

**Classic Poetry Series**

**Kabir**  
**- poems -**

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# Kabir(1440 - 1518)

Kabir (also Kabira) (Hindi: कबीर, Punjabi: ਕਬੀਰ, Urdu: کبیر) was a mystic poet and saint of India, whose writings have greatly influenced the Bhakti movement. The name Kabir comes from Arabic al-Kabir which means 'The Great' - the 37th name of God in Islam.

Apart from having an important influence on Sikhism, 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.

## **Early Life and Background**

Many legends abound about the birth, life and death of Kabir, one of India's most quoted poets and mystics. His birth itself is shrouded in mystery, some say he was the son of a Brahman widow, others that he was of virgin birth, what is known though is that he was brought up in a family of muslim weavers. He was never formally educated and was almost completely illiterate. According to legend, the only word that he ever learned how to write was "Rama".

Legend says that he relinquished his body when he was about 120 years old. There is a famous legend about his death; When he died, his Hindu and Muslim followers started fighting about the last rites. When they lifted the cloth covering his body, they found flowers instead. The Muslim followers buried their half and the Hindu cremated thier half. In Maghar, his tomb and samadhi still stand side by side.

## **Philosophy**

The social and practical manifestation of Kabir's philosophy has rung through the ages. It represented a synthesis of Hindu, and Muslim concepts. From Hinduism he accepts the concept of reincarnation and the law of Karma. From Islam he takes the affirmation of the single god and the rejection of caste system and idolatry. The basic religious principles he espouses are simple. According to Kabir, all life is an interplay of two spiritual principles. One is the personal soul (Jivatma) and the other is God (Paramatma). It is Kabir's view that salvation is the process of bringing into union these two divine principles.

Kabir is a very important figure in Indian history. He is unusual in that he is spiritually significant to Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims alike. Kabir openly criticized all sects and gave a new direction to the Indian philosophy. Kabir touches the soul, the conscience, the sense of awareness and the vitality of existence in a manner that is unequalled in both simplicity and style.

### <b>Poetry<b>

It is for this reason that Kabir is held in high esteem all over the world. Another beauty of Kabir's poetry is that he picks up situations that surround our daily lives. Thus, even today, Kabir's poetry is relevant and helpful in both social and spiritual context. Following Kabir means understanding one's inner self, realizing oneself, accepting oneself as is, and becoming harmonious with one's surroundings.

Kabir has written much poetry and song. All of Kabir's recorded verses are in Hindi. His lyrics are characterised by a free use of the vernacular, and is unfettered by the grammatical bonds of his day. It is this quality which has made his philosophy accessible to generations of Indians.

# Abode Of The Beloved

Oh Companion That Abode Is Unmatched,  
Where My Complete Beloved Is.

In that Place There Is No Happiness or Unhappiness,  
No Truth or Untruth  
Neither Sin Nor Virtue.  
There Is No Day or Night, No Moon or Sun,  
There Is Radiance Without Light.

There Is No Knowledge or Meditation  
No Repetition of Mantra or Austerities,  
Neither Speech Coming From Vedas or Books.  
Doing, Not-Doing, Holding, Leaving  
All These Are All Lost Too In This Place.

No Home, No Homeless, Neither Outside or Inside,  
Micro and Macrocosm Are Non-Existent.  
Five Elemental Constituents and the Trinity Are Both Not There  
Witnessing Un-struck Shabad Sound is Also Not There.

No Root or Flower, Neither Branch or Seed,  
Without a Tree Fruits are Adorning,  
Primordial Om Sound, Breath-Synchronized Soham,  
This and That - All Are Absent, The Breath Too Unknown

Where the Beloved Is There is Utterly Nothing  
Says Kabir I Have Come To Realize.  
Whoever Sees My Indicative Sign  
Will Accomplish the Goal of Liberation.

Kabir

# Are You Looking For Me?

Are you looking for me? I am in the next seat.  
My shoulder is against yours.  
you will not find me in the stupas, not in Indian shrine  
rooms, nor in synagogues, nor in cathedrals:  
not in masses, nor kirtans, not in legs winding  
around your own neck, nor in eating nothing but  
vegetables.

When you really look for me, you will see me  
instantly --  
you will find me in the tiniest house of time.

Kabir says: Student, tell me, what is God?  
He is the breath inside the breath.

Kabir

# Between The Poles Of The Conscious

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.

Kabir

# Brother, I've Seen Some

Brother, I've seen some

Astonishing sights:

A lion keeping watch

Over pasturing cows;

A mother delivered

After her son was;

A guru prostrated

Before his disciple;

Fish spawning

On treetops;

A cat carrying away

A dog;

A gunny-sack

Driving a bullock-cart;

A buffalo going out to graze,

Sitting on a horse;

A tree with its branches in the earth,

Its roots in the sky;

A tree with flowering roots.

This verse, says Kabir,

Is your key to the universe.

If you can figure it out.

Kabir

# Chewing Slowly

Chewing slowly,  
Only after I'd eaten  
My grandmother,  
Mother,  
Son-in-law,  
Two brothers-in-law,  
And father-in-law  
(His big family included)  
In that order,  
And had for dessert  
The town's inhabitants,

Did I find, says Kabir,  
The beloved that I've become  
One with.

Kabir

# Do Not Go To The Garden Of Flowers

Do not go to the garden of flowers!  
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.

Kabir

# Friend, Hope For The Guest While You Are Alive

Friend, hope for the Guest while you are alive.  
Jump into experience while you are alive!  
Think... and think... while you are alive.  
What you call 'salvation' belongs to the time  
before death.

If you don't break your ropes while you're alive,  
do you think  
ghosts will do it after?

The idea that the soul will join with the ecstatic  
just because the body is rotten—  
that is all fantasy.

What is found now is found then.

If you find nothing now,  
you will simply end up with an apartment  
in the City of Death.

If you make love with the divine now, in the next life  
you will have the face of satisfied desire.

So plunge into the truth, find out who the Teacher is,  
believe in the Great Sound!

Kabir says this: When the Guest is being search for,  
it is the intensity of the longing for the Guest  
that does all the work.

Look at me, and you will see a slave of that intensity.

Kabir

# Friend, Wake Up! Why Do You Go On Sleeping?

Friend, wake up! Why do you go on sleeping?  
The night is over— do you want to lose the day  
the same way?

Other women who managed to get up early have  
already found an elephant or a jewel...  
so much was lost already while you slept...  
and that was so unnecessary!

The one who loves you understood, but you did not.  
You forgot to make a place in your bed next to you.  
Instead you spent your life playing.  
In your twenties you did not grow  
because you did not know who your Lord was.  
Wake up! Wake up! There's no one in your bed—  
He left you during the long night.

Kabir says: The only woman awake is the woman  
who has heard the flute!

Kabir

# Hang Up The Swing Of Love Today!

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.

Kabir says: 'Listen to me brother!  
bring the vision of the Beloved in your heart.'

Kabir

# Having Crossed The River

Having crossed the river,  
where will you go, O friend?

There's no road to tread,  
No traveler ahead,  
Neither a beginning, nor an end.

There's no water, no boat, no boatman, no cord;  
No earth is there, no sky, no time, no bank, no ford.

You have forgotten the Self within,  
Your search in the void will be in vain;  
In a moment the life will ebb  
And in this body you won't remain.

Be ever conscious of this, O friend,  
You've to immerse within your Self;  
Kabir says, salvation you won't then need,  
For what you are, you would be indeed.

Kabir

# He's That Rascally Kind Of Yogi

He's that rascally kind of yogi  
who has no sky or earth,  
no hand, foot,  
form or shape.

Where there's no market  
he sets up shop,  
weighs things  
and keeps the accounts.

No deeds, no creeds,  
no yogic powers,  
not even a horn or gourd,  
so how can he  
go begging?

'I know you  
and you know me  
and I'm inside of you.'

When there isn't a trace  
of creation or destruction,  
what do you meditate on?

That yogi built a house  
brimful of Ram.

He has no healing herbs,  
his root-of-life  
is Ram.

He looks and looks  
at the juggler's tricks,  
the magician's sleight-of-hand -  
Kabir says, saints, he's made it  
to the King's land.

Kabir

# Hey Brother, Why Do You Want Me To Talk?

Hey brother, why do you want me to talk?  
Talk and talk and the real things get lost.

Talk and talk and things get out of hand.  
Why not stop talking and think?

If you meet someone good, listen a little, speak;  
If you meet someone bad, clench up like a fist.

Talking with a wise man is a great reward.  
Talking with a fool? A waste.

Kabir says: A pot makes noise if it's half full,  
But fill it to the brim - no sound.

Kabir

# Hiding In This Cage

Hiding in this cage  
of visible matter

is the invisible  
lifebird

pay attention  
to her

she is singing  
your song

Kabir

# His Death In Benares

His death in Benares  
Won't save the assassin  
From certain hell,

Any more than a dip  
In the Ganges will send  
Frogs—or you—to paradise.

My home, says Kabir,  
Is where there's no day, no night,  
And no holy book in sight

To squat on our lives.

Kabir

# Hope For Him

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.

Kabir

# How Do You

How do you,  
Asks the chief of police,  
Patrol a city  
Where the butcher shops  
Are guarded by vultures;  
Where bulls get pregnant,  
Cows are barren,  
And calves give milk  
Three times a day;  
Where mice are boatmen  
And tomcats the boats  
They row;  
Where frogs keep snakes  
As watchdogs,  
And jackals  
Go after lions?

Does anyone know  
What I'm talking about?  
Says Kabir.

Kabir

# How Humble Is God

God is the tree in the forests that  
allows itself to die and will not defend itself in front of those  
with the ax, not wanting to cause them  
shame.

And God is the earth that will allow itself to  
be deformed by man's tools, but He cries; yes, God cries,  
but only in front of His closest ones.

And a beautiful animal is being beaten to death,  
but nothing can make God break His silence  
to the masses  
and say,

"Stop, please stop, why are you doing this  
to Me? "

How humble is God?  
Kabir wept  
when I  
knew.

Kabir

# I Burst Into Laughter

I burst into laughter  
whenever I hear  
that the fish is thirsty in water.

Without the knowledge of Self  
people just wander to Mathura or to Kashi  
like the musk-deer unaware  
of the scent in his navel,  
goes on running forest to forest.

In water is the lotus plant  
and the plant bears flowers  
and on the flowers are the bees buzzing.  
Likewise all yogis and mendicants  
and all those who have renounced comforts,  
are on here and hereafter and the nether world -  
contemplating.

Friend, the Supreme Indestructible Being,  
on whom thousands of sages meditate  
and even Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh,  
really resides within one's self.

Though He is near, He appears far away -  
and that is what makes one disturbed;  
says Kabir, listen, O wise one,  
by Guru alone is the confusion curbed.

Kabir

# I Have Attained The Eternal Bliss

I have attained the Eternal Bliss.  
There is no time for sorrow or pain,  
for now I enjoy singing His glory.

The tree of His pleasure has neither root, nor seed,  
as revealed by the grace of the true Guru.

Now there is effulgence of a million suns,  
my swan has dipped in the lake of His knowledge.

Says Kabir, listen, O wise brother,  
Now comings and goings have come to an end.

Kabir

# I Have Been Thinking

I have been thinking...

I have been thinking of the difference between water

I have been thinking I have been thinking and the waves on it. Rising,  
water's still water, falling back,  
it is water, will you give me a hint  
how to tell them apart?

Because someone has made up the word  
'wave,' do I have to distinguish it  
from water?

There is a Secret One inside us;  
the planets in all the galaxies  
pass through his hands like beads.

That is a string of beads one should look at with luminous eyes.

Kabir

# I Laugh When I Hear That The Fish In The Water Is Thirsty

I laugh when I hear that the fish in the water is thirsty

You don't grasp the fact that what is most alive of all  
is inside your own house.  
and so you walk from one holy city to the next with  
a confused look!

Kabir will tell you the truth: go wherever you like,  
to Calcutta or Tibet;  
if you can't find where your soul is hidden,  
for you the world will never be real!

Kabir

# I Played Day And Night

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.'

Kabir

# I Said To The Wanting-Creature Inside Me

I said to the wanting-creature inside me:  
What is this river you want to cross?  
There are no travelers on the river-road, and no road.  
Do you see anyone moving about on that bank, or nesting?

There is no river at all, and no boat, and no boatman.  
There is no tow rope either, and no one to pull it.  
There is no ground, no sky, no time, no bank, no ford!

And there is no body, and no mind!  
Do you believe there is some place that will make the  
soul less thirsty?  
In that great absence you will find nothing.

Be strong then, and enter into your own body;  
there you have a solid place for your feet.  
Think about it carefully!  
Don't go off somewhere else!

Kabir says this: just throw away all thoughts of  
imaginary things,  
and stand firm in that which you are.

Kabir

# I Talk To My Inner Lover, And I Say, Why Such Rush?

I talk to my inner lover, and I say, why such rush?  
We sense that there is some sort of spirit that loves  
    birds and animals and the ants—  
perhaps the same one who gave a radiance to you  
    in your mother's womb.  
Is it logical you would be walking around entirely  
    orphaned now?  
The truth is you turned away yourself,  
and decided to go into the dark alone.  
Now you are tangled up in others, and have forgotten  
    what you once knew,  
and that's why everything you do has some weird  
    failure in it.

Kabir

# I Won't Come

I won't come  
I won't go  
I won't live  
I won't die

I'll keep uttering  
The name  
And lose myself  
In it

I'm bowl  
And I'm platter  
I'm man  
And I'm woman

I'm grapefruit  
And I'm sweet lime  
I'm Hindu  
And I'm Muslim

I'm fish  
And I'm net  
I'm fisherman  
And I'm time

I'm nothing  
Says Kabir  
I'm not among the living  
Or the dead.

Kabir

# Illusion And Reality

What is seen is not the Truth  
What is cannot be said  
Trust comes not without seeing  
Nor understanding without words  
The wise comprehends with knowledge  
To the ignorant it is but a wonder  
Some worship the formless God  
Some worship His various forms  
In what way He is beyond these attributes  
Only the Knower knows  
That music cannot be written  
How can then be the notes  
Says Kabir, awareness alone will overcome illusion

Kabir

## It Is Needless To Ask Of A Saint

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.

Kabir

# I'Ve Burned My Own House Down

I've burned my own house down,  
the torch is in my hand.  
Now I'll burn down the house of anyone  
who wants to follow me.

Kabir

# Knowing Nothing Shuts The Iron Gates

Knowing nothing shuts the iron gates;  
the new love opens them.

The sound of the gates opening wakes  
the beautiful woman asleep.

Kabir says: Fantastic!  
Don't let a chance like this go by!

Kabir

# Lamps Burn In Every House

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 Brahman 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.'

Kabir

# Lift The Veil

Lift the veil  
that obscures  
the heart

and there  
you will find  
what you are  
looking for

Kabir

# Looking At The Grinding Stones - Dohas (Couplets) I

Looking at the grinding stones, Kabir laments  
In the duel of wheels, nothing stays intact.

searching for the wicked, met not a single one  
When searched myself, 'I' found the wicked one

Tomorrows work do today, today's work anon  
if the moment is lost, when will the work be done

Speak such words, sans ego's ploy  
Body remains composed, giving the listener joy

Slowly slowly O mind, everything in own pace happens  
Gardner may water a hundred buckets, fruit arrives only in its season

Give so much O God, suffice to envelop my clan  
I should not suffer cravings, nor the visitor goes unfed

In vain is the eminence, just like a date tree  
No shade for travelers, fruit is hard to reach

Like seed contains the oil, fire in flint stone  
Your heart seats the Divine, realize if you can

Kabira in the market place, wishes welfare of all  
Neither friendship nor enmity with anyone at all

Reading books everyone died, none became any wise  
One who reads the words of Love, only becomes wise

In anguish everyone prays to Him, in joy does none  
To One who prays in happiness, how sorrow can come

Kabir

# Many Hoped

Many hoped  
but no one found  
Hari's heart.  
Where do the senses rest?  
Where do the Ram-chanters go?  
Where do the bright ones go?  
Corpses: all gone  
to the same place.  
Drunk on the juice  
of Ram's bliss,  
Kabir says,  
I've said and I've said,  
I'm tired of saying.

Kabir

# My Body And My Mind

My body and my mind...

My body and my mind are in depression because  
You are not with me.

How much I love you and want you in my house!  
When I hear people describe me as your bride I look sideways ashamed,  
because I know that far inside us we have never met.

Then what is this love of mine?

I don't really care about food, I don't really care about sleep,  
I am restless indoors and outdoors.  
The bride wants her lover as much as a thirsty man wants water.

And how will I find someone who will take a message  
to the Guest from me?  
How restless Kabir is all the time!  
How much he wants to see the Guest!

Kabir

# My Body Is Flooded

My body is flooded  
With the flame of Love.  
My soul lives in  
A furnace of bliss.

Love's fragrance  
Fills my mouth,  
And fans through all things  
With each outbreath.

Kabir

# My Swan, Let Us Fly

My swan, let us fly to that land  
Where your Beloved lives forever.

That land has an up-ended well  
Whose mouth, narrow as a thread,  
The married soul draws water from  
Without a rope or pitcher.

My swan, let us fly to that land  
Where your Beloved lives forever.

Clouds never cluster there,  
Yet it goes on and on raining.  
Don't keep squatting outside in the yard –  
Come in! Get drenched without a body!

My swan, let us fly to that land  
Where your Beloved lives forever.

That land is always soaked in moonlight;  
Darkness can never come near it.  
It is flooded always with the dazzle  
Of not one, but a million suns.

My swan, let us fly to that land  
Where your Beloved lives forever.

Kabir

## O Friend

O friend! hope for Him whilst you live  
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!

Kabir says : 'It is the spirit of the quest which helps;  
I am the slave of this Spirit of the quest.'

Kabir

## O How May I Ever Express That Secret Word?

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.

Kabir

## O Lord Increate, Who Will Serve Thee?

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.'

Kabir

# O My Heart! The Supreme Spirit

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?

Kabir

# O Servant Where Dost Thou Seek Me

O servant, where dost thou seek Me?

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.

Kabir says, ' O Sadhu! God is the breath of all breath.'

Kabir

# O Slave, Liberate Yourself

O Slave, liberate yourself.

Where are you, and where's your home,  
find it in your lifetime, man.

If you fail to wake up now,  
you'll be helpless when the end comes.

Says Kabir, listen, O wise one,  
the siege of Death is hard to withstand.

Kabir

# Oh Friend, I Love You, Think This Over

Oh friend, I love you, think this over  
carefully! If you are in love,  
then why are you asleep?

If you have found him,  
give yourself to him, take him.

Why do you lose track of him again and again?

If you are about to fall into heavy sleep anyway,  
why waste time smoothing the bed  
and arranging the pillows?

Kabir will tell you the truth: this is what love is like:  
suppose you had to cut your head off  
and give it to someone else,  
what difference would that make?

Kabir

# Plucking Your Eyebrows

Plucking your eyebrows,  
Putting on mascara,  
But will that help you  
To see things anew?

The one who sees  
Is changed into  
The one who's seen  
Only if one is

Salt and the other  
Water. But you, says Kabir,  
Are a dead  
Lump of quartz.

Kabir

# Tell Me Brother

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.'

Kabir

# Tell Me, O Swan, Your Ancient Tale

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.

Kabir

# Tentacles Of Time

Sadho Ye Murdon Ka Gaon  
Peer Mare, Pygambar Mari Hain  
Mari Hain Zinda Jogi  
Raja Mari Hain, Parja Mari Hain  
Mari Hain Baid Aur Rogi  
Chanda Mari Hain, Suraj Mari Hain  
Mari Hain Dharni Akasa  
Chaudan Bhuvan Ke Chaudhry Mari Hain  
In Hun Ki Ka Asa  
Nauhun Mari Hain, Dus Hun Mari Hain  
Mari Hain Sahaj Athasi  
Tethis Koti Devata Mari Hain  
Badi Kaal Ki Bazi  
Naam Anam Anant Rehat Hai  
Duja Tatva Na Hoi  
Kahe Kabir Suno Bhai Sadho  
Bhatak Maro Mat Koi

English Translation

Oh Sadhu This is the Village of the Dead

The Saints Have Died, The God-Messengers Die  
The Life-Filled Yogis Die Too |  
The Kings Die, The Subjects Die  
The Healers and the Sick Die Too ||

The Moon Dies, The Sun Dies  
The Earth and Sky Die Too |  
Even the Caretakers of the Fourteen Worlds Die  
Why Hope For Any of These ||

The Nine Die, The Ten Die  
The Eighty Eight Die Easily Too |  
The Thirty Three Crore Devatas Die  
It's a Big Game of Time ||

The Un-Named Naam Lives Without Any End  
There is No Other Truth ||  
Says Kabir Listen Oh Sadhu  
Don't Get Lost and Die ||

Kabir

# The Bhakti Path

The bhakti path winds in a delicate way.  
On this path there is no asking and no not asking.  
The ego simply disappears the moment you touch  
him.  
The joy of looking for him is so immense that you  
just dive in,  
and coast around like a fish in the water.  
If anyone needs a head, the lover leaps up to offer  
his.

Kabir

# The Bride-Soul

When will that day dawn, Mother;  
When the One I took birth for  
Holds me to His heart with deathless love?  
I long for the bliss of divine union.  
I long to lose my body, mind, and soul  
And become one with my husband.  
When will that day dawn, Mother?  
Husband, fulfil now the longing I have had  
Since before the universe was made.  
Enter me completely and release me.  
In terrible lonely years without You  
I yearn and yearn for You.  
I spend sleepless nights hunting for You,  
Gazing into darkness after You,  
With unblinking hopeless eyes.  
When will that day dawn, Mother?  
When will my Lord hold me to His heart?  
My empty bed, like a hungry tigress,  
Devours me whenever I try to sleep.  
Listen to your slave's prayer -  
Come and put out this blaze of agony  
That consumes my soul and body.  
When will He hold me to His heart?  
When will that day dawn, Mother?  
Kabir sings, &quot;If I ever meet You, my Beloved,  
I'll cling to you so fiercely You melt into me;  
I'll sing from inside You songs of union,  
World-dissolving songs of Eternal Bliss.&quot;

Kabir

# The Dropp And The Sea

I went looking for Him  
And lost myself;  
The dropp merged with the Sea -  
Who can find it now?

Looking and looking for Him  
I lost myself;  
The Sea merged with the dropp -  
Who can find it now?

Kabir

# The Guest Is Inside You, And Also Inside Me

The Guest is inside you, and also inside me;  
you know the sprout is hidden inside the seed.  
We are all struggling; none of us has gone far.  
Let your arrogance go, and look around inside.

The blue sky opens out further and farther,  
the daily sense of failure goes away,  
the damage I have done to myself fades,  
a million suns come forward with light,  
when I sit firmly in that world.

I hear bells ringing that no one has shaken,  
inside 'love' there is more joy than we know of,  
rain pours down, although the sky is clear of clouds,  
there are whole rivers of light.  
The universe is shot through in all parts by a single sort of love.  
How hard it is to feel that joy in all our four bodies!

Those who hope to be reasonable about it fail.  
The arrogance of reason has separated us from that love.  
With the word 'reason' you already feel miles away.

How lucky Kabir is, that surrounded by all this joy  
he sings inside his own little boat.  
His poems amount to one soul meeting another.  
These songs are about forgetting dying and loss.  
They rise above both coming in and going out.

Kabir

# The Impossible Pass

The pundits have taken  
A highway that takes them  
    away,  
    and they're gone.  
Kabir has climbed to  
The impossible pass  
    of Ram  
    and stayed.

Kabir

# The Last Flight

Ud Jayega Huns Akela,  
Jug Darshan Ka Mela  
Jaise Paat Gire Taruvar Se,  
Milna Bahut Duhela  
Naa Jane Kidhar Girega,  
Lageya Pawan Ka Rela  
Jub Howe Umur Puri,  
Jab Chute Ga Hukum Huzuri  
Jum Ke Doot Bade Mazboot,  
Jum Se Pada Jhamela  
Das Kabir Har Ke Gun Gawe,  
Wah Har Ko Paran Pawe  
Guru Ki Karni Guru Jayega,  
Chele Ki Karni Chela

## English Translation

The Swan Will Fly Away All Alone,  
Spectacle of the World Will Be a Mere Fair  
As the Leaf Falls from the Tree  
Is Difficult to Find  
Who Knows Where it Will Fall  
Once it is Struck with a Gust Of Wind  
When Life Span is Complete  
Then Listening to Orders, Following Others, Will Be Over  
The Messengers of Yama are Very Strong  
It's an Entanglement with the Yama  
Servant Kabir Praises the Attributes of the Lord  
He Finds the Lord Soon  
Guru Will Go According to His Doings  
The Disciple According to His

Kabir

# The Light Of The Sun

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.'

Kabir

# The Lord Is In Me

The Lord is in me, and the Lord is in you,  
As life is hidden in every seed.  
So rubble your pride, my friend,  
And look for Him within you.

When I sit in the heart of His world  
A million suns blaze with light,  
A burning blue sea spreads across the sky,  
Life's turmoil falls quiet,  
All the stains of suffering wash away.

Listen to the unstruck bells and drums!  
Love is here; plunge into its rapture!  
Rains pour down without water;  
Rivers are streams of light.

How could I ever express  
How blessed I feel  
To revel in such vast ecstasy  
In my own body?

This is the music  
Of soul and soul meeting,  
Of the forgetting of all grief.  
This is the music  
That transcends all coming and going

Kabir

# The Middle Region Of The Sky

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, t  
he 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.'

Kabir

# The Moon Shines In My Body

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 'I' and the 'Mine',  
his works are as naught:  
When all love of the 'I' and the 'Mine' 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.

Kabir

# The River And Its Waves Are One

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.

Kabir

# The Self Forgets Itself

The self forgets itself  
as a frantic dog in a glass temple  
barks himself to death;  
as a lion, seeing a form in the well,  
leaps on the image;  
as a rutting elephant sticks his tusk  
in a crystal boulder.  
The monkey has his fistful of sweets  
and won't let go. So  
from house to house  
he gibbers.  
Kabir says, parrot-on-a-pole:  
who has caught you?

Kabir

# The Spiritual Athlete Often Changes The Color Of His Clothes

The spiritual athlete often changes the color of his clothes,  
and his mind remains gray and loveless.

He sits inside a shrine room all day,  
so that the Guest has to go outdoors and praise the rocks.

Or he drills holes in his ears, his hair grows  
enormous and matted,  
people mistake him for a goat...  
He goes out into wilderness areas, strangles his impulses,  
and makes himself neither male nor female...

He shaves his skull, puts his robe in an orange vat,  
reads the Bhagavad-Gita, and becomes a terrific talker.

Kabir says: Actually you are going in a hearse  
to the country of death,  
bound hand and foot!

Kabir

# The Swan Flies Away

The Swan Will Fly Away All Alone,  
Spectacle of the World Will Be a Mere Fair  
As the Leaf Falls from the Tree  
Is Difficult to Find  
Who Knows Where it Will Fall  
Once it is Struck with a Gust Of Wind  
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Servant Kabir Praises the Attributes of the Lord  
He Finds the Lord Soon  
Guru Will Go According to His Doings  
The Disciple According to His!

Kabir

# The Time Before Death

Friend? hope for the Guest while you are alive.  
Jump into experience while you are alive!  
Think... and think... while you are alive.  
What you call 'salvation' belongs to the time  
before death.

If you don't break your ropes while you're alive,  
do you think ghosts will do it after?

The idea that the soul will join with the ecstatic  
just because the body is rotten --  
that is all fantasy.

What is found now is found then.

If you find nothing now,  
you will simply end up with an apartment in the  
City of Death.

If you make love with the divine now, in the next  
life you will have the face of satisfied desire.

So plunge into the truth, find out who the Teacher is,  
Believe in the Great Sound!

Kabir says this: When the Guest is being searched for,  
it is the intensity of the longing for the Guest  
that does all the work.

Look at me, and you will see a slave of that intensity.

Kabir

# The Word

Find the word, understand the word,  
Depend on the word;  
The word is heaven and space, the word the earth,  
The word the universe.  
The word is in our ears, the word is on our tongues,  
The word the idol.  
The word is the holy book, the word is harmony,  
The word is music.  
The word is magic, the word the Guru.  
The word is the body, the word is the spirit, the word is being,  
The word Not-being.  
The word is man, the word is woman,  
The Worshipped Great.  
The word is the seen and unseen, the word is the existent  
And the non-existent.  
Know the word, says Kabir,  
The word is All-powerful.

Kabir

# There's A Moon Inside My Body

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 I and the Mine, his works are as naught:

When all love of the I and the Mine 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.

Kabir

# To Be A Slave Of Intensity

Friend, hope for the guest while you are alive.  
Jump into experience while you are alive!  
Think...and think...while you are alive.  
What you call 'salvation' belongs to the time before death.

If you don't break your ropes while you're alive,  
do you think  
ghosts will do it after?

The idea that the soul will join with the ecstatic  
Just because the body is rotten -  
that is all fantasy.  
What is found now is found then.  
If you find nothing now,  
you will simply end up with an apartment in the City of Death.  
If you make love with the divine now, in the next life you will have the face of  
satisfied desire.

So plunge into the truth, find out who the Teacher is,  
Believe in the Great Sound!

Kabir says this: When the guest is being searched for, it is the intensity of the  
longing for the Guest that does all the work.  
Look at me, and you will see a slave of that intensity.

Kabir

# To Thee Thou Hast Drawn My Love

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! '

Kabir

# To What Shore Would You Cross

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.'

Kabir

# What Kind Of God?

What kind of God would He be  
if He did not hear the  
bangles ring on  
an ant's  
wrist

as they move the earth  
in their sweet  
dance?

And what kind of God would He be  
if a leaf's prayer was not as precious to creation  
as the prayer His own son sang  
from the glorious depth  
of his soul –  
for us.

And what kind of God would He be  
if the vote of millions in this world could sway Him  
to change the divine  
law of  
love

that speaks so clearly with compassion's elegant tongue,  
saying, eternally saying:

all are forgiven – moreover, dears,  
no one has ever been  
guilty.

What  
kind of God would He be  
if He did not count the blinks  
of your  
eyes

and is in absolute awe of their movements?

What a God - what a God we  
have.

Kabir

# When He Himself Reveals Himself

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!

Kabir

# When I Found The Boundless Knowledge

Kabir:

My mind was soothed  
When I found the boundless knowledge,  
And the fires  
    that scorch the world  
To me are water cool.

Kabir

# When The Day Came

When the Day came -  
The Day I had lived and died for -  
The Day that is not in any calendar -  
Clouds heavy with love  
Showered me with wild abundance.  
Inside me, my soul was drenched.  
Around me, even the desert grew green.

Kabir

# When You Were Born In This World - Dohas II

When you were born in this world  
Everyone laughed while you cried  
Conduct NOT yourself in manner such  
That they laugh when you are gone

Kabir's mind got cleansed like the holy Ganges water  
Now everyone follows, saying Kabir Kabir

Guru the washer man, disciple is the cloth  
The name of God liken to the soap  
Wash the mind on foundation firm  
To realize the glow of Truth

Alive one sees, alive one knows  
Thus crave for salvation when full of life  
Alive you did not cut the noose of binding actions  
Hoping liberation with death!

Inexpressible is the story of Love  
It cannot be revealed by words  
Like the dumb eating sweet-meat  
Only smiles, the sweetness he cannot tell

Worry is the bandit that eats into one's heart  
What the doctor can do, what remedy to impart?

Says Kabir  
Don't be so proud and vain  
Looking at your high mansion  
Death makes one lie on bare land  
And grass will grow thereon

Says Kabir  
Don't be so proud and vain  
The clutches of Time are dark  
Who knows where shall it kill  
Whether at home or abroad

Says Kabir

By my doing nothing happens  
What I don't does come to pass  
If anything happens as if my doing  
Then truly it is done by someone else

Like the pupil in the eyes  
The Lord resides inside  
Ignorant do not know this fact  
They search Him outside

First the pangs of separation  
Next grows the thirst for Love  
Says Kabir then only hope  
The union to materialize

Kabir

# Where Do You Search Me

Moko Kahan Dhundhere Bande  
Mein To Tere Paas Mein  
Na Teerath Mein, Na Moorat Mein  
Na Ekant Niwas Mein  
Na Mandir Mein, Na Masjid Mein  
Na Kabe Kailas Mein  
Mein To Tere Paas Mein Bande  
Mein To Tere Paas Mein  
Na Mein Jap Mein, Na Mein Tap Mein  
Na Mein Barat Upaas Mein  
Na Mein Kiriya Karm Mein Rehta  
Nahin Jog Sanyas Mein  
Nahin Pran Mein Nahin Pind Mein  
Na Brahmand Akas Mein  
Na Mein Prakuti Prawar Gufa Mein  
Nahin Swasan Ki Swans Mein  
Khoji Hoyal Turat Mil Jaon  
Ik Pal Ki Talas Mein  
Kahet Kabir Suno Bhai Sadho  
Mein To Hun Viswas Mein

English Translation:

Where do you search me?  
I am with you  
Not in pilgrimage, nor in icons  
Neither in solitudes  
Not in temples, nor in mosques  
Neither in Kaba nor in Kailash  
I am with you O man  
I am with you  
Not in prayers, nor in meditation  
Neither in fasting  
Not in yogic exercises  
Neither in renunciation  
Neither in the vital force nor in the body  
Not even in the ethereal space  
Neither in the womb of Nature

Not in the breath of the breath  
Seek earnestly and discover  
In but a moment of search  
Says Kabir, Listen with care  
Where your faith is, I am there.

Kabir

# Where Spring, The Lord Of The Seasons

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 Brahmas 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 veena  
There is my Lord self-revealed:  
and the scent of sandal and flowers dwells in those deeps.

Kabir

# Within This Earthen Vessel

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.'

Kabir