

## **The Reformist Movement in India: An Analysis of the Role of Sant Kabir in Bhakti Tradition**

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‘The Creature is in Brahmin, and Brahmin is in the Creature,  
They are ever distinct, yet ever united’ - Kabir

**Abstract:** *Many reformist movements had emerged in India and have revolted against the corrupt practices of Hindu religion. ‘Bhakti’ being one of them also played a very important role in this. Many poets and saints are associated with the bhakti movement, and one of the most popular among them is Sant Kabir Das, who led a movement against the malpractices of the Hinduism and Islam, and criticized both. Building upon such criticisms he tried to evoke a new synthesis, taking good elements of both Hinduism and Islam. He criticized mainly the caste system and rejected the dominant practices of the Hindus and the Muslims. He criticised the guardian of both religions, the Mullahs and the Brahmins. He taught mainly the ideas of the universal humanism going beyond the narrow and dogmatic practices of religions. This paper focuses on the main teachings of Kabir, and the ways in which he preached his ideas to the people. The focus would be on his use of the poetry and the skill of language to communicate the essence of his teachings, which was later consolidated and institutionalized by his followers, paving the way for the creation of Kabir Panth. This paper thus tries to locate the Sant Kabir in the cultural domain of Indian social structure which made him focus on themes that were untouched by the dominant religions of the day. A thorough analysis of his poetry/doha, is done in order to understand how his works have impacted the social cultural domain of India, and thereby generated a new way of conceptualizing the relation between man and the god.*

**Keywords:** Religion, Bhakti, Sufism, Doha, Poet, Personalised God.

### ***Introduction***

The word '*religion*' comes from the Latin word '*religio*.' In society it means believing in high power. This higher power is usually a God; people are taught how this comes to be. When one believes in God there are set ways of worship and moral codes that is lived by not every religion has God and sometime there are many Gods, or in some instances there is no God. In any case this general definition does not do justice to all religion because of the different beliefs that each religion has. There are many aspects to religion like animism, Magic, divinization, taboo, totems, sacrifice myths, rituals, rites of passage and ancestor worship. Every religion has all of these, but a different combination of them. Animism is the belief that everything around has spirit. In religion it is the belief that by performing certain formula dance and incantation correctly, one can change the course of nature. According to Durkheim – 'A religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden – beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them' (Durkheim 1915/1976: 47). Religion not only configures the day to day routine activities of the people but also orders the ways in which we think and conceive of the facts of the reality in a very precise way. Therefore, it organizes the ways of life of the people who adhere to the belief and practices of the people. India has been a place where we can find almost all the major world religions; it in fact is the home for major religions of the world like Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, etc. To note the significance of the reformist and the revivalist movement in India it is essential to note the historical origins and functions of all the religions in India. Therefore, in this context when we are analysing the works of Sant Kabir Das, we have taken note of the religions and religious practices of both Hindus and the Muslims. The analysis of the type of social structure is therefore important to note the significance of the great leader like Sant Kabir Das. So, it is intelligible to start with the analysis of the main belief systems of the Hindu religion. As Kabir wrote and worked against the corrupt practice of caste system it becomes further more important to locate the Hinduism in the era in which Kabir lived and worked.

### ***Hinduism in India***

Before we outline the trajectory of the Bhakti movement in India it is essential to understand the main teachings of the Hinduism, which was the most dominating religion of that time along with Islam. As it is popularly believed Hinduism is the oldest organized religion; it consists of a thousand

of different groups that have evolved since 1500 B.C.E. Because of wider variety of Hindu tradition freedom belief and practice is notable feature of Hinduism. Most from of Hinduism heterogeneous religion they recognize a single deity and view other God and Goddess as manifestation or aspect of that supreme God. 'Hinduism does not refer to one particular religion but, rather is a catchphrase for a group of religions, which have its origin in India.' (Rose 2006: 3). While trying to understand the main features of Hinduism many scholars have underlined many diverse beliefs and practices, however, Rose has had summarised them very neatly as- (1) Belief in divining of the Vedas, the epics and the Puranas, which are the holy books of the Hindu religion. (2) Belief in one, all pervasive supreme reality manifesting as both an impersonal force, which is called Brahman. (3) Beliefs in the cyclical nature of time, and the age which repeat themselves like seasons. (4) Belief in *Karma* the law of action and reaction, by which each person creates his or her own destiny. (5) Belief in reincarnation that the soul evolves through many births until all past deeds have been resolved, leading to ultimate liberation from the material world. (6) Belief in alternate realisation with higher beings. (7) Belief in the enlightened master or 'gurus' exemplary saints who are fully devoted to God, and who mediates between the man and the god. (8) Belief in non-aggression and non-injury (ahimsa) as a way of showing love to all creatures. (9) Beliefs that all revealed religion are essentially correct as aspects of one ultimate reality and the religious tolerance is the hall mark of all wisdom. (10) Belief in living, and living is first and foremost a spiritual entity a soul within the body and that the spiritual pursuit is consequently the essence and real purpose of life. 11) Belief that an organic social system traditionally called '*Varnashrama*'<sup>1</sup> is essentially the proper effective functioning of human mind and thus this system should be based on intrinsic quality and natural aptitude as opposed to birth right (Stephen 2006).

For analytical reasons it is very important for us to note the main beliefs of the Hindus as it is in contradiction to many of these features that Kabir writes his poems. It is against the hypocrisy of both the Hindus and the Muslims that Kabir writes and sings his *doha*, instead of a mythical and abstract God he preaches the idea of the loving and the all-encompassing God. This God is personalized to the extent that He does not become distinct from the self. It is thus very evident that most of the movements in Hindu religion can be seen as a result of unequal social order which tried to eliminate the inequality prevailing in the religious sphere. The sociological understanding of reformist movement thus has to be understood in relation to the wider context of the society in which it came out and also generated

a significant change in the overall lives of the people. In India it was caste structures that governed the lives of men and the networks of relations that they could enter into. The structure of social divisions that arose thus was, as mentioned, a rigid, inflexible and unequal one that created extremes of inequality, privileges and deprivileges between men and social groups. Although this was an extremely unfair system, little could be done or said against it as it was supported by Hindu religious ideology, particularly the notions of high and pure birth and occupation as against the low and impure. In other words, Hinduism was as much a social system as it was a religion, and provided an ideological framework on the basis of which Hindu society arose. In other words, Hinduism was both religion and social framework and governed the lives of Hindus. To be a Hindu meant that one's life was governed by factors such as being born in a caste, being subject to one's actions or karma, to be a part of Brahman and aim at achieving 'moksha' or Liberation of one's soul or salvation. Further, it must be remembered that Hinduism was not a revealed religion that had just a single text. With every phase in the development of Hinduism came new scriptures and texts. Thus, we have the Veda, the *Upanishad*, the *Purana* and the *Bhagavad Gita*. Even though we have stressed that the caste system was a system that formed the basis of life in Hindu India and was rigid and unchangeable, there nevertheless occurred many anti-caste movements in the course of the development of the religion. Buddhism and Jainism in the 6th century B.C. that spoke against caste divisions and social inequality. This struggle was carried forward and saw its culmination in the rise of the medieval movement of bhakti or 'selfless' devotion to a single God, with which this unit is primarily concerned. The Sanskrit term bhakti is most often translated as "devotion" and *bhaktimarg* as "path of devotion". Bhakti is the divine-human relationship as experienced from the human side. There are at least three major forms of bhakti that is *Vaisnavas*, *Saivas*, and worshippers of the great power (*Sakti*). Each sect is divided into many subjects. Bhakti is between popular religion and asceticism. Bhakti shares the concern for *moksa* (salvation), that is release from the bondages of life on earth. The ritual of puja is very important. There are other rituals too communal singing of hymns and chants; recitations of epics; recounting of sacred lore. It is this last path of devotion that forms the basis of a religious tradition that survives and proliferates today even across international boundaries.

### ***Bhakti tradition in Indian context***

Bhakti needs no introduction, celebrated as an Indian version of Protestant Christianity by nineteenth-century missionaries and scholars. Grierson defined the term *bhakti* as having the primary meaning of “adoration,” while the related term *Bhagavata* (which the author always capitalizes) means “the Adorable One” (in the sense of “One who is adored”)<sup>2</sup> Bhakti tradition plays on the relationship between the real and the imagined, the local and the universal, the specific and the abstract. The two main pillars of the bhakti tradition are ‘love’ and ‘meditation’. The ‘love’ is for God, and it is ecstatic in nature as well as symbolising a feeling of bliss or happiness that is unparalleled; and an intimacy or closeness with God like that with one’s beloved. The idea that is being conveyed here is to be lost in the love of God as though He were a beloved. At the same time the relationship that arises here may be one of dependence upon the God. The basic teaching of this tradition was the idea of ‘loving devotion’ by concentrating upon the image of a single God and without any thought for oneself, as being the way of liberation of one’s soul. Any God could be the focus of one’s devotion. This God was then seen as one’s personal God or *Ishta deva*<sup>3</sup>. The most often chosen God for one’s devotion we find has been Krishna and most of the bhakti tradition has evolved around him. The idea of self-abandonment or the forgetting of everything in the presence of one’s God, is also seen as an important part of the bhakta or devotee’s devotion to God. This particular form of relationship between the God and devotee has been called ‘viraha bhakti’. Viraha bhakti is the name given to exclusive personal devotion to Sri Krishna where feeling of separation or longing is felt for the deity by the devotee. The devotion to Krishna and the bhakti cult that arose around him became prominent in South India around the 8th century.

When we look into the trajectory of the Bhakti movement in India, we have to find the course and genesis of the movement, Bhakti comes from the Sanskrit word, it is also similar to Tamil word ‘Anmu’. Bhakti is an affection fixed on God and Ishwara. Bhakti emphasises devotion and practice to above rituals, it also represents human beings’ relationships. Most often beloved friend, parents, child, master servant, it also refers to devotion to spiritual guru, teacher as a Guru is an impersonal form of God. Scholar like C. N. Venogopal considers Bhaktism as liberal dogma. It provided a kind of spiritual forum for people who were drawn from different castes. The main principles of Bhaktism were (a) cultivation of personal devotion to a god, (b) de-emphasis on rituals, (c) monotheism, and (d)

participation in a collectivity built on brotherhood or equality (Venugopal 1990: 80).

The concept of the Bhakti was a pan Indian phenomenon, yet there were regional variations, organizations such as *Kabirpanthis* (north India), *Chaitanyites* (Bengal), and *Dadupanthis* (western India), were active in their exclusive areas. Therefore, there are slight variations in their form of representation of the dominant culture of their area. 'The bhakti poets of regional languages differ from one other in the degree of criticism represented in their poetry. In all cases, bhakti poets respond to the world around them; at issue is how much their vision of bhakti overlaps with the norms of the surrounding culture.' (Prentiss 1999: 28). In its purest and highest form Bhakti is *prapatti*, 'abandon', the total self-surrender of the devotee to his Lord. The religion of Bhakti is one of a deeply felt love for a visible god, a love which suffices for everything and is its own recompense; Bhakti is constantly represented as the 'easy path', a kind of court which makes all asceticism unnecessary. However, notwithstanding the mere similarity of the Bhakti movement, there are sharp divisions that stem from the two-fold division between the *Nirguna* and *Saguna Tradition*- 'The Saguna bhaktas had strengthened the existent sects, and had supported the established socio-religious norms. As against this, the Nirguna bhaktas had taken a radical position, and their teachings had led to the formation of new and unorthodox sects. The Bhakti movement, therefore, embodied the conservative and the liberal, as well as the revivalist and reformist trends. It contained both conformism and dissent.' (Prentiss 1999: 27). Owing to this it has been argued that the cult of Bhakti is catholic, universal and to all. Thus, while the Bhagawat religion of devotion is perfectly democratic, yet it did not become universal religion due to the overwhelming domination of the Brahmins. The Bhakti movement on the contrary, was actually a reaction against that Brahminic tradition. So though there were regional variations in the Bhakti movement yet there was an unaided unity in the poets and the Sants who were active during this time, and this unity was the criticism of the dominant order of the day and time. 'The poets not only constructed their theology of bhakti in regional languages but also they offered reflections on the surrounding world. Their poetry tends toward the observational, with images of everyday life and their responses to it, including folklore, as well as the more institutionalized religious images such as God, temple, and ritual.'<sup>24</sup> As it is very important to note that Bhakti emphasizes a personal devotion for one god. It may be pointed out that the *Alvar bhakti* saints of South India composed their devotional Poetry between 5th and 9th century AD. They were worshippers

of Krishna. They approached him with a love based on parental, filial, friendly and devotional attitudes the *Acharyas* who followed the Alvars had an intellectual approach treated dependence on god as logical rather than emotional. 'Vallabha formed a sect based on Sri Krishna-Radha in the 16th century AD. Krishna -Bhakti was also given much attention by Sri Chaitanya (AD 1485-1533) who was a contemporary of Vallabha. However, Sri Chaitanya's worship was of the ecstatic kind and popularization of the chanting of Hari (Sri Krishna), as a way to spiritual liberation. Namdeva (end of 14th century AD) and Ramananda were further important Bhakti Saints. The North Indian school was popularized by the disciples of Ramananda such as Kabir who used local language for preaching. Mirabai herself was initiated by Ravidas as disciple of Ramananda.

### ***Locating Sant Kabir in the Bhakti tradition***

The rise of Bhaktism almost coincided with the influx of Islamic groups into India. Bhaktism was a liberal creed. It provided a kind of spiritual forum for people who were drawn from different castes. The main principles of Bhaktism are (a) cultivation of personal devotion to a god, (b) deemphasis on rituals, (c) monotheism, and (d) participation in a collectivity built on brotherhood or equality. Insofar as Bhakti sects were heterodox, they faced uncertainty and often incurred the hostility of both Hindu and Muslim rulers in the initial stages. During their early formulations they were 'liminal groups'. As noted earlier, Indian reformist sects, such as Kabirpanthis (north India), Chaitanyites (Bengal), and Dadupanthis (western India), were inclusive rather than exclusive. Indeed, they included some cult-like characteristics. In the Bhakti sects, membership was not very selective. Discipline was not strictly enforced among the members, and flexibility enabled marginal individuals and groups to enter the sect. In addition, the cults often accommodated marginal, fugitive, and deviant individuals. It is very difficult to understand the contribution of Sant Kabir, without taking into account the Sufi tradition in India which had a very strong tradition in the time of Kabir. 'Sufism began around the 8th century with Saints such as Hadrat Habib Ajami (AD 738). Some scholars feel that Sufism is not against the Islamic law. In fact, the process of Sufism is closely interwoven in the Islami law. Sufism can be explained from the viewpoint of three basic religious attitudes found in the Quran. These are the attitudes of Islam, Iman and Ihsan. The attitude of Islam is that of submission to the will of Allah and the teachings Quran. Iman designates a further penetration

into the religion and strong faith in its teachings. Ihsan is the highest stage of spiritual ascent.' (Prentiss 1999:14).

It may thus be noted that the ideas of Kabir was the interwoven text of the ideas that was developing in the Sufi and the Hindu tradition in India. In this period, we can see how the forms of 'Sufism which were widespread in North India at the time of Kabir had already been influenced by Vedanta monism and had also assimilated some yogic methods, so much so that the Sufis appeared to the people as a variety of Yogis' (Vaudeville and Partin 1964). This kind of very acute synthesis is found in the works of Kabir as his intellectual roots are ingrained in the culmination of the two distinct yet similar line of thinking. The fusion of Islam and Hinduism was complete in the poetry of Kabir, who in fact refused to identify himself exclusively with either religion. In the mystical experience, subject and object are felt to be transcended, and Kabir shared with Samkara the conviction that when ignorance is abolished the soul knows itself to be one with the Supreme Atman, in which, as Kabir said, following the *Mandkya Upanisad*, 'God is one; there is no second'.<sup>5</sup>

### ***Contribution of Sant Kabir Das***

Although Kabir (1440-1518) was born in Benares, his father was a Moslem, and he was profoundly influenced by the Moslems who dominated India from the eleventh century until the advent of the British. 'Rejecting the external authority of the Vedas and the Koran, Kabir, who was brought up in a Muslim family, preached the goal of inner realization based on the love of a transcendent and formless divinity.' (Stahl 1954: 141). He was influenced by Vaishnava bhakti primarily but also by yogic and Sufi ideas and practices, such as the ideals of self-perfection and the oneness of God respectively, and the meditative recitation of God's name as an expression of one's love for him, common to both Hindu devotees and Muslim Sufis. His followers were drawn mostly from lower, often untouchable, Hindu castes, and included Muslims. Kabir expressed himself in the thought-forms of his own time and his own culture, but he was neither an apologist nor a critic of any school of philosophy. His motive is practical-to express the results of his luminous experiences so that men bound by ignorance and superstition might know liberation and peace. Throughout Kabir's work the accent is on interiorization: man ought to turn his attention away from the exterior world, from all sensible forms, in order to withdraw into the innermost

depths of his conscience (undoubtedly analogous to the Surr of the Sufis) where God dwells:

They say that Hari dwells in the east and that Allah resides in  
the west:

Search in your heart, search in your heart-there is his dwelling  
and his residence!

I believed that Hari was far off, though he is present in  
plentitude in all beings,

I believed Him outside of me-and, near, He became to me far!<sup>6</sup>

During the life of Kabir, Hindu and Muslim, both religious leaders feared; because Hindu religion wanted to save the Hindu ways and practices, and the Islam also feared that the converted Muslim might not convert back to Hinduism. Therefore, the Brahmin and Mullah, fearing the negative aspect of each other consolidated and formed their religion on more orthodox lines. This was the situation in which Sant Kabir was born. 'Kabir's devotionism was cantered not on a personalized god in human form, however, but on an abstract and formless conception of the divine. He considered the religious experience more important than its ground in some conception of a divinity. Alongside bhakti Kabir echoed the metaphysics of the Upanishads and reflected in some measure the influence of Sufi ideas on his upbringing as a Muslim.' (Madan 1989: 120)

Kabir was influenced on the one hand by the tradition of the Bhakti and also of the Sufism on one hand and on the other by the Yoga tradition of Hinduism, but Kabir fosters a tradition which is- 'Contrary to Yoga, which is essentially technique, Bhakti is essentially faith, the adoration of a personal God, who is generally "manifested" in an anthropomorphic form, that of an *avatdra* or "descent." It is this visible form of a "qualified" (*saguna*) God which is the object of Vishnuite devotion. This God asks of his devotee ("bhakta") or of his servant (*dds*) nothing but faith, love, and trust.' (Vaudeville and Partin 1964).

As the bhakti movement liberalized Hinduism, so the Sufis liberalized Islam, and the synthesis of these two streams of thought met in Kabir. Kabir gave devotion to the Guru, who gives individual knowledge and who guides him throughout. For this very reason Kabir regards Guru to be of supreme importance. He regards Guru to be the person who paves the way for his disciple's salvation. Thus, he writes in one of his *doha*-

Can one without feet take a leap?

Can one without a mouth burst into laughter?  
Without sleep can one rest?  
Can one churn the milk without a vessel?  
Can a cow without teats give milk?  
Can one accomplish a long journey without road?  
So the path cannot be found without a Guru.<sup>7</sup>

Kabir criticised Hindus and the Muslims both, Brahmin and Mullah alike, so both hated him, once upon a time Mullah went to Delhi and told Sikander Lodhi, that Kabir used word Ram-Ram! Publicly, but he is not a Hindu, similarly Brahmin also joined them and accused Kabir that he used the Tilak, which is the symbol of the Hindu though being himself a Muslim. Lodi was not convinced by their arguments and accusation and let Kabir go free. Again, once there was an accusation against Kabir before Lodi, and he was summoned in the court, on that occasion Kabir reached late. When asked for the reason for him to get late, he replied that he was engaged in watching the strange sight of elephants and camels are passing through the eye of needle. Lodi thought that he was lying, then Kabir answered by saying-

*O Kabir speak not on truth,  
No one knows why may happen a quarter of second  
O Kabir, all can comprehend  
A drop entering the sea,  
but the sea has entered into the drop  
Few can understand this  
The outward eyes have perished  
O Kabir who has lost all four  
What can one find in him?<sup>8</sup>*

*My name is great one,  
All the world knows this My name is throughout the three worlds  
I made manifest the seed of Brahma  
I fought against the bounds of Yama*

*And I made my body clean  
 Gods, Sage and men do not achieve the heights  
 Saints alone can find it by Vedas and Quaranas  
 None will reach the shore so deep is the mysterious knowledge.  
 Hear of Sikander I sage of both religions.<sup>9</sup>*

Kabir was one of the staunchest opponents of the orthodoxy of both Hindu and Muslims faith. He lavished his criticism against both of them, and especially against its most devoid practitioners. That this is essentially the position of Kabir is brought out in the following poem in which creature and Brahman are said to be ‘ever distinct, yet ever united.’

*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 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.<sup>10</sup>*

The work of Kabir contains a resounding satire on Brahmanical orthodoxy and the superstitions of popular Hinduism. Not only does he condemn with finality worship of idols, these ‘lifeless stones,’ but he also rejects with contempt all the proceedings and ceremonies by which popular Hindu devotion manifests itself: purificatory bathing, ritual fasts, pilgrimages, and all sorts of practices:

*What is the good of scrubbing the body on the outside?  
 If the inside is full of filth?  
 Without the name of Ram, one will not escape hell,  
 Even with a hundred washings!<sup>11</sup>*

His criticism of the Mullah Islamic religion is also astounding like his criticism of the Brahminical Hinduism. His criticisms are one and the same time directed against the two collectively.

*The one reads the Veda; the other does the qutba,  
This one is a Maulana, that one is a Panda:  
They bear different names, but they are pots from the same clay!  
Says Kabir, both have gone astray  
And neither has found God.... The one kills a goat, the other slays a  
cow:  
In quibbles they have wasted their life!<sup>12</sup>*

For the people in the North India Kabir is one of the great names of the literature and religious history of North India. He belongs to that first generation of poets of Hindi language who composed couplets and songs for the people in a language which they understood: a mixed Hindi dialect, a kind of dialectal Bhojpuri which is not amenable to the classifications of the linguists. His use of the local language to foster his ideas was very well accepted by the people and it in turn helped in enriching the language of the local people. The lucidity and the innocence of the language that Kabir followed had a tremendous impact on the thoughts of the people, who in turn showered lavish attention and appreciation to his works. His notion of the God and the non-dualism of the person and the lord had a very great appeal to the masses in general, his Doha like the one in which his ideas of non-dualism are encoded are still very popular among the masses. Kabir most often takes the masses to the ideal state in which the body and the soul meet and the soul has the great realisation of the almighty, this mysterious experience he calls 'paricaya', from a word which signifies 'acquaintance by sight or by contact.' Thus he writes-

*When I was, Hari was not-now Hari is, and I am no more,  
every shadow is dispersed when the Lamp has been found  
within the soul.... The One for whom I went out to search, I  
found Him in my house, And this One has become myself,  
whom I called other.<sup>13</sup>*

Therefore, his idea of the God was more reachable to the masses, the lord for him is not the idealised anthropomorphised idol in the temple and sacred shrines but one with whom the human being is in constant interaction and, with whom one can share the deep feelings of life and agony. One is totally devoted to the lord and thus one is totally at the mercy and grace of the lord, thus he writes-

*His confidence is complete; he belongs body and soul to his  
Master: I am your slave, you may sell me, O Lord, My body*

*and my soul and all I have, all is Ram's. If you sell me, O Ram, who will keep me? If you keep me, O Ram, who will sell me? Ram is not only the companion and friend; He is more than a father-He is a mother: Whatever fault a son commits, His mother will not have a grudge against him: O Ram, I am your little child, Will you not blot out all my faults*  
 14?

Kabir's ideas are thus encoded still in the daily life practices of people, and in form of institutional organizations like the Kabir Panth for whom Kabir is understood as a trans-temporal figure, so his words have a resonance larger than life and his signature a force that goes beyond any single historical context. 'Particularly in the Dharmadasi branch of the Kabir Panth, the term "Kabir" signifies more than the name of a man' (Hawley 1988: 271).

### **Conclusion**

Throughout Kabir's work the accent is on interiorization: man ought to turn his attention away from the exterior world, from all sensible forms, in order to withdraw into the innermost depths of his conscience. Therefore, for Kabir, the religion of the man is to realize the non-dual aspect of the reality. His conception has come a long way in getting espoused in our ways of thinking. This continuity in our thought shows the relative importance of his teachings, also in the contemporary world. Kabir's ideas in the society are usually scattered in the forms of the popular idiom and proverbs, which serves us to find a ray of hope in the domain of darkness and austerity. It teaches the gospels of love and brotherhood which we can easily relate in our daily life. So, like in the quotation given in the beginning, we find solace in knowing the presence of the god in every realm of our life. It therefore from the idiom of the daily life of the householder and also of our daily conversation, where we argue for the presence of God in all the realm of life.

### **Notes**

1. Hindu social system was divided in the four-fold division of labour, therefore people were organized in the hierarchical strata, whereby

the relative position of one group was justified by the origin myth of that particular group, respectively from the parts of the Brahma.

2. Grierson as quoted in Prentiss Karen, Pechilis. (1999): *The Embodiment of Bhakti*, Oxford University Press. New York, p. 7.
3. Ishta devais a deity that the worshipper chooses as a personal deity and accords it personal devotion.
4. *Ibid.*
5. Quoted from Partin, Harry B and Charlotte Vaudeville. 'Kabîr and Interior Religion', *History of Religions*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (Winter, 1964), p. 196.
6. Quoted from Partin, Harry B and Charlotte Vaudeville. 'Kabîr and Interior Religion', *History of Religions*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (Winter, 1964), p. 196.
7. Kabir quoted from, Ezekeil, Issac. 'Kabir the Great Mystic.' (p.16).
8. *ibid* (p. 36).
9. *ibid* (p. 38)
10. Roland Stahl, 'The Philosophy of Kabîr', *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (Jul., 1954), p. 149.
11. *Ibid*
12. Quoted from Partin, Harry B and Charlotte Vaudeville. *Kabîr and Interior Religion (1964)*. pp. 193.
13. *ibid* (pp. 197)
14. *ibid*

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