared from a translation of *Amar Mul* made for me by Mr. U. R. Clement, Head Master of the Mission School, Indore, and formerly Second Master of the Collegiate School, Cawnpore.

of Kál. Of one alone is Kál afraid and that one is the Word. The spoken word is Máyá; the unutterable name alone is true, the name that pervades all hearts. When the voice of the Word was sounded the indestructible one took form. As clouds obstruct the rays of the sun, so does Máyá withhold from man true knowledge. That soul alone attains perfection which learns the secret of the immortal root (*Amar Mui.*)

Dharm Dáss presses for a further explanation of the Betel Leaf and the Cocoanut. The Sat Gurú replies that the Betel Leaf was not produced in the way of nature but proceeded from the Word, and that the Cocoanut when broken by the true Word is accepted as a substitute for the soul which, as all else in the three Lokas, has been made over by Purusha to Dhamráe, the Angel of Death. The Cocoanut, the Betel leaf and the Word are the three boats in which souls can safely cross the Ocean of life.

He who would be saved must receive the Betel Warrant, serve the Sadhús with attention and become absorbed in the true Word. This is the secret to be revealed to the wise by Dharm Dáss and his descendants.

Chapter II. The Sat Gurú explains that átma and Brabma are one through union with Param-

âtma. Atma stands in the same relation to Param-âtma as the wave to the ocean, the spark to the fire and the ornament to the gold out of which it is fashioned. The soul abides in Brahma, as light shines in the rays of the sun. Thus Jîva and Brahma which are commonly regarded as two are really one. Those who have gained this knowledge obtain emancipation.

Dharm Dass next asks the Sat Gurú to explain to him the Letterless One, the bodiless Shabda in the body. The Sat Gurú explains that all who have assumed bodies have been produced by Shabda. Shabda is perfect and all else fragmentary. The true Shabda reverberates in the Universe. He who knows the Letterless One finds an abode in Satya Loka. In answer to further inquiries the Sat Gurú explains that the splendour of the soul in Satya Loka is equal to that of sixteen suns while the glory of Purusha himself is indescribable. The true name is the basis of the soul. By a draught of nectar doubts are removed and the thirst of ages satisfied. All the souls in Satya Loka see with the feelings of love and never give utterance to unkind thoughts. Hope and desire find no place there. The sins of millions of births are washed away by the influence of the Name. Without the Name all efforts are in vain; without the Name knowledge is of no account. As darkness prevails where

there is no lamp, so is there darkness in the heart that is without the Name.

Chapter III. To reach the Ocean of Bliss souls must serve the Satgur and so banish the fear of all ; they must receive the sacramental food and render acceptable service to their Gurú; they must promote the happiness of others and recognise that the Gurú is identical with the Lord ; they must be simple-minded and drink the water in which Sadhus have washed their feet ; they must never speak ill of their Gurú and meditate on the love of the Letterless One; they must remember the Name day and night, and place no trust in the illusion of Karma. He who knows the Name is of the family of Dharm Dáss. The Veda knows not the extent of the Name. All declare, ' We know not, we know not'. The Pandit reads and gropes in the dark; he knows not the existence of the Adí Brahma. The acquisition of knowledge produces pride and is of no use in the hour of death. Eighteen Puranas have been written and of these the Bhágawata is the best. It explains the glory of Brahma and establishes the efficacy of devotion. Fools read, but to no purpose; they think not of that which is obtainable through the intellect. Those only obtain wisdom who fall in with the Sat Gurú, Of what use is the boat without the boatman ?

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He who knows the secret of the rosary is absorbed in the true Name. Welcome the secret that overcomes fear in all three forms, physical, mental and spiritual. Escape thus from the halter of many births.

Doubt, the angel of Kál, has taken up his abode in the hearts of men. Doubt is the offspring of Dharma. He who understands the letterless one banishes doubt and enters into the house of immortality. Only through a knowledge of the Name can doubt be banished from the heart.

Dharm Dass urges that but few Jívas possess knowledge. How then can the world escape destruction ?

The Sat Gurú replies, I impart to you the secret of him that possesses knowledge. The *Hansa* that receives the Betel warrant will undoubtedly attain Nirvána. He in whose heart there is belief will safely cross the ocean of rebirths. After receiving the Betel he will speak the truth. He will keep the feet of the Satgur in his heart. He will sacrifice all for the Satgur and attend to the needs of the saints. He will banish all fondness for sons and wife and forsake all for the feet of the Satgur. He will wash his feet and drink of the washings. So in the hereafter will he drink nectar in Satya Loka. Dharm Dáss inquires whether women also

can obtain salvation. The Sat Gurú replies :— Women also can cross the ocean by faith in the Name. Women are without knowledge, therefore they must offer their body, mind and wealth to the Sants, and serve them devotedly. If they despise the Sants they will fall into the snare of Dhamráe. Those women can escape the noose of Kál who offer all at the feet of the Gurú and serve him day and night.

The Sat Gurú exhorts Dharm Dáss to shake off illusion and teach to men devotion, for on him has been placed the burden of the world and it is his seal that will be everywhere respected. To him too has been entrusted the touchstone by means of which crows (*Jivas*) can be converted into swans (*Hansas*). Through the vehicle of the Name the shape and colour of the Jiva can be changed.

Chapter IV. Dharm Dáss inquires into the meaning of the touchstone and is told that it varies in the case of individuals. In the case of the wise it is to be found in a knowledge of Shabda, in the case of children in the reception of the Betel leaf, and in the case of the passionate in devotion.

After all these explanations the Sat Gurú is angered when Dharm Dáss asks how it is possible for the Sant to live in this world, and disappears from view. Dharm Dáss is much



distressed and cries, "Be merciful, O Lord, the perfect Gurú. I knew not that you could read the heart; through ignorance I failed to understand your teaching. In my pride I erred; pardon my fault. O Gurú, you are the true Gurú; like unto Brahma. I was very proud, but when a child speaks foolishly its parents hasten to forget its foolishness. O Lord, the merciful one, have pity on me now. If you do not reveal yourself to me again, I will destroy my life. It was you who imparted to me this religion, therefore I put to you that question." Kabír had pity on Dharm Dáss and again appeared before him. The joy of Dharm Dáss was as that of the Chakor when it beholds the moon.

He held fast to the feet of the Gurú and worshipped him; he washed his feet and drank of the water in which they had been washed. Then he prayed, "O Lord, give unto thy servant *Muhâprasád*".

At the bidding of Dharm Dáss Amini prepared a plentiful repast and Arti was offered in a golden vessel. The wife of Dharm Dáss and all his children fell at the Gurú's feet and drank the water in which they had been washed. All listened to the words of divine knowledge. The Lord Kabír sat at the Chauka. After Kabír had eaten and washed, he offered Prasád to Dharm Dáss and all those who were present.

All that were in the house were filled with joy.

Then Amini prepared a bed upon which the Sat Gurú took his seat. Dharm Dáss fanned him, while Amini shampooed his feet. All the Sants adored him. Then Amini said, Lord, I offer in thy service this body of mine, my heart, my wealth and all that I possess. Do as it pleaseth thee. Then the Lord took her by the hand and set her beside him on the bed. He tested her and placed his hand kindly on her head and said, Amini, go your way, I see that your mind is chaste. The mind leads one to do good and bad actions, and makes the body act according to its pleasure. For your sake I have renounced all desires of the flesh.

The Sat Gurú then renewed his promises to Dharm Dáss assuring him that he should have forty-two generations of children in whose hands would rest the salvation of the world.

Dharm Dáss said, 'O Lord, grant unto my descendants this blessing that through them souls may be set free. This is my prayer, that my descendants may be accounted as yours; then all will be saved.'

The Sat Gurú replied, "In the world the Hansas will be set free by the hands of thy descendants. The children of thy generations shall be welcomed as a touchstone. They will

be free from the disturbance of passion, their minds will be absorbed in the contemplation of Shabda, their mode of living will be serious and collected; their thoughts and words will be directed towards the truth; they will have a knowledge of self and subtle things. He is my descendant who knows Shabda. How can he be saved who makes distinctions in the touchstone? I have revealed the path to you, but remember that there is no sin so great as that of hiding the path of salvation. Those who know the word should proclaim it in various countries and liberate all Hansas that have intelligence. None can be saved without the Name. All who are without the Name are proud. Very few have experience of the Name. Dharm Dáss, remember, I am day and night with him who knows the Name."

Chapter V. The Sat Gurú explains that Dhamráe had objected to his coming into the world to save souls since all three Lokas had been made over to him by Purusha, and had asked by what name he hoped to liberate the Hansas. All who performed religious acts were in his power, including Shiva, as he sat with pride in *Samádhi*; in the great day of destruction all would be destroyed by him, even Vishnu, the greatest of all. Gyáni had replied that Dhamráe had acted as a thief, seeking to estab-

lish his authority where he had no right to rule and that for this reason he had been sent forth to rescue souls by Purusha, the true God, with whom Dhamráe had vainly striven to identify himself. Dhamráe had implored Gyáni to be kind to him, even as Purusha had been kind, but that Gyáni had only consented to leave him undisturbed on condition that he would promise not to approach those who had received the Betel leaf, to treat with kindness all who had become Gyáni and to show love to all who had welcomed Shabda. Dhamráe had accepted this offer, but had at the same time been warned that his rule would come to an end so soon as Shabda had become established in the world.

Dharm Dáss thanks the Sat Gurú for having thus cooled the lotus of his heart, and asks for a fuller account of Kál.

The Sat Gurú explains that Kál is the cause of all actions in this world, that he has deceived the ten Avatars of Vishnu, is the cause of virtue and vice, is in reality a form assumed by Purusha and has power over all but Shabda. Kál is the author of that duality which exists wherever the true Word has not been apprehended. *Yog, jap, tap*, sacrifice and alms-giving all have their origin in a fear of Kál. Kál is an embodiment of selfishness; he devours all who live a life of enjoyment. Through Kál

creation has come into existence and in Kál it will fade away.

In reply to an inquiry as to which was first, Purusha or Kál, the Sat Gurú explains that first was space, and that in that space Purusha produced Shabda from Shabda, that space and time (Kál) were really one, but that so terrible was Kál that none dare look upon his face. But for the noose of Kál there had been no need for devotion. Only through a knowledge of the Name could the fear of Kál be overcome.

Chapter VI.—In connexion with an account of the Chauka Dharm Dáss asks for how many sins a cocoanut should be broken and is told that a cocoanut is broken for sins a lakh and a quarter in number. He is also told that the splitting of the straw will wash away the sins of many births.

The following Mantras are prescribed :—

(1) *At the time of drinking water.*—Immortal tank and transparent water. The Hansa drinks to his satisfaction. The body is gold, the mind is blissful, the fear of Karma is effaced.

(2) *At the time of bathing.*—The water of Sat Sukrit was brought in. The child of Dhani bathed. He directed his attention to the feet of the Lord. Kabír says—Hear, Dharm Dáss, in the beginning and the end there exists an abode of blazing flame. The immortal name

is peaceful. In fourteen mansions and nine apartments there is one true Kabír.

(3) *At the time of taking food.*—The Chauka is made of the Word that removes fear; purification is the result of satisfaction and good character. There is the light of love and faith; Sat Sukrit began to dine. When the name of Sat Sukrit was pronounced, the water became sacred, giving joy to the Sants. All the Sants united to produce light. Father Kabír began to eat and the wealthy Dharm Dass was taking his food. Then all the Sants took Prasád. The saved enjoyed the absence of fear.

Dharm Dass makes inquiry as to what is necessary for the proper performance of Artí. He is told that in the first place the house should be whitewashed. There should be provided seven cocoanuts, thirty and a quarter maunds of sweet meats of eight different kinds, three and a quarter pounds of sugar candy, twelve thousand betel leaves and a plentiful supply of sandal wood, camphor, cloves, betel nuts and cardamums. A silk dhoti should be provided for the officiating Mahant, the canopy over the Chauka should be made of gold cloth and the vessel in which the dew is collected should be of gold.

Whoever celebrates an Artí after this manner will pass immediately to Satya Loka, provided

that it is not celebrated from any selfish motive.

Dharm Dáss urges that in this Kali Yuga men are poor and very few could afford to celebrate an Arti on so liberal a scale.

The Sat Gurú replies that a simpler form is permissible. In this three and a quarter pounds of sweets, one cocoanut and a hundred betel leaves will suffice, but a new Dhoti must be provided for the Mahant and an offering of money made by all present to the Sat Gurú.

He further adds that when the *Kadhàr* (disciples) are not in a position to celebrate the Arti once a month, it will be sufficient to celebrate it twice in the year, in the months of Phágun (February) and of Bhádon (August).

In conclusion the Sat Gurú warns Dharm Dáss that the Gurú who celebrates the Arti must have a knowledge of the letter, otherwise both he and his disciples will find themselves in Hell (Jám Loka).

Chapter VII. The Sat Gurú discourses on the four castes.

The special duty of the *Brahmin* is to gain a knowledge of Brahma. He in vain repeats the *Gyátri*, performs *Sandhya* and reads the Vedas, if he is devoid of knowledge. Why do he Brahmins confine their attention to Sanskrit? Is the vernacular unsuited to spiritual

instruction ? The Brahmins in pride of heart despise the Sādhús who are true seekers after God and taunt them with having given up caste for the sake of their stomachs. Those who know not Brahma and neglect to practise devotion cannot obtain salvation.

The special duties of the *Kshatrya* are to protect cows, Brahmins and women. But in an age when cows are slaughtered, Brahmins draw their own water and men commit adultery, of what use are the Kshatryas ? They commit murder and receive the praise of men, but the true Kshatrya is he who exercises forbearance and has true sympathy with others.

The special duties of the *Vaishya* are to have pity upon the hungry and to go on pilgrimage, but it is vain to strain water before drinking, in the desire to save life, if there is no faith in Hari. Those who indulge in sensuality fall into the power of Yámaráj, and in vain worship Parasnáth, the great, wise Gurú, when they disregard his counsel. Let all such fall at the feet of the Sat Gurú and learn the secret of the Name.

The *Sudra* whose duty it is to render service has discovered the Bhakti of the Satgur. He serves the Brahmin and has cast forth from his heart all desires of the flesh, anger and avarice. He serves also the Kshatryas and the



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Vaishyas and is well spoken of in Brahma Loka. Other castes neglect their duties, but the Sudra prostrates himself at the feet of the Sat Gurú and so finds his way to Satya Loka.

Dharm Dáss, you are a Sudra by caste, but all who honour the water of your feet will escape from the ocean of rebirths. The soul that is born a Sudra is saved, if it meditates on Brahma. Kál in vain attacks the soul that knows the mystery of Shabda.

Dharm Dáss says, Lord, through you I have obtained Mukhti, but why has not my family also obtained it ?

The Sat Gurú explains that his descendants up to the eighth generation will be tainted with pride, treat with contumely men who bear the name of Kabír, and seek honour in the world instead of placing reliance on the Name.

Those who practise true Bhakti save themselves and others, spend all that they have in feeding Sádhus, speak the truth to all, cherish the true name in their hearts suffer not feelings of anger to arise, speak under the influence of the Name, reason about knowledge and preach the doctrine of Shabda.

In the eighth generation will be born a child who will bring men back into the true Path.<sup>6</sup>

(6) Are we to infer from this statement that *Amar Mul* was written when the eighth Mahant was on the gaddi ?

The Jiva that finds the immortal Name loses all fear. I dwell in the heart in which the immortal Shabda shines. Regrets will be the portion of him who finds not the immortal Name.

Chapter VIII. Dharm Dáss gives expression to his belief that the Purusha dwells in the Gurú and that there is no distinction between the Gurú and the Purusha. The Sat Gurú again describes the work assigned to Dharm Dáss and his descendants. Dharm Dáss says that with the permission of the Gurú he will send all the children (disciples) to Satya Loka. The Sat Gurú reminds him that there are two kinds of children, those of the flesh and those of the spirit, and that the spiritual children are those who cherish the name of the Sat Gurú. The time will come, he adds, when all creation will enter Satya Loka and all animate beings become absorbed in the Satgur.

Dharm Dáss urges that the work of saving souls belongs to the Sat Gurú and that he himself might well be relieved of so great responsibility. This the Satgur declines to do.

Dharm Dáss inquires why he, being the Purusha, had visited this mortal world. The Satgurú speaks of the time when there was neither space nor non-space, neither sin nor righteousness, neither Shesha (serpent) nor Kál, neither the

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seven days of the week nor the fifteen days of the lunar month, when Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva had no existence. Then the Adi Purusha produced the world through Shabda and Shabda produced intelligence. Finally Kāl was brought into existence and began to persecute the Jivas. Purusha perceiving this had pity upon them and sent the Satgur to rescue them from the clutches of Kāl.

He compares Purusha to a child who builds a house and then destroys it and afterwards runs crying to his mother, saying, "Build again for me my house." Such is the sport of Purusha. He is foolish and he is wise, he is proud and he is humble, he is true and he is false. Such teaching is only for those who have the power to understand.

Dharm Dáss asks for an explanation of Atma Gyán that all the Hansas may obtain salvation. The Sat Gurù explains that he who has divine knowledge will understand that the Gurú and the Chela are one. So also the enemy and the friend are one. Himself is active and himself is passive; himself shows and himself sees; himself causes birth and death, and himself is death; himself is the image and himself the worshipper; himself is the branch and himself the tree; himself is all manifest and himself is hidden in himself.

But why, Dharm Dáss asks, why if all is equivalent to Brahma, does the Jíva remain in ignorance ? The Sat Gurú explains that Brahma is the seed out of which all things are developed and that the Shabda is of subtle form ; that the Jíva is in Brahma as the wave is in the sea, the ray of light in the sun, oil in the oil seed and the scent in the flower.

Such is the relation of Atma to Paramàtma.

Chapter IX. The Sat Gurú explains that all sense of duality is due to Máyá, that when man knows himself he becomes himself, and when he realises himself he becomes Brahma. Until he knows himself he weeps and cries, and wades through the swamp of delusion.

The light of knowledge shines forth when Brahma abides in the heart. Then *Karma* and *Dharma* are obliterated ; then there is neither coming nor going. As it was, so it is, and all intervening delusion disappears. All apparent contradictions are reconciled in the fulness of knowledge. Brahma himself is the Word that cannot be uttered, and himself the Word that speaks to all ; himself is formless and himself is all the forms ; he is both *Nirguna* and *Saguna*. Dharm Dáss is warned that he must first purify his own heart and mind before he can so preach to others that they can obtain *Mukhti* and escape from the toils of Transmigration. All

reasonings and religious writings are the work of Máya; what is required is devotion and *Tattwagyan*, (the knowledge of essentials). All delusion (*Bharma*) is removed through meditation.

The Sat Gurú explains that he was once in Satya Loka, or rather beyond it, and that he then saw what is indescribable; that the form of Purusha was wonderful, to be imagined, not described; that the abodes in Satya Loka were innumerable and that in all Hansas was discernible the one letter. In the Loka of Kabír he saw the forms of many Kabirs, but looking again he saw that it was but one form multiplied. In the light of the true Shabda all is one, there is no second.

The people of the world are taught by means of stories, but for those who understand, all such stories fall far short of the truth. All apparent distinctions are the creation of the mind. He who knows the letter thoroughly suffers no duality to enter into his mind. The only difference between Brahma and Jíva is this, that the latter is the reflection of the former.

Chapter X. The Sat Guru instructs Dharm Dass to act thus in the case of one who wishes to become a disciple. In the first place he should give him betel, then, if he seems to possess *gyán*, reveal to him the majesty of Shabda,

and when his faith in Shabda is confirmed impart to him profound knowledge. Atmàràṁ abides in the heart of him who has full knowledge. When Atmàràṁ is realised, he himself is Atmàràṁ ; he knows no second.

The Sat Gurú tells how once when he was in Satya Loka Purusha appeared to him and said " Kabir, you and I are one ; entertain no thought of duality. I am in you and my form is in all the earth. There are eighty-four lakhs of species and I live in all. Beside me there is no second. All creation is delusion. All the countless gods and sages, even Brahma himself, are entangled in delusion." Dharm Dàss rejoins, "(O Gurú, this is your statement. Is there not need of a second witness ?" The Sat Gurú replies that he made this statement in the Treta age, and that Madhukar, Brahmin, is the second witness. He continues, "Kabir is in all bodies; the speaker is Shabda. There is one form and one Shabda. There is only one form, and one Shabda. There is only one form, one Shabda and one Purusha, manifest in all. He who knows one is one ; the second is this world."

Dharm Dàss asks how it is that Jivas fail to realise their unity with Brahma. The Sat Gurú replies, All the Jivas came from Brahm Loka undefiled and devoid of Karma. The clouds lift up the water from the ocean and rain down

so does *Gyan* remove Karma and the purity of the Jiva is restored. Knowing itself, it separates itself from the water and being disembodied reaches the Durbar. The Atmà mingles with Paramàtmá, as the rivers flow into the ocean. Only in this way can Paramàtmà be found. The Atinà without Shabda is blind and cannot find the path. He who sees Atinàram is present everywhere ; all he sees is like himself, there is nought else beside Brahma. "I am he, I am he ; the true Kabîr."

A4

B4

## ADDITIONAL NOTES.

### *Literature on the Life and teaching of Kabir.*

Names printed in italics refer to writings that exist in manuscript only. In the case of printed books, the place of publication is added within brackets. An asterisk is prefixed to the names of MSS known only by hearsay.

1. *Achhar Bhèd ki Ramaini.*
2. *Achhar Khand ki Ramaini.*
3. *Agádh Mangal.*
4. *Agam Ujijár.*
5. *Alif Námá.* (1)
6. *Alif Námá.* (2)
7. *Alif Námá.* (3)
8. *Alláh Tok.*
9. *Amar Múl.*
10. *Ambú Ságar.* (Bombay.)
11. *Anú Rág Ságar.* (Bombay.)
12. *Asàr Gráhi ko ang.*
13. *Atam Anùbhau.*
14. *Balakh Paij.*
15. *Bhakti ko ang.*
16. *Bhau Táran.*
17. *Bhopál Bòdh.*
18. *Báráh Māsà.*
19. *Basant.*
20. *Bíjak with Commentary by Rájá of Rewah,*  
(Lucknow, Benares and Bombay.)



- 23 *Chauka ki Ramáini.*
- 24 *Chauntisi.*
- 25 *Garur Bòdh.*
- 26 *Gauri.*
- 27 *Gorakh Gusht.*
- 28 *Gur Updèsh. (Bombay.)*
- 29 *Gyán Dipak.*
- 30 *Gyàn Gòdrí.*
- 31 *Gyán Ságar. (Bombay.)*
- 32 *Hansáwálí.*
- 33 *Hanùmán Bòdh.*
- 34 *Hori.*
- 35 *Hori Rám Lílá.*
- 36 *Kabir Charitra Bódh. (Bombay.)*
37. *Kabir Kasauti. (Bombay.)*
38. *Kabir Manshúr. (Bombay.)*
39. *Kabir Upàsna. (Bombay.)*
40. *Kabir Sàhib ki Sakhi. (Lucknow.)*
41. *\*Kamòl Gusht.*
42. *Karni Bind Kathni ko ang.*
43. *Karni Sahit Kathni ko ang.*
44. *Kúsangit ko ang.*
45. *Kurmauli.*
46. *\*Madad Bódh.*
47. *Mangal.*
48. *Mukti Mál.*

49. *Muhammad Bôdh.*
50. *Mûl Ramainl. (Lucknow)*
51. *\*Mûsa Bôdh.*
52. *Nâm Mahâtam.*
53. *\*Nânak Gusht.*
54. *Niranjan Gusht.*
55. *Nirbhai Gyân.*
56. *Piya Pahchan ko ang.*
57. *Pûno Mahâtam.*
58. *Ramanand Gusht.*
59. *Rekhtâ.*
60. *Sadhû ko ang.*
61. *Sam Darsî ko ang.*
62. *Samjhe Ghat ko ang.*
63. *Santôkh Bôdh. (27 writings, Bombay)*
64. *Sarab Gyâta ko ang.*
65. *Sar Grahi ko ang.*
66. *Sar Sangrah Prishnôtar. (Lucknow.)*
67. *Sarawag Sangar Sanyukt.*
68. *Sat Kabîr ki Sâkhi.*
69. *Sat Kabîr ki Shatak Satik. (Benares.)*
70. *Sat Sang ko ang.*
71. *Sat Sang Mahima ko ang.*
72. *Shabd Bhawani.*
73. *Shabd Chauntisi.*
74. *Shabd Pûkar.*
75. *\*Sikandar Bôdh.*
76. *Sowansa Gunjar.*
77. *Sukh Nidhan.*
78. *Sukrit Dhyân.*

- 79. Ugr Gītā. (Lucknow)
- 80. \**Vasist Muni Gusht.*
- 81. Vavek Sāgar. (Bombay.)
- 82. *Vavek Sangram.*

In addition to the above Prof. H. H. Wilson in *Essays on the Religion of the Hindus*, Vol. I pp. 76-7 mentions

*Anand Ram Sagar.*

*Balakh ki Ramaini.*

*Chancharas.*

*Hindolas.*

*Jhūlanas.*

*Kabīr Panjī*

*Kaharas.*

*Shabdawālī.*

*Pandit Walji Bhai.*

Pandit Walji Bhai, who worked for many years as a Pastor of the Irish Presbyterian Church at Borsad in the district of Khaira in Gujerat, devoted much time to a study of literature connected with the Kabīr Panth and the religion of the Sikhs. The Pandit was led to believe that the Kabīr Panth was instituted by Jesuits and found confirmation of this belief in the secrecy observed by members of the Panth regarding their literature and teaching.

In 1881 he published in Gujerati under the name *Kabīr Charitra* an exposition of his views upon the subject which he has elsewhere summarised thus:—

1. In Kabír's book it is written that when the first woman Eve, being deceived, repented of her sin, God promised that from her sex a great Man will be born and He shall overcome Satan and save His people.

2. According to the promise, God sent His Son to save the world. This Son lived with God as Word from the beginning, and at the appointed time became flesh to save His people and was called Kabír.

3. He was tempted by Satan.

4. At last He was nailed to a tree and suffered agony.

5. God's Son took the burden of His people upon Himself.

6. God's Son worked miracles.

7. God's Son rose from the dead.

8. After God's Son rose from the dead He commanded His disciples to go to all countries and preach the Gospel.

9. God's Son ascended into heaven.

10. In Kabír's books baptism and the Lord's Supper are commanded to be observed. Generally, all the doctrines of the Bible are to be found in Kabír's books.

He further held that Nanak, the disciple of Kabír, was also influenced by Christian teaching and that Hari, the name given to the Sat Gurú in the Adi Granth, was used as a synonym for Christ. He worked out his theory with great industry and

published the results of his studies in two small volumes, *Hari Charitra* and a *Key to the Adi Granth*.<sup>1</sup>

I had some interesting correspondence with the Pandit which was only interrupted by his death in December 1903.

The Pandit's writings are not marked by any great critical acumen. Many of his interpretations may be regarded as far fetched, while his suggested derivations of words are often more ingenious than convincing. His main position is undermined by the assumption that Kabir is responsible for all literature connected with the Panth. In spite, however, of these defects he has much to say that is both interesting and suggestive. Would that more Indian Christians would study the religious beliefs of their country with equal industry and enthusiasm, and that all Indian Clergy were as diligent as he in studies that result in a more perfect understanding of the Scriptures!

*Addenda and Corrigenda.*

Page 7. In the Qorán, Sura Mariam, the infant Jesus is represented as addressing those who were perplexed as to the nature of his birth, saying "Verily, I am the servant of God etc." See *Studies in the Qorán* by Rev. Ahmad Shah, p. 106.

(1) Both these books were printed at the Presbyterian Mission Press, Ludhiana, Panjab.

Page 17. A short account of Mansur Al Halráz (the cotton carder) and Sháms Tabrezi, together with extracts from the latter's writings, will be found in *The Persian Mystics*, Wisdom the East Series, Murray.

Page 26. Och, the place where Syed Kabír-ud-dín Hassan resided, is in the neighbourhood of Balakh, the birth place of Jalál-ud-dín, *not* in Baluchistán.

Page 35. The statement that of the names Akbar, Kubra, and Kibriya, Kibriya alone is to be found in modern Qoráns, is inaccurate. All three names are to be found. Akbar occurs 22 times, Kubra 6 times and Kibriya twice.

Page 41. Balakh in north Afghanistán was the birth-place of Jalál-ud-dín Rumi, the author of the *Masnavi*. It is for Sufis a place of pilgrimage. Kabír is said to have visited Balakh. The name also occurs in the title of two Kabír writings, *Balakh* and *Balakh ki Ramaini*.

Page 46. The following Sákhí (187) occurs in the Bijak :—

I neither touched ink nor paper, nor did I take a pen into my hand ; to the sages of all four ages Kabír declared his word by mouth.

*Corrigenda.*

- Page 17. ll. 17 and 25. *For Tahrezi read Tabrezi.*  
Page 25 l. 13. *For Chishit read Chishiti.*  
Page 27. l. 6. *For Bhura read Budhá.*  
Page 31. l. 12. *For Khanti read Khanthi.*  
Page 40. note 3, l. 2. *For Nidán read Nidhán.*  
Page 43. sub. fin. *For Akardi read Aqardi, and for*  
*Tujáwar read Mujáwar.*  
Page 71. l. 22. *For safe read Sádthú.*  
Page 73. ll. 18 and 20. *For Saguna read Sarguna.*  
Page 76. l. 11. *For Rádhi read Rádha.*  
Page 116. sub. fin. *For Nidán read Nidhán.*  
Page 136. l. 25. *For Tariqa read Tariqat.*

## GLOSSARY.

- Achhàr* letter of the alphabet.  
*Agádih* deep, unfathomable.  
*Agam* unfathomable.  
*Akhàs* the fifth element, ether.  
*Alif-núma* account of Arabic alphabet.  
*Amar* immortal.  
*Ambu* perception, mind.  
*Amrita* immortal (drink), nectar.  
*Anand* happiness.  
*Anúrág* desire.  
*Artì* sacrificial offering of light.  
*Atmà* soul.
- Bairâg* renunciation of the world.  
*Bandagì* service, respectful salutation as from a slave to his master.  
*Bàrah* twelve.  
*Basant* tune or hymn associated with the season of spring.  
*Batâsa* small wafer, made of sugar.  
*Be-dharm* without religion.  
*Bhajan* hymn, sung as an act of worship.  
*Bhaktì* devotion.  
*Bhawânì* wife of Shiva. Shabd Bhawànì, a morning hymn.  
*Bhau* fear.  
*Bhed* secret, mystery.  
*Bodh* knowledge.  
*Bunniah* shop-keeper.
- Chànchará* an evening hymn.  
*Charitra* picture, biography.



*Chaukâ* square space, specially prepared for the consumption of food.

*Chauntisi* Thirty four, letters of Hindi alphabet.

*Chelâ* disciple, in 'relation to spiritual guide Gurû.

*Dâl* the split grain of certain kinds of pulse.

*Dhoti* a cloth, tied round the waist and falling over the legs.

*Dhyân* attention to.

*Dîpak* lamp.

*Durbâr* a royal levee, the judgement hall of God.

*Garur* a mythical bird, mentioned in the Râma-yana.

*Gauri* a musical measure.

*Ghat* mind.

*Ghât* flight of steps, leading down to the river ; used for religious bathing, for the cremation of the dead etc.

*Ghî* clarified butter.

*Godri* a patch-work coat, worn by *sâdhis*.

*Gunjâr* echo.

*Gusht* dialogue, controversy.

*Gyân* wisdom.

*Gyânî* possessed of wisdom.

*Gyâtâ* wise.

*Gyâtri* a sacred verse from the Rig Veda, used by Brahmins and others in their morning devotions.

*Hansâ* goose, used figuratively for the soul of man, as never abiding in one place.

*Hindola* hymn, sung while swinging in a sitting position.

*Hori* a musical mode, used during the Holi, a spring festival.

*Jám* angel of death.

*Jáneo* the sacred thread worn over the left shoulder by members of the twice-born castes; the Brahmins, the Kshattriyas and the Vaishyas.

*Jap* the mumbling of prayers or other devotional exercises.

*Jhùlana* hymn sung while swinging, in a standing position.

*Jíva* soul, life.

*Kadhár* disciple.

*Káfir* unbeliever, from a Muhammadan point of view.

*Kaharà* a musical mode.

*Kàl* time, death.

*Kanthi* a necklace, made generally of fruit seeds or wooden beads.

*Karma* action as involving punishment or reward.

*Kasauti* touchstone.

*Khand* group, division.

*Kusangit* associating with wicked persons.

*Lákh* number, 100,000.

*Langoti* loin-cloth.

*Lila* play, drama.

*Loka* world.

*Mahá* prefix = great.

*Mahátam* greatness.

*Mála* rosary.

*Mangal* joy, hymn of praise.

*Mantra* a verbal formula, used for religious or semi-religious purposes.

*Manshúr* spreading abroad, publication.

*Mása* month.

*Math* monastic building.

*Mukti* liberation, salvation.

*Mûl* root.

*Nidāhn* mansion, abode.

*Nirānjan* void of passions, a title applied to  
God by Kabir Panthis.

*Nirbhāi* without fear.

*Nirguna* without qualities.

*Pahchān* knowledge.

*Pañj* entry.

*Pān* betel leaf.

*Pānch Māl* rosary with five strings.

*Pande* a high caste Brahmin.

*Pāñji* path.

*Param-ātmā* the great, all-pervading soul.

*Param-eshwar* the great God.

*Parwāna* authoritative document, passport.

*Pir* Muhammadan saint.

*Piya* husband.

*Prasād* offering made to God.

*Prishnotar* catechism.

*Pukār* call.

*Puno* the day of full moon.

*Puno Granth* form of service used at *Puran*  
*Māsi*

*Puran Māsi* the festival of full moon.

*Purush* being, person.

*Ramaini* a short exposition of religious truth.

*Rekhta* Poetry, written in a mixed dialect  
(Hindi, Urdu, Persian, Arabic etc.)

*Sādhu* a Hindu monk.

*Sāgar* sea.

*Saguna* with qualities.

*Sākat* man of the world, unspiritual.

*Samadh* the tomb of a holy man.

- Samádhi* the condition of one completely absorbed in religious meditation.
- Sam Darsi* concentration of attention on one object.
- Samjhe* understanding.
- Sāndhya* the meeting of day and night ; a form of devotion used at that time.
- Sangráh* protection.
- Sangráṁ* battle, controversy.
- Sanyukt* union.
- Sār* whole.
- Sarab* complete.
- Sarawag* whole.
- Sat-sang* association with good men.
- Satya* true.
- Shabda* a word or saying ; the word of God, see Add. Note p 74.
- Shaikh* a Muhammadan priest.
- Shāstras* a code of laws, the Hindu scriptures.
- Shatah* one hundred approximately.
- Smṛiti* memory, religious teaching based upon tradition.
- Somtokh* contentment.
- Sowansa* breath.
- Sudra* a Hindu, not belonging to one of the three twice-born castes.
- Sukh* peace.
- Sukerī* virtuous.
- Swāmī* a Hindu religious teacher, held in great respect by his disciples.
- Tap* the practise of religious austerities.
- Tāran* enabling to cross (river or ocean.)
- Tilak* a sect mark, usually worn upon the forehead.
- Tinkā* straw.
- Tinkā-Arpan* the offering of straw in sacrifice ;

the name given to the initiatory service  
in the Kabir Panth.

*Tirtha* a place of pilgrimage.

*Tok* atom.

*Ugra* a title of Shiva.

*Ujyár* light.

*Upasna* fasting.

*Úpdesb* teaching.

*Vavek* discrimination.

*Yam* the angel of death.

*Yog* religious meditation.

*Yuga* age in the world's history.

*Zinda* living.

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# Kabīr

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# Kabir

*Al-Kabir ("the Great") is also one of the 99 names of God in Islam. For a complete disambiguation page, see Kabir (disambiguation)*

Kabir	
<div>  <p>A 1825 CE painting depicts Kabir with a disciple</p> </div>	
<b>Born</b>	1440 Lahartara near Kashi (present-day Varanasi)
<b>Died</b>	1518 Maghar
<b>Occupation</b>	Weaver, poet
<b>Known for</b>	influenced the Bhakti movement, Sikhism, Sant Mat and Kabir Panth

**Kabir** (also **Rangaa**) (Hindi: कबीर, Punjabi: ਕਬੀਰ, Urdu: کبیر) (1398-1518)<sup>[1]</sup> was a mystic poet and saint of India, whose writings have greatly influenced the Bhakti movement. The name Kabir comes from Arabic *al-Kabīr* which means 'The Great' – the 37th name of God in Islam.

Kabir's legacy is today carried forward by the Kabir Panth ("Path of Kabir"), a religious community that recognizes him as its founder and is one of the Sant Mat sects. Its members, known as *Kabir panthis*, are estimated to be around 9,600,000. They are spread over north and central India, as well as dispersed with the Indian diaspora across the world, up from 843,171 in the 1901 census. His writings include Bijak, Sakhi Granth, Kabir Granthawali and Anurag Sagar.<sup>[2]</sup>

## Early life and background

**Kabir** was born to a Brahmin widow at **Lahartara** near **Kashi** (modern day **Varanasi**). The widow abandoned Kabir to escape dishonour associated with births outside marriage. He was brought up in a family of poor Muslim weavers Niru and Nima. Vaishnava saint Ramananda accepted Kabir as his disciple; when **Ramananda** died, Kabir was 13 years old.

It is not known in detail what sort of spiritual training Kabir may have received. He did not become a sadhu, nor did he ever abandon worldly life. Kabir chose instead to live the balanced life of a householder and mystic, a tradesman and contemplative.

Kabir's family is believed to have lived in the locality of Kabir Chaura in Varanasi. *Kabīr maṭha* (कबीरमठ), a *maṭha* located in the back alleys of Kabir Chaura, celebrates his life and times. Accompanying the property is a house named *Nīrūṭīlā* (नीरू टीला) which houses Niru and Nima's graves. The house also accommodates students and scholars who live there and study Kabir's work.

## Philosophies

Kabir's legends describe his victory in trials by a Sultan, a Brahmin, a Qazi, a merchant and god. The ideological messages in Kabir's legends appealed to the poor and oppressed. David Lorenzen describes primary purpose of his legends as a "protest against social discrimination and economic exploitation".

His greatest work is the *Bijak* (the "Seedling"), an idea of the fundamental one. This collection of poems elucidates Kabir's universal view of spirituality. Though his vocabulary is replete with Hindu spiritual concepts, such as Brahman, karma and reincarnation, he vehemently opposed dogmas, both in Hinduism and in Islam. His Hindi was a vernacular, straightforward kind, much like his philosophies. He often advocated leaving aside the Qur'an and Vedas and simply following Sahaja path, or the Simple/Natural Way to oneness in God. He believed in the Vedantic concept of *atman*, but unlike earlier orthodox Vedantins, he spurned the Hindu societal caste system and *murti-pujan* (idol worship), showing clear belief in both *bhakti* and Sufi ideas. The major part of Kabir's work as a *bhagat* was collected by the fifth Sikh guru, Guru Arjan Dev, and incorporated into the Sikh scripture, Guru Granth Sahib. The hallmark of Kabir's works consists of his two line couplets, known as the 'Kabir ke Dohe'. The Dohas reflect the deep philosophical thinking of the poet saint.

## Poetry

Kabir composed in a pithy and earthy style, replete with surprise and inventive imagery. His poems resonate with praise for the true guru who reveals the divine through direct experience, and denounce more usual ways of attempting god-union such as chanting, austerities, etc. Kabir, being illiterate, expressed his poems orally in vernacular Hindi, borrowing from various dialects including Avadhi, Braj, and Bhojpuri. His verses often began with some strongly worded insult to get the attention of passers-by. Kabir has enjoyed a revival of popularity over the past half century as arguably the most accessible and understandable of the Indian saints, with a special influence over spiritual traditions such as those of Sant Mat, Garib Das and Radha Soami.<sup>[citation needed]</sup>

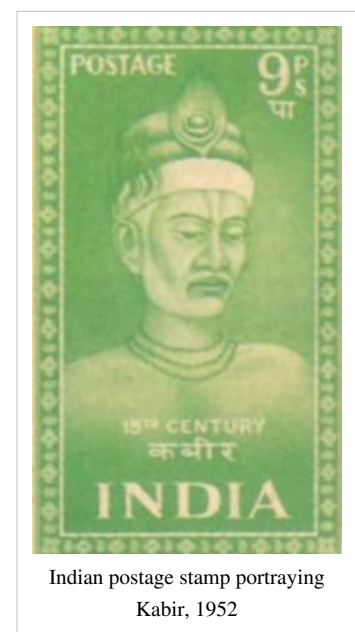
## Legacy

A considerable body of poetical work has been attributed to Kabir. And while two of his disciples, Bhāgodās and Dharmadās, did write much of it down, "...there is also much that must have passed, with expected changes and distortions, from mouth to mouth, as part of a well-established oral tradition."<sup>[3]</sup>

Poems and songs ascribed to Kabir are available today in several dialects, with varying wordings and spellings as befits an oral tradition. Opinions vary on establishing any given poem's authenticity.<sup>[4]</sup> Despite this, or perhaps because of it, the spirit of this mystic comes alive through a "unique forcefulness... vigor of thought and rugged terseness of style."<sup>[5]</sup>

Kabir and his followers named his poetic output as 'bāpīs,' utterances. These include songs, as above, and couplets, called variously dohe, śalokā (Sanskrit: ślokā), or sākhi (Sanskrit: sākhī). The latter term, meaning 'witness,' best indicates the use that Kabir and his followers envisioned for these poems: "As direct evidence of the Truth, a sākhi is... meant to be memorized... A sākhi is... meant to evoke the highest Truth." As such, memorizing, reciting, and thus pondering over these utterances constitutes, for Kabir and his followers, a path to spiritual awakening.<sup>[6]</sup>

Kabir's influence was so big that similar to how different communities argued to cremate the Buddha upon his death, after Kabir died both the Hindus and Muslims argued to cremate it in Varanasi or bury it in Maghahar them according to their tradition.<sup>[7]</sup>



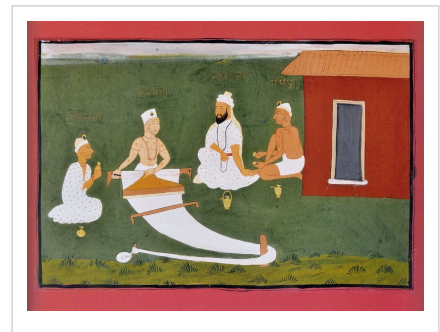
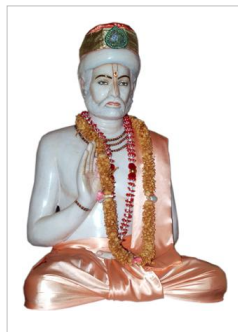
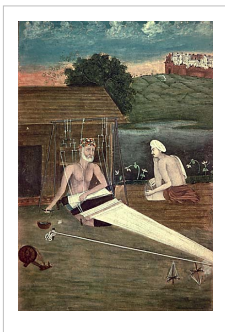
Indian postage stamp portraying Kabir, 1952



# Kabir panth

The **Satguru Kabir Panth** (Hindi: कबीर-पंथ) "Path of Kabir") is a Philosophy and religious community of India encompassing a wide spectrum of beliefs, traditions and practices based on the teachings of Kabir. Its adherents are of Hindu, Buddhist and Jain ancestry (with an overwhelming majority being Hindu.<sup>[1]</sup>) . KabirPanthis or "followers of the path of Kabir" are numerous throughout all parts of India and are also found in Indian communities in large numbers in Africa, particularly Eastern Africa in Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Uganda and the island of Mauritius as well as in Nepal, Tibet, Sri Lanka, Guyana, Fiji, Suriname, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, New Zealand, Australia, United Kingdom, Canada and the United States.

## Pictures about Kabir



## Kabir

Kabir Sahib appeared on lotus in the Hindu holy city of Varanasi, also known as Kashi, in the 13th century AD and disappeared in the early 15th century AD. According to some people he was initiated by Ramananda, a famous Hindu guru and community leader at that time. Using poignant language, Kabir criticized caste ideology and declared the equality of all human beings. He employed a Socratic method of teaching, pleading with all human beings regardless of their gender, status, caste, color, race, religion or occupation to think critically about their lives and pursuits and the salvation of their soul. He "spoke truth to power", confronting the most hostile of the Muslim rulers as well as the Hindu kings and sages, Buddhist scholars and Jain monks of the time, and was fearless and relentless in his pursuit of the salvation of humanity at large.<sup>[citation needed]</sup>

Kabir Sahib was an oral poet whose works were written down by others. His lyrics have flourished for more than 600 years, producing music, folk and classical, in countless local dialects and regional styles. Thousands of poems are popularly attributed to him.

## Practices and beliefs

Kabir Panthis can follow the ethical and social customs of the day according to tradition without hindrance. Lay persons can be cremated according to Hindu law and priests can be buried or cremated depending upon which tradition one wishes to follow . In the West Indies and across Canada and North America, Kabir Panthis may opt for burning or burial.

Kabir Panthis observe sanctity and purity in their daily lives and behavior. The foundation of their belief and practice is Dharma, or "the natural Law of life", Satya, or "The primordial and eternal truth", Ahimsa, or "Non-violence towards all beings through word and deed", Bhakti, or "devotional love for god and a higher spiritual reality", Sraddha, or "Faith and unswerving loyalty", Asteya, or "not hoarding, not coveting", Kshama, or "forgiveness and patience", Daya, or "compassion, mercy, and conquering feelings of cruelty and insensitivity towards all beings",

Shaucha or "purity in body, mind and speech", Aparigraha, or "limiting possessions to what is necessary and being non-materialistic", Anekantvada, or "acceptance of different beliefs and the multiplicity of viewpoints", Vishva Bandhutva, or "The universal brotherhood of all beings" and Atma Gyan or "The awareness of ones true self, which is no different from the one true reality which pervades in everyone, thus making everyone the one and only true reality". This basic set of guidelines gives Kabir Panthi's an all encompassing formula for Love, Humility, Compassion and Unity. A Kabir Panthi Lay person is called a Bhakt and priests are addressed with the honorific title of Mahant. Spiritual leaders are called Acharya or Guru. Monks who are more ascetic in nature, who do not marry and engage in more severe spiritual pursuits while never living in one place, constantly moving from monastery to monastery are called Brahmachari Sadhu's, whereas those monks who do marry, have children and live a more relaxed spiritual life are *Grihasta* Sadhus. Similarly, women who have chosen to be Nuns are called Sadhvis. God is called by an infinite array of names but some of the more common names are "Satya Purush", "Soham Sadguru", "Adi Guru, Param Satyeshwar", or simply "Sadguru Kabir Saheb". During their religious ceremonies Kabir Panthi's sing the songs, *bhajans* and *Sakhis* of Kabir to the music of cymbals, drums and other Indian instruments. The Guru recites various prayers and Mantras, all of which remind devotees to remember God in all that they do.

One's mind and body must be kept pure by contemplation and avoiding gross and complicated behaviour. Such practice will allow one to attain salvation while living no matter what ones religion or other personal endeavour may be. A mark of initiation into the Kabir Panth is given in the form of a Kanthi Mala. It is a necklace made from the sacred Tulsi beads. It is also made out of holy Rudraksha beads and can also be made using yagyopaveet string with just one large Tulsi or Rudraksha bead. It is worn by choice and is typically given to one who has committed to avoiding lust, anger, greed, attachment to perishable things, and ego. Sahaja Yoga involves remembering God by repeating *Satyanaam*. Kabir Panthis believe in simplicity of life; simple food, clothing and belongings. One should only acquire what is needed for sustenance. Kabir Panthis are strictly vegetarian and avoid the use of alcohol and tobacco.

Separate organizations have formed over the years. One of the largest groups of Kabir Panthis outside India is in Trinidad and Tobago: three smaller active groups exist in Guyana, Suriname and also in Canada. The Kabir Panth Association in Trinidad and Tobago operates two primary schools and was one of the first religious denominational schools founded in the region. Recently, other groups have been formed in Trinidad and Tobago [like Kabir Chaura Math, Satya Kabir Nidhi], each with their own emphasis on the teachings of Kabir Saheb and with their own affiliations in Trinidad and Tobago, Bhaarat and elsewhere in the World.

## Scriptures

### The Bijak

The most sacred books of the Kabirpanthi sect are the Bijak, many passages from which are presented in the Guru Granth Sahib and the Anuraag Saagar. In a blunt and uncompromising style the Bijak exhorts its readers to shed their delusions, pretensions, and orthodoxies in favor of a direct experience of truth. It satirizes hypocrisy, greed, and violence, especially among the religious.

The Bījak includes three main sections (called *Ramainī*, *Shabda* and *Sākhī*) and a fourth section containing miscellaneous folksongs. Most of Kabir's material has been popularized through the song form known as Shabda (or pada) and through the aphoristic two-line sākhī (or doha) that serves throughout north India as a vehicle for popular wisdom. In the Anurag Sagar, the story of creation is told to Dharamdas [one of Kabir Saheb's disciples], and the Maan Sarowaris another collection of teachings of Kabir Saheb from the Dharamdasi branch of the Kabir panth.

### Anurag Sagar

### Kabir Bani

### Kabir Granthawali

### Sakhi Granth

## Biographies

Kabir Kasauti

Kabir Manshur of Paramanandadas

## Major centres

The centres of major branches of Kabirpanthis are the <sup>[2]</sup>

- Kabir Chaura based in Varanasi with a branch at Maghar, founded by Shruta Gopal Sahib (d. 1551 AD) <sup>[3]</sup>
- Biddupur seat founded by Jagu Sahib
- Dhanuati (Chhapra, Bihar) founded by Bhagvan Sahib, the scribe of Bijak <sup>[4]</sup>
- Chhatisgarh seat at Kudrimal, founded by Muktamani Sahib (Vikram Samvat 1570-1630). They belong to the line of Dharmadas Sahib.

## External links

- Website of the Kabir Chaura, monastery of the Kabir Panthis <sup>[5]</sup>
- Website for Sadguru Prakatya Dham, Kabir Bagh. Lahartara .Varanasi <sup>[6]</sup>
- Kabir : Truth Beyond Legends and Miracles <sup>[7]</sup>
- Website for Kabir Association Canada. Includes Sakhis, Romaini and Bhajans <sup>[8]</sup>
- Website of the Kabir Ashram Jamnagar <sup>[9]</sup>
- Website dedicated to Kabir Ashrams <sup>[10]</sup>
- Mandir in the capital of India, New Delhi <sup>[11]</sup>
- website of the Kabirpanthi's in Holland and Surinam <sup>[12]</sup>
- Information about Kabir Panth <sup>[13]</sup>
- website of the Sahib Bandgi in India <sup>[14]</sup>
- Website for Kabir Ashram Limdi <sup>[15]</sup>
- Bhagat Mahasabha's Efforts to Unite Kabirpanthi In India <sup>[16]</sup>
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## Sant Mat

**Sant Mat** (Hindi: संत मत) was a loosely associated group of teachers that became prominent in the northern part of the Indian sub-continent from about the 13th century. Theologically, their teachings are distinguished by an inward, loving devotion to a divine principle, and socially by an egalitarianism opposed to the qualitative distinctions of the Hindu caste system, and to those between Hindus and Muslims.<sup>[1]</sup>

The sant lineage can be divided into two main groups: The northern group of Sants from the provinces of Punjab, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, who expressed themselves mainly in vernacular Hindi, and the southern group, whose language is archaic Marathi, represented by Namdev and other Sants of Maharashtra.

### Etymology

The expression "Sant Mat" literally means the "Path of Sants (Saints)", "Path of Truth", "Right or Positive Path" or "point of view of the Sants." The term *Sant* is derived from the Sanskrit *sat* (सद्) and has overlapping usages (true, real, honest, right). Its root meaning is "one who knows the truth" or "one who has experienced Ultimate Reality." The term Sant has taken on the general meaning of "a good person" but is properly assigned to the poet-sants of medieval India.<sup>[2]</sup>

### The Sants

The Sant Mat movement was not homogeneous, and consisted mostly of the Sants' own socio-religious attitudes which were based on *bhakti* (devotion) as described a thousand years earlier in the Bhagavad Gita.<sup>[3]</sup> Sharing as few conventions with each other as with the followers of the traditions they challenged, the Sants appear more as a diverse collection of spiritual personalities than a specific religious tradition, although they acknowledged a common spiritual root.<sup>[4]</sup>

The boundaries of the movement were likely not sectarian and were devoid of Brahmin concepts of caste and liturgy. The poet-sants expressed their teaching in vernacular verse, addressing themselves to the common folk in oral style in Hindi and other dialects such as Marathi. They referred to the "Divine Name" as having saving power, and dismissed the religious rituals as having no value. They presented the idea that true religion was a matter of surrendering to God "who dwells in the heart".

The first generation of north Indian sants, (which included Kabir and Ravidas), appeared in the region of Benares in the mid 15th century. Preceding them were two notable 13th and 14th century figures, Namdev and Ramananda. The latter, according to Sant Mat tradition, was a Vaishnava ascetic who initiated Kabir, Ravidas, and other sants. Ramanand's story is told differently by his lineage of "Ramanandi" monks, by other Sants preceding him, and later by the Sikhs. What is known is that Ramananda accepted students of all castes, a fact that was contested by the orthodox Hindus of that time. Sant Mat practitioners accept that Ramananda's students formed the first generation of Sants.<sup>[5]</sup>

These Sants developed a culture of being close to marginalized humans in society including women, and the untouchables (*Atishudras*). Some of the more notable Sants include Namdev (d.1350), Kabir (d.1518), Nanak (d.1539), Mira Bai (d.1545), Surdas (d.1573), Tulsidas (d.1623), and Tukaram (d. 1650).

The 'tradition of the Sants' (sant *parampara*) remained non-sectarian, though a number of Sant poets have been considered as the founders of sects. Some of these may bear the Sant's name, but were developed after them by later followers such as Kabir Panth, Dadu Panth, Dariya Panth, Advait Mat, Science of Spirituality and Radhasoami.<sup>[6]</sup>

Only a small minority of religious Hindus have formally followed Sant Mat, but the tradition has considerably influenced Hindus across sects and castes. Bhajans (devotional songs) attributed to past Sants such as Mira Bai are widely listened to in India and in Hindu communities around the world. The Sant tradition is the only one in medieval and modern India which has successfully crossed some barriers between Hindu and Muslim blocks. Julius J. Lipner asserts that the lives of many Hindus have been leavened by the religious teachings of the Sants, which he describes as liberating.

The Sant Mat tradition refers to the necessity of a living human master, which is referred to with honorific titles such as Satguru, or perfect master.

## Similar movements

Classical Gnostics,<sup>[7]</sup> medieval Sufi poets such as Jalal al-Din Muhammad Rumi, as well as Sindhi poets, are considered to have many similarities with the poet-sants of Sant Mat.<sup>[8]</sup>

The Radhasoami movement in North India regards itself as the main repository of the tradition of the Sants and their teachings, as well as their approach to religious endeavors, and presents itself as the living incarnation of the Sant tradition. The most notable being Radhasoami Satsang Beas, situated on the banks of the river Beas, whose current living master is Maharaj Baba Gurinder Singh Dhillon. According to Mark Juergensmeyer, that claim is also made by the Kabir-panthis, the Sikhs and other movements that continue to find the insights from the Sant tradition valid today.<sup>[9]</sup>

Guru Maharaj Ji (Prem Rawat) and the Divine Light Mission (Elan Vital) are considered to be part of the Sant Mat tradition by J. Gordon Melton, Lucy DuPertuis, and Vishal Mangalwadi, but that characterization is disputed by Ron Geaves.<sup>[10][11][12]</sup> The 20th century religious movement Eckankar is also considered by David C. Lane to be an offshoot of the Sant Mat tradition.<sup>[13]</sup> James R. Lewis refers to these movements as "expressions of an older faith in a new context".<sup>[14]</sup>

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