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كيشون دتگھ پیتہ كیو متے
كيشون پیتہ نے تو تے كیاہ
كيشون دتگھ لالو ترے
كيشون گاشہ منر گوتے كیاہ

Some are blessed here as well as there

Some get nothing here nor there

Some get diamond necklaces bright

Some are those whose day is night

Editor's Note

Markaz-i Noor, Centre for Shaikh-ul Aalam Studies was established with the main objective of carrying out research in the field of literature and Social sciences. In the present day Higher Education, there is a huge scope for quality research in the institutes of higher learning, including universities. So much so that varied incentives for faculty including the periodical promotions are directly linked with the research carried out by the faculties in the institutions of higher learning. A substantial funding is kept at the disposal of the Universities by the funding agencies which include MHRD, UGC and other ministries for carrying forward the quality research, which will be beneficial for society in general and higher education in particular.

Our University, under the dynamic leadership of Hon'ble Vice Chancellor Prof. Khursheed Iqbal Andrabi is also one of the beneficiaries where quite numerous projects of Research in various faculties of the University have been awarded by the Central and State funding agencies for carrying out research. Alhamdulillah, the University of Kashmir has made a mark in this direction. The research work carried out by our University is being duly appreciated and new major projects are being awarded by various funding agencies.

With a view to produce quality research, we at Centre for Shaikh-ul Aalam Studies constantly move towards this direction. Ours is mainly a research oriented centre, where we regularly produce M.phil and Ph.D scholars from the faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. Our main thrust is to carry out quality research about the great Kashmiri Rishi and Saint Hazrat Shaikh-ul Aalam, Shaikh Noor-ud Din Noorani^(RA).

Of course we do face some financial constraints as well. But with the positive approach and liberal attitude by the present administration of the University under the dynamic leadership of the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor towards this Centre, I am sure the financial constraints will soon change into generous funding which will facilitate us to do more qualitative research with zeal and enthusiasm.

The present volume of our yearly research magazine "Alamdar" is one more modest effort in quality research being carried out through Centre for Shaikh-ul Aalam Studies.

I am sure that this effort will be duly recognized by the researchers and students alike. It will be appreciated if we receive feedback based on merit and genuine argument which will help us to improve further.

Mohammad Shafi Sumbli
Chairman
CSAS

Bhakti Movement: A Socio-Religious Analysis

Prof. Farooq Fayaz

What we mean by Bhakti in a historical connotation refers to a distinct socio religious behavior which aims at redefining the passage of accessibility to divine through the means of love, devotion, pity and simplicity as against the priestly crafted and textual branded ritual performance. With an aim to redefine the contours of religion, it equally presses for the evolution of a society, which guarantees equal opportunities to all human kind without any distinction of sex, status, caste or profession.

The entire gamut of Hindu tradition either during the Vedic period from 2500 to 400 BC or epic or classical periods from 400 BC to 600 A.D is generally governed by the priestly dominance. In the formative period (2500-400), it was Rishi or Seer the visionary figure which attained the status of centrality as he was able to communicate with and about the various gods of Vedic pantheon through a complex system of rituals that could only be conducted by an increasingly powerful priest hood. Liberation or Moksha was to be formed through the precise performance of ritual.

During the epic or the classical period (400 BC to 600 AD) it was the Brahmin priesthood that acted both as the interpreters of the text and the performers of the ritual. Some of the authors of the law books belonged to the learned faculty of priesthood, the Brahman thus comfortably was placed at the highest of the social rung,

followed by Kishtrayas and Vaeshyas. Beneath these three groups were the Shudras (the servants to the upper three varnas), underneath this rung came another sub section, the untouchables (those whose occupations were so polluting that they did not even qualify to fit within an ordered society. The way to rebirth from liberation or moksha was in a true understanding of Dhanna-recognition and maintenance of the good of the social order-as exemplified and regulated by Shastras or law books.

A marked deviation in terms of approaching invisible Absolute reality became prominently traceable with the rise of a new line of kings, the Gupta lineage (320) when adherence to ritual was replaced by worship of Divine image (Puja) and the temple became the metaphor of connectivity between the devotees and the divine. Thus deviations during the early medieval Indian period, alongside the lessening of religious value to rituals, made gods, deities or icons accessible (or the basis of personal devotion) to those socially disqualified humans, whose accessibility had been banned within an ordered society.

The emergence of Shavite and Vaishnavite cults at this point of time in south, point to the simmering discontent which was basically breeding against the prevalent suffocating socio- religious set up. To get rid of Brahmanical hegemony and status and caste centric socio-religious orthodoxy, the followers of the two sects composed imaginary mythological stories known as the Puranas around Vishnu (the cosmic king) and Shiva (the great yogi and ascetic) with an aim to get some degree of psycho-social relief. The expression 'Bhakti' refers to a devotion or intense love for the divine. According to Bhakti, Moksha or liberation from rebirth does not depend

to adhere rules, regulations or social ordering, but it can be achieved through a simple devotion to the Divine. Singulru; devotion, mystical love for God and structured focus on a personal relationship with the Divine constitute the basic canons of Bhakti worship. Given their belief in the centrality of personal devotion, the Bhakti saint poets were highly critical of ritual observances as maintained and fostered by the Brahman priesthood. For many, their critique also included the caste system that supported the traditional religious hierarchy, with Brahmans at the head of this hierarchy. The poet saints, particularly, as the movement developed northward were themselves of lower cast lineages. Another commonality was their usage of the vernacular or regional languages of the masses as opposed to the sacred language of the elite priesthood, Sanskrit. Caste regulations prevented the untouchables from being employed in domestic work. Forced to work in a caste society, untouchables constituted a permanent reservoir of landless labor, their performance ensured by the disabilities of their birth.

Fah-Hian, a Chinese Buddhist Monk, who was on pilgrimage to India in the years AD 405-4011, collecting Buddhist manuscript and studying at Buddhist Monasteries writes about the gory picture of untouchables as under:-

"The untouchables had to sound a clapper in the streets of the town so that people were warned of their presence, and that if an untouchable came into close range, the upper caste person would have to perform a ritual ablution. He further states that butchers, fishermen, theatrical performers, executioners and scavengers were forced to live outside the city and their houses were marked so that they could be avoided."

At this point of history, there emerged three important aspects of Vaishnavism and Shaivism that (had their roots in the changes of this period) led to a different religious ethos from the dominated one either by Buddhism or Vedic Brahmanism. The image emerged as the focus of worship and this form of worship centered on Pujas superseded the Vedic sacrifice. According to Romila Thapar, "The reaction of the emphasis on the priest compared to his role in the sacrificial ritual of Vedic Brahmanism gradually led to a devotional worship Bhakti, becoming the most widespread form of the Puranic religion, worship of deity became the main concern of the individual, as it was through Bhakti" that the individual could aspire to liberation from rebirth. The Vedic religion had well defined rituals and was exclusive to the upper castes. The Puranic religion had a far wider appeal. Its accessibility lays in performing acts that required little investment. This underlined the individual's participation in the religion, as well as the cohesion of a sect while members were chosen not necessarily by birth but by faith, even if it tended to remain somewhat closed."

This new dimension of socio-religious articulation was given wide spread publicity by two groups of Mystic poets, the Alvars and Nyanamars in Tamil Nadu. One group promoted the worship of Vishnu and the other Shiva. Most of the Alvars and Nayanmars were not Brahmas by birth and hailed from communities of peasants, traders, washer-men, potters, fishermen, hunters etc. These mystics immersed were in the deepest emotion of devotion and surrendered to the lord, expressing their mystical experiences and realizations in songs that facilitated a

respectable degree of lessening the strong priestly hold on contemporary society and religion.

Shankaracharya's philosophy which is known as a Advaita--a well reasoned and balanced interpretation of the Hindu way of knowledge, also played important role in liberating religion from the ritual centric socio- religious order. By redefining Vedanta, the philosophy of Upanishadas and bringing it to the level which made it understandable to people other than elite Brahmas it widened scope and horizon to accommodate, though in limited manner, other shades of social organization. Ramanuja, too in the footsteps of Shankaracharya attempted to interpret Vedanta against the emerging changing socio-cultural scenario of the times.

The devotional fervour which originated in South, when travelled north in due course of time, gave further momentum to the Bhakti Movement and between the 14th and 17th centuries, it swept almost across the entire North and east India. Unlike the Bhakti movement of the South, which was centered on Vishnu and Shiva, the moment in the north rallied around Rama and Krishna. Ramananda (1400-1470) intensively devoted to Sri Rama; he extensively spread the path of Ram Bhakti throughout North India. His disciples belonged to different religions irrespective of their caste and social status. Among them were Kabir, (a muslim); Raidas, a Shoe-maker; and Sena (a barber). He had women disciples too.

With the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate in the beginning of the thirteenth century, and consequent upon, it brought in its fold Sufi saints of different orders, which played significant role towards the propagation of Islam, particularly in the marginalized sections of Indian society.

Sensing the magnitude of changing mood of Indian populace, there developed an undercurrent notion to cleanse the Indian Society from inborn polluting agents without offending the State and expanding Muslim society. To address this objective, Bhakti was thought to be the potent tool, on the expected lines. The popular movement played significant role in eradicating the socio- religious barriers in the past and played significant role in the Indian life in bringing people of different faiths, linguistic origins, varied professions and castes together and thus heralded a period of social unity and integration amid marked contrasts.

In a state of tremendous social crisis and tension fostered by opposite religio-cultural strands represented by indigenous established religions and the one represented by Muslim Ulemas, the Sufi-Bhakti convergence stressing on intense love, devotion, faith and social equality played a significant role as a bridge connecting people of the diverse faiths, castes, professions and linguistic identities together and thus evolving a socio-religious fabric that provided dignified space to all irrespective, of the socio-religious diversity and distinction.

The Bhakti saints believed that salvation is not the status or caste centric phenomenon and the same can be achieved by all. They themselves came from diverse backgrounds. Ramananda, whose disciples included Hindus and Muslims, came from a conservative Hindu family. His disciples were many like Kabir (a weaver), Guru Nanak was (a villager's son), and Namdev (a tailor). These saints stressed on equality, disregarded the caste system and attacked institutionalized religion. The saints did not confine themselves to purely religious ideas; they

advocated social reforms too. They opposed sati and female infanticide. They emphasized on community langers to feed poor and hungry. They directed their followers to plant trees, and construct bathrooms and washrooms along the road ways.

By allowing women in the religious discourses and the Bhakti audiences, the movement provided a respectable space and offered greater degree of freedom to women-folk in the other-wise conservative social clime, governed by the advocates of conventional religious order. Women and shudras, both at the bottom of hierarchy ordering society became the examples of true humility and devotion. Their struggle attests to the strength of patriarchal values within both social and religious systems and social movements attempting to pave the way for more egalitarian access to the divine.

Bhakti movement was a socio-religious movement that opposed religious bigotry and social rigidities. At a time when society had become stagnant; Bhakti saints infused new life and strength in it. They awakened a new sense of confidence and attempted to redefine social and religious values.

The importance of Bhakti and Sufi saints lies in the new atmosphere created by them ·which continued to affect the social, religious and political life of India. Even in later centuries, Akbar's liberal ideas were a product of this atmosphere in which he was born and brought up. The preaching of Guru Nanak was passed down from generation to generation. This resulted in the growth of a separate religious group with its separate language and script.

The silent revolution in the cultural and the socio-religious history of Medieval India brought about by role of socio-religious reformers is known as the Bhakti movement. The development of Bhakti movement took place in Tamil-Nadu between the 7th and 12th centuries. It was reflected in the emotional poems of the Nayanars (devotees of Shiva) and Alvars (devotees of Vishnu as mentioned earlier). These saints looked upon religion not as a cold formal worship but as a loving bond based upon love between the worshipped and worshipper. They wrote in local languages, Tamil and Telugu and were able to reach out to many people. Alongside the men, many of its poets belonged to woman-folk who extolled passionate devotional love for the divine. The Bhakti movement gained momentum from the 12th century in the central western regions of India, then moved North and coming to an end roughly in the 17th century.

Historians have advanced various theories with regard to the origin and rise of Bhakti movement. Some believe that advent of Islam and the spread of Sufism is the cause of the Bhakti movement, yet another school of historians' attribute it as a reaction to the feudal oppression. The anti-feudal tone in the songs of saints like Kabir, Nanak, Chaitanya and Tulsi Das are given as evidence. Some others hold that the very Bhakti movement was a natural and spontaneous response of Hinduism to directly or indirectly address the social and religious issues, without, however, dislocating or disturbing the allegiance of the Hindu towards their religion or their scriptures. So for the advent of Islam in India is concerned, no doubt, the early traces of Islamic influences began to be felt much before the establishment of Delhi Sultanate towards the

beginning of the 13th century, yet the early settlers, engaged themselves more in trading activities and the religious fervour remained subservient to their commercial interests. Therefore, it holds little weight age to argue that Bhakti movement was the product of Islamic teachings in India. Further the Muslim conquest of Sind and Multan in 8th century had little to advance Islamic teachings beyond the northern borders of Peninsula. True, with the establishment of Muslim Sultanate in Northern India, there landed in India a good number of Muslim Sufi saints, who by dint of their noble deeds, love for humanity, social cordiality and universal brotherhood, carved a dignified space in the contemporary socio religious landscapes of India.

The argument advanced by Marxist historians that the Bhakti movement was a reaction against the feudal oppression falls short of qualification. We do come across some references of torture and oppression on peasantry in the poetry of Bhakti saints like Kabir, Nanak, Chaitanya and Tulsi Das but the underlying objective of these references is governed more by Sufi experiences than that of mundane agrarian compulsions. The Bhakti or Sufi saints often used to select metaphoric expressions from agricultural activities to explain inward Sufi experiences. The metaphoric compatibility between the invisible spiritual world and life centric agro order has been the predominant subject matter of Bhakti and Sufi poetic compositions. The way Shaikh Noor ud Din Rishi in his *Gongul-Nama*; uses agro related metaphors to explain spiritual stages of Sufi experience and has little to do with the feudal or agro elite oppression, the same applies true to Bhakti saints as well.

The third assertion is that Bhakti movement was a natural and spontaneous response of Hinduism to directly or indirectly address the social and religious issues without however dislocating or disturbing the allegiance of the Hindu towards religion or their scriptures. True, Shankaracharya and Ramanuja attempted to redefine Vedanta in the light of the contemporary socio-religious milieu but their additions were seldom welcomed by conventional Hindu religious establishment. The system continued to be guarded by the canons of shastras and the contours of the ordered society which would hardly allow to dilute its orthodox stand on the established socio-religious order: Further, the stray attempts to bring reformation in the established Hindu socio-religious order were never governed by any institutionalized effort. Had Bhakti movement been a natural and spontaneous response of Hinduism to revisit its orthodox socio religious order, there would have been a unified selection of deities, icons, heroes or gods or goddesses across the country. But against Shiva and Vishnu the two popular cults of Bhakti in the Deccan, there emerged Krishna and Rama as most revered cults in the Northern India. In other regions, there appeared multitude of regional deities, who took central stage in regional religious versions. The decline of Bhakti movement towards the end of the mid 17th century because of unfriendly response of caste or Brahman centric religious order towards the egalitarian approach of Bhakti saints, could also be advanced as a strong argument that Bhakti movement was not an institutionalized or structured effort of established Hindu order to address the socio religious issues. Priest class untouchability and caste

centric social order continued to remain in operation even after the disappearance of Bhakti movement.

Bhakti movement was in fact an unorganized silent protest against hegemonic, Brahman centric and caste oriented socio- religious order, legitimized under the religious sanction of Shastras and scriptures. This was a creative articulation of a regional sentiment clothed in devotional expression against structured and centralized religio-political power structure.

Political Milieu of Kashmir before and during the period of Shaikh Nur-ud Din ^(R.A)

Dr. Zulfikar Siddiqui

History is testimony to the fact that State and Church have always remained closely associated in the past. It is equally a fact that ancient history is replete with examples of political leaders who derived legitimacy through religious titles. In this connection monarchs ruled by the idea of Divine right for centuries. The mixing of religion and state can be seen throughout antiquity. So was the case with Islam. The concept of Caliphate and Imamate are its manifestations. This was perhaps to achieve the desired goals of a good, honest and morally upright society. However, among ancient philosophies, we see Epicureanism in favour of an early version of the separation of religion and state as can be found in the writings of Lucretius, and Epicurus. James Madison writes, "perhaps one of the most important modern proponents of the separation of Church and State, Luther Martin's doctrine of the two Kingdoms marked the beginning of the modern conception of separation of Church and State".¹ And in Islam the very introduction of Malukiyat according to Sayyid Moudoodi, destroyed the fundamental tenants of Caliphate.² To my understanding this might have been at the hindsight of the great poet and philosopher Iqbal when he said:

Juda ho Din Siyasat Se To Reh Jati hai Changezyi !

Kashmir has a wonderful history as far as its political and religious spectrum of diversity is concerned. Where it has remained a seat of learning there it has also remained the most religious state with high standards of understanding. Perhaps the genius of Kashmiris was well recognised by the most learned and highly scholastic personalities who were attracted to this fertile land.

We not only see Buddhism thriving in this land but also its postulates being discussed and formulated here. At the same time we also see the highest philosophy of Hinduism especially Saivism being devised and practiced here. Islam also made its way to this beautiful land as back as 8th century. According to Chach-i Nama, it was the Caliphate of Walid Awal Umwi(705- 715 AC corresponding to 86-96 AH) when Hamim Ibini Sama Shami who was among the Arabs came to Kashmir along with Jai Shah, son of the Raja Dahar of Dabeel (Karachi) Jai Shah was given the village of Shakul⁴ to his Jagir by the then ruling King of Kashmir. After the natural death of Jai Shah, Hamim took over the possession of his properties and built mosques there and lived with the ruling King with peace and respect.

Likewise there are numerous historical accounts which establish that Islam was introduced in Kashmir during the early periods of 8th Century and the ruling Kings/Rajas thereafter did tolerate the pluralistic set up of the society. However, Muslim clergy and its missionaries remained dynamically involved for the propagation of Islam with the very advent of Muslims to this land. Yes, the nuances of their endeavours in this direction were so subtle that the same could not get recorded in the historical accounts.

The life of Shaikh Nur-ud Din (1377-1438) remains shrouded in a complex political discourse. He saw the Sultanate period which continued to be marked not only by political instability but civil war and public disorder as well. Intrigues, conspiracies and revolts were the common features with most of the Sultanate period.

Religious disorder especially in a Hindu dominated society, of that time Kashmir over ridden with class and caste discrimination made the life of common masses not only miserable but difficult to live. The important feature of the Sultanate period is Islamic Missionaries making their way to the valley. They influenced greatly the ruling Sultans. They also proved catalysts to the religious conversion processes. Islamic acculturation was in progress during Shaikh's period.

This made Nur-ud Din most relevant as far as the political, social and religious affairs were concerned. Under this complex situation there is no denying the fact that the Shaikh played his role exceptionally well. And history is testimony to the fact that his role was most desirable and most warranted by the circumstances prevailing during that period. He stood for the good of common masses, fought tooth and nail against the political class for the due justice of their subjects and at the same time he was pivotal in Islamic acculturation.

Contribution of Kabir and Shaikh Noor-ud Din to Northern India

Dr. K. C. Sharma

Kabira

Kabira has been a genius of a different order. He has gazed into the mystery of life and seen the vision of the ineffable light. He brings from the world of beyond a new message for the individual for the society. Kabir is considered the as most influential and most remarkable poet of the Bhakti movement in Northern India. He dreams of a future purified of insincerities, untimths, ugliness, inequalities; he preaches a religion based on the only foundation on which faith can stand namely, personal experience. His vision was of a human centered society which remains till today, a source of inspiration not only for the people of North India but for people all over the world who are fighting against injustice and inequality. Undoubtedly, Kabir was a product of the historical times in which he lived; but he left an indelible imprint on that history and gave it a new direction, in resonance with the aspirations of the people. He upheld that every idea must be tested in terms of the ground reality of the concrete necessities of life. The direction he showed served to transform ideas from the realm of imagination to the practical reality on the ground.

Kabir's life is shrouded in obscurity. Different writers have given different dates of his birth and death. Some

historians favor 1398-1448 C.E. as the period Kabir lived while others favor 1440-1518 C.E. The Hindu authors do not give any clear guidance. Kabir was a son of Brahmana widow whom in order to hide her shame left him on the side of a tank in Banaras and was later found by a weaver Niru and his wife Nima who adopted him. Kabir spent the years of his childhood in the house of his Muslim parents, who were very poor and were unable to give him proper education. He was left more or less to his own devices, except that he learnt his father's profession. In the city of Banaras surrounded by a Hindu atmosphere and endowed with a keen and enquiring mind, he early became familiar with both the Hindu and the Muslim religions. It is, related that even as a boy he showed such freedom from bias, that both Hindu and Muslim boys misunderstood him and persecuted him. Kabir was the disciple of Ramananda he himself says, "I was revealed in Kashi and was awakened by Ramananda ". He initiated him in the knowledge of Hindu Philosophy and religion. At the time of Kabir masses were confused by these conflicts and no religious community could provide the answers to their questions. It was at such a time that Kabir struck at the very root of these imaginary ideological conflicts. A big section of Kabir's works are included in the 'Guru Granth Sahib'. At least 243 saakhis are included in this. One research deals with the important contribution of Kabir's teachings towards the development of Sikhism.

Another feature of Kabir is worth noting, that he laid great emphasis on earning by one's own labour. Throughout his life he never gave up his work as a weaver. He was faithfully partisan towards the working people and he remained the saint of the masses all his life.

His thought process can be linked to the thought processes of that time. It is true that he was influenced by the

various trends of that time, yet he worked to maintain harmony among all of them. In fact he contributed to the development of a new trend. The values of this new trend are becoming more and more relevant with time.

Shaikh Noor-ud-din Rishi:

The Shaikh Noor-ud-din is the founder of Rishi order in Kashmir. According to some authorities he was born on 9 April 1378C.E. basically he was a son of Hindu who converted into Islam. He is also called Nund Rishi. He was brought up as a Muslim he did not obtain a formal religious education. Later he admitted that he did many penances to atone for his illiteracy. Performing the usual ascetic exercises of a mystic, Shaikh lived in a cave in the village of Kaimuh near Srinagar, at the same time totally obtaining from meat and gaining nourishment from wild spinach and leaves. It would seem, however that the Shaikh obtained inspiration from Lalla. Some early sources state that the Shaikh was an Uwaisi who obtained initiation directly from the spirit of the Prophet.

Shaikh was not in favour of caste system. He says :

Hazrat Ba:ba-A:dam mo:lu:

Ma:ma Hava: totuy a:vu:

Ada kati vopun Du:mb, Va:tul, tsrolu:

Kvalas hamkval kya:h hedivu:

Unity in Diversity, 168, p154

Adam came as the first ancestor of,

Mother Eve followed suit.

Where from were low castes born, then?

How can members of the same family jeer at one another?

Ati hath ta vuh jora vopanu:

Akh Zani ta akh marad a:vu:

Tahanz hekamats timan bo:la:nu:

Kvalas hamkval kya:h hedivu:

Unity in Diversity, 169, p155

Hundred and twenty pairs were born of them,
Of each (pair), one was male and the other, female; God's
wisdom made them talk,

How can members of the same family jeer at one another?

If the creation origin from same family then how the
differences of caste, creed and colour, can take place? Shaikh
says that these differences are only like the differences among
the Ice, sheets of frozen water and snow. He says:

Yakh tulkatur t ashi:n

Bion bion pa:da kari A:shin

Ya:mat khotuk pu:ri kin Rav

Ta:mat timan tren akuy gav.

Unity in Diversity, 172, p158

Ice, sheets of frozen water and snow

Are created by God, variously;

But the moment Sun appears from the East, Into one element
are changed the three.

Nund further says:

This universe is the play of God and He Himself seeing this
play. The creator and creation He Himself and the birth and
death also take place due to him. He never sleeps and never
eats, He all powerful so one should try to realize him.

He says:

Soray piinal vuchhiin chhuy piinas

Ziitas labina nendar ta khen

Yemi na dyiin kor ziinh ath gyiinas

Anis chhu hyuhuy riith kyho den.

(Unity in Diversity, I35, P 128)

Being all consciousness, He looks upon himself, Alt. (being everywhere, he looks upon him); the transcendental being
neither sleeps nor eats;

One, who never thought on this point of true knowledge,
Is blind: night and day are alike to him.

Philosophies had been rear in India on the doctrines of pain or illusion. Existence has been viewed in the gloom of universal suffering or the shadow of unreality. For Kabira such vision was essentially false. True, egoism was the root of all evils for Kabira no insight was possible for the heart insistent on the satisfaction of its own claims, where there is mercy there is strength; where there is forgiveness, there is God. Kabir was totally in favour of religious harmony.

He says:

"The Hindu resorts to the temple and the Musalman to mosque, but Kabir goes to the place where both are known. The two religions (*di:na*) are like two branches in the middle of which there is sprout surpassing them". *Kabir* has taken the higher path abandoning the custom of the two. "If you say that I am a Hindu then it is not true, nor am I a Musalman: I am a body made of five elements where the unknown (*ghaibi*) plays". Kabir says about birth and rebirth:

dchj lalk nwfj dfjj tkaeu ej.k HkjaeA
iaprr rrfg feys] lqjfr lekuk eauAA
dchj xzUFkkoyh i` - 138

Birth and death are nothing but the fruit of ignorance.
Therefore this doubt should be removed. Human body means five elements and at the time of death these elements emerge in their own forms and soul emerges in the Ultimate soul.

dchj dgrs gSa fd e`R;q&IEcU/kh la'k;
dks nw dj nksA ;g tUe&ej.k dsoy Hkze
ek=gSA

'kjhj ds iap rRo O;id ,ao rRoksa esa fey tkrS gSa
vkSj O;f"V&pSrU; lef"V&pSrU; vFkkZr bZ'oj esa
foyhu gks tkrk gSA ;gh eqDrkRek dk ej.k gSA
eqDrkRek dk ej.k gh okLro esa ej.k gSA D;ksafd
og Kku vkSj izse ls ije&rRo esa yhu gks tkrh gSA

Kabir says about the ego that life is mortal therefore one should not be proud of it. Everyone will die one day, nobody can escape death.

dchj dgrs gSa fd {k.kHkaxqj ,oa vfuf'pr
thou ij D;k vfHkeku djrk gS\ e`R; us tho
dks ckyks ls idM+s gh j[kk gSA irk
ugha] dky mls dgka ekjsxk\ mlds vius
?kj ij gh vFkok ijns'k esa\

Kabir further describes the Ultimate soul and individual soul as:

ika.kh gh rSa fge Hk;k] fâe gS x;k fcykbZA
tksa dqN Fkk lksbZ Hk;k] vc dNq dâk u tkbZAA
cdhj xzUFkkoyh i' - 37

Kabir says in between relation Ultimate Self and individual self lies no difference and the one who does not see it, is ignorant. Duality takes place due to ignorance. Kabir compares this situation with the water which after freezing becomes Ice and when heated again becomes water.

ik.kh gh ?kuk gksdj dQZ cu x;k gSA
cQZ fixydj ik.kh cu xbZA tks dqN igys
Fkk]
ogh gks x;kA bl ifjorZu ds IEcU/k esa
dqN ugha dgk tk ldrk gS] fD;ksafd dqN
uohu
oLrq iSnk gh ugha gqbZA bl izdkj
fo'kq) pSrU; ek;k dk vkJ; ysdj c) tho
gks x;k vkSj iqu% ifjp; izklr djds

vkRe&cks/k tkx tkus ij fo'kq) pSrU;
 gks x;k(vFkkZr~
 viuh iwokZoLFkk esa fQj ls vk x;kA
 Shaikh describe the carelessness of individual as:
 A:dam a:sith lo:guth kharo
 Ginda:n su:ruy doh tar a:th
 Marun masbaritb sapanukh garo
 Kya:h kara kya:h kara tsoluy na za:th.
 (Unity in Diversity, 316, p296)

Though a human, thou acted like an ass,
 And playing spent thy day and night:
 Conceited became thou, forgetting death,
 And always bemoaned thy helplessness.

Kabir strongly opposed the idol-worship, caste system and untouchability as practiced by the Hindus and simultaneously condemned the orthodoxy and meaningless rituals of the Muslims.

He says:

ikagu dwa dk iwft,] ts tue u nsbZ tkcA
 vka/kk uj vk"kkeq"kh] ;kSagh [kksoS vcAA
 dchj xzUFkkoyh i`-

109

About Idol-worship Kabir says, that there is no benefit of worshipping an idol because it never gives response to a worshiper. But people blindly have faith in idol-worship and waste their energy and time.

iRFkj dh iwtk djus ls D;k ykHk\ ;g iRFkj tUe Hkj iwtus ij Hkh
 dHKh fdh dks dqN dgrk ugha gSA HkDr dh izkFkZuk ij
 mUkj ugha ns ikrk gSA ij ekuo vk'kkvksa esa Qalk gqvk

vU/kk gks x;k gS vkSj blh ls O;FkZ gh eqfrZ&iwtk esa viuh
izfr"Bk vkSj 'kfDr xaok jgk gSA

Shaikh believed in internal purity and said that first of all needs to be pure. When mind is pur, our thoughts turn pure and as such our actions turn good and pious He says if the internal purity not takes place the there is no use of external purity. He says:

Ma:ravun ti:r iim yeti ada bala no
Zeth za:la valanay yeli iis metsi.
Anti mal neirina kyiih neiri chhalano
Ka:li mii talanam tila zam tvatsi..

(Unity in Diversity, pl02,p 102)

Once the arrow of death is shot, there is no remedy:
Through birth was I caught in the meshes of the world.
If the mind be not clean, what avails washing the body?
I am fried in oil, one day, I fear

Kabir was not in favour of renouncing the world and going to forests and hills in search of true knowledge or salvation; instead he advised his followers to earn their livelihood by the sweat of their brow and perform all the duties as householders while leading an honest, noble and dedicated life.

He says about pilgrimage:

rhj; dfj dfj tx eqok] Mwa?kS ika.kh UgkbA
jkaefg jkae tiarMka] dky ?klhV~;ka tkbAA
dchj xzUFkokyh i` - 94

Kabir says that religious people who feel proud by taking bath in deep rivers cannot get any benefit of liberation. Because for liberation purification of heart is must.

/kekZfHkekuh ykx rhFkZ dj&djds xgjs ty esa ugk&ugkdj ekj
x;SA ij mudh eqfDr ugh gqbZA vUr%dj.k dh IPph
HkfDr&Hkkouk ds vHkko esa dsoy tho ls fujUrj jke&uke tius
okyksa dks Hkh vUr esa dkygh ?klhV dk ys tkrkgSA

In Kabir's critical analysis, he also brings out a new thought: No one becomes learned simply by reading volumes of books. Truly learned is the one who has understood the meaning of love (dhai akshar prem ke). I have one divine spirit who is neither Hindu nor Turk, I neither fast nor celebrate Muharram, I neither perform puja nor read the namaaz. I salute Him who is without form, who resides in my heart. I neither go for Haj, nor for Teerath Puja, because if you say one is backward, then what is the other? Kabir says dispel all these illusions and focus your mind on the one divine. He says about pilgrimage:

iksFkh if<+ if<+ tx eqok] iafMr Hk;k us dksbZA

,dS vf"kj iho dk] i<+S lw iafMr gksbZAA

cdhj xzUFkkoyh i` - 97

;g lkjk lalkj bu iqLrdksa dks i<+rs i<+rs ej x;k gS(ij
buesa ls dksbZ okLrfod iafMr ugha gqvka tks vius
ifr&ijes'oj ds uke dk ,d v{kj Hkh i<+ yrsk gS(vFkkZr~
mlesa vius fiz; ds Lo:i dk lk{kkRdkj dj yrsk gS vkSj
mlds izse esa rUe; gks tkrk gS] ogh mRd`"V cu tkrk
gSA mlh dks rRo Kku gksrk gSA

Shaikh also says about the prayers and worship:

Shaikh also comments about the prayers and worship:

Poz yod bo:zakh pa:ntsh namu:rakh

Nata ma:z namu:rakh soy chhem nema:z Shivasta
Shunyahas yod myul karakh
Seduy Soy chhay vahantar nema:z.
Unity in Diversity,173, pl 59

If you listen to truth, curb the five;
Otherwise, you bend the body and call it "prayers"!
If you unite Shiva and the Void,
That is the inner prayer, indeed.

Kabir believes in true love he says:

dchj izse u pf"i;k] pf"i k u yh;k lkoA
lqus ?kj dk ikgq.kka] T;wa vk;k r;wa tkoAA
dchj xzUFkkoyh i`-
15

About true love for God, Kabir says that one who has no experience of true love. He is like that person who always visits that house where nobody resides.

dchj dgrs gSa fd ftlus izse&vFkkZr~ bZ'oj izse dk
vuqHko ugha fd;k]
mldk Lokn ugha fy;k] mldk bl lalkj esa tUe ysuk vkSj ej
tkuk lwus ?kj ds egeku ds vkus&tkus ds leku gSA
cdhj ;g ?kj izse dk] [kkyk dk ?kj ukafgA
lhl mrkjS gkfFk dfj] lks iSlS ?kj ekafgAA
dchj xzUFkkoyh i`-
67

Again about love Kabir says: Love is not an easy thing. In true love there is no place for selfishness. In the house of true love, only one can enter who has no interest in this mortal world.

dchj dgrs gSa fd ;g ?kj izse dk gS] viuh ekSIh dk
ughaA ;gka jksus&/kksus ;k vuqu;&fou; ls dke ugha
34

pyrkA izse ds ?kj esa ogh izos'k dj ldrk gS] tks fl mrkj
dj vius gkFk ij j[k ysrk gSA

Shaikh was also in favour of true love:

'A:shaq suy yus ' shqa sa:ti daziy

Svan zan prazales panun pa:n

'Ashaqun do:d yas varlinji saziy

Suy ada vatiy La:rnaka;r.

(Unity in diversity, p305)

A lover is he who burns with love,
Like gold will glitter his own self;
The one, whose heart is afflicted with love,
Will surely attain the Infinite Self.

Nund Rishi guides the people that this life is not permanent but temporary so we should not give much importance to this material body. One should meditate upon God, by controlling his mind. Lalla too taught the people that one should not over eat and do not put much clothes as overeating and putting much clothes are not good for meditation. So Nund Rishi was also not in favour of over eating so he left food, when one day his mother brings food for him, he says:

Ma:ji bo kya:h kara annas

Me beni hunis brahmano dito

Bo par liiyith hekana piinas

Me gara trov ta zion kas kito.

Unity in Diversity, 30, p 51

What shall I do with the food, mother?
Offer it to a dog or a Brahman hava I.

I cannot shrike a hammer at myself.
Having renounced my home, for whom should I live?

About selfishness Kabir says:

LokjFk dks lc tx dksm lxx] tx lxykgh tkf.kA
fcu LokjFk vknj djs] lks gfj dh izhfr fiNaf.kAA
dchj xzUFkkoyh i` - 127

Everybody knows that selfishness is the base of all relations. But if somebody maintains the relation without any interest, only he is the knower of actual devotion.

;g rks izR;sd O;fDr tkurk gS fd LokFkZ lc lEcU/kksa dk ewy vk/kkj gSA ij tks fu%LokFkZ Hkko ls ykxksa dk vknj djrk gS(ogh HkfDr ds ewy jgL; dks le>rk gSA

Kabir was a man of absolutely independent thoughts and broadly criticized the evils that had crept inside religions. Kabir addressed mixed gatherings consisting of the Muslim and Hindus and made disciples from both. He denounced the Brahmins and the Mullahas alike to be sole custodians of their religious orders and took them to task for their orthodox and exploitative attitude. He refused to accept the sanctity of Vedas as well as Quran to be the revealed scripture.

,d fujatu vyg esjk] fgUnw rjgd ngwa ugh usjKA
jk[kwa czr u egje tkauka] frlgh lqfe;a tks jgs funkukaA
iwtk d:a u fuekt xqtk:a] ,d fujkdkj fgjnS ueldk:aAA
uka gt tkaÅa u rhjFk iwtk] ,d fiNka.;k rkS D;k nwtKA
dgS dchj Hkje lc Hkkxk] ,d fujatu lwa eu ykxkkAA
cdhj xz- in
337

dchj dgrs gS fd ,d ek=] ek;kjfg[r] fujatu] vYykg
,oa vyH; rRo esa gh esjh fu"Bk gSA fgUnw vkSj
eqlyeku nkuksa esa ls dksbZ Hkh esjs utnhd ugha gS
vFkkZr~ eq>s fdlh dh Hkh lEiznkf;d ekU;rk dk vkxzg
ugha gSA muds }kjk dfYir ,oa lhfer bZ'oj :i esa esjh J)k
ugha gSA u eSa ozr j[krk gwa vkSj u gh esjk eqgjZe
esa fo'okl gSA eSa mlh rRo dks Lej.k djrk gwa tks
lEiw.kZ ek;k ds yqlr gks tkus ds ckn vUr esa vof'k"V jg
tkrk gS blhfy, u eSa nsorkvksa dh iwtk djrk gwa vkSj u
uekt i<+rk gwaA dsoy fujkdj Hkxoku~ dks gh g`n; ls
ueLdkj djrk gwaA u eSa gt tkrk gwa vkSj u rhFkZ&iwtk
djrk gwaA tc eSaus lgt izse ls ml ,d ije rRo dks igpku
fy;k rks nwljh lk/kukvksa dh D;k vko';drk gS\ dchj dgrs
gSa fd esjs lkjs Hkze u"V gks x;s gS vkSj ,d ek= rRo
fujatu esa esjk g`n; je x;k gSA

Men are not equally endowed with spiritual insight.
Men must seek guidance of those who have through
knowledge of God, discovered for them absolute the way.
The Hindus trust in vain those who wear the symbol of
sacrifice while they lead lives of pride and self- indulgence.
Those who escape not themselves from death are unable to
impart to others the gift of life.

The mission of Kabir and Shaikh was to preach the
religion of love, which unites all castes and creeds. They
selected from both religions, common elements and the
similarities between them. They found analogies in their
philosophic ideas, their dogmas and rituals. They placed the
greatest value upon the inwardness of religion and
impartially condemned the external formalism of both.

They deliberately abandoned the divisions between the two faiths and taught a middle path.

Teachings of Kabir in Guru Granth Sahib

Prof. P. P. Singh

Kabir is one of the greatest Bhakti saints of medieval India. His early life is shrouded in mystery. He is said to have been born of a Brahman widow of Benares who left him near a tank from where he was picked up by a

Muslim weaver. (1) Scholars differ about his date of birth. It seems almost certain that he flourished towards the close of the fifteenth century. (2) From his early life he was boy of meditative turn of mind and thoroughly religious, though in an unconventional sense.(3) He was a disciple of Ramanand, the great Bhakti saint. He was also influenced by the Sufi thought and practices. Kabir was not an escapist, but lived a householder's life and at the same time preached the religion of love to all people irrespective of caste and creed and made it the main concern of his life to promote unity between Hinduism and Islam.(4)

Kabir, inspite of all opposition by the orthodox sections of the society, preached against caste, ritual and the external formalities of religion. He was a firm believer in the theory that salvation could be attained only through love and devotion to God.(5)

When Guru Arjun Dev Ji composed the Guru Granth Sahib, he incorporated the writings of all the four Gurus who had preceded him.(6) He also invited followers of other religious denominations and contemporary writers of religious verse to send in contributions for consideration(7). The followers of the principal Indian saints Hindu, Muslim since the days of Jaidev, were invited by the Guru to attend and suggest suitable hymns for insertion in the sacred book. (8) Four Bhagats of Lahore-Kahna, Chhajju, Shah Hussain and Pilo, with a desire of being immortalised by getting their hymns entered in the Granth came to the Guru and requested him to find a place in the book for their compositions. The guru rejected them as they were opposed to the main teachings of Sikhism. Kahna's identity with God, Chajju's condemnation of women, Shah Hussain's despair and Pilo's pessimism were

not approved by the Guru. (9) In addition to the Gurbani of six sikh Gurus, the gurbani of sixteen Bhagats or saints was included in a chronological order. These saints are Jaidev (Bengal), Namdev (Mumbai), Trilochan (Mumbai), Permanand (Mumbai), Sadna (Sindh), Uchi Ramanand (U.P), Dhanna (Tank Rajasthan), Pipa (U.P), Sain (Rewa-U. P) Kabir (Banaras), Ravi Das (UP), Mirbai (Rajputana), Farid (West Punjab), Bikhan (U.P), Sur Das (Oudh). They represented nearly the four centuries of Indian thought from the middle of the twelfth to the middle of the sixteenth century A.D. The third set of the authors of the Guru Granth are the Bhattas who are seventeen in number.

There are 541 hymns of Kabir arranged in Guru Granth Sahib. (10) Among all the saints he has the 'largest number of hymns in Guru Granth Sahib.(11) These hymns have been arranged in seventeen Ragas. The subjects that Kabir has talked highlight the problems of the people in general and that of down trodden in particular. These include belief in oneness of God, human equality and tolerance, creation of universe, transistorns of life, gap between rich and poor, dominance of Brahmans, caste system, rituals, rulers, religious leaders and corruption.

Kabir through his couplets not only reformed the mindset of common villagers and low caste people but gave them self confidence to question Brahmins (12). Tarachand says that Kabir's mission was to preach a religion of love which could unite all castes and creeds. He goes on to say "Kabir's was the first attempt to reconcile Hinduism and Islam". (13) Kabir certainly believed that God was one, and different religions were different paths leading to Him. His own path of love and devotion to God was one which could

be followed by all irrespective of their individual beliefs.(14)

Since Kabir has said a lot on various of subjects, it is not possible to discuss all in this paper. Some of his teachings in Guru Granth Sahib are mentioned here:

Faith in One God

Kabir has complete faith in God. We find concept of one God in every hymn of Kabir in Guru Granth Sahib. He uses words like Allah, Ram, Hari, Sahib etc for God. Let us have a glimpse of his concept of one God described in his Rag, Bhair-o in Guru Granth Sahib:[15]

Eihu Dghan Maerae Har Ko Naa

The name of the Lord-this alone is my wealth

Gaanth N Baadhho Baech Na Khaao.

I do not tie it up to hide it, nor do I sell it to make my living.

Naa Maerae Khaethee Naa Meare Baaree.

The name is my crop, and the name is my field.

Bhagath Karo Jan Saran Thumhaaree,

As your humble servant! Perform devotional worship to you; I seek your sanctuary.

Naa Maerae Maaeiaa Naa tvlaerae Poonjee

The name is maya and wealth for me; the name is my capital.

Thumchi Shhood Jaano Nehee Dhooje,

I do not forsake you; I do not know any other at all.

Naa Maerae Bandhip Naa Maerae Bhaae,
The name is my family, the name is my brother.

Naa Maerae Sang Anth Hoe Sakhaae,
The name is my companion, who will help me in the end.

Maaeiaa Mehi Jis Rakhai Oudhass.
One whom the Lord keeps detached from maya.

Kehi Kabeer Ho Thaa Ko Dhass.
Says Kabeer, I am His slave.

Kabir sees all the creation in the universe as the work of God. He explains this in Rag Gauri.(16).

Que J Dheesehi Anbar Tharae,
The stars which are seen in the sky,

Kin Oue Cheethae. Cheethane haarae.
who is the painter who painted them?

Kahu Rae Panndith Anbar Kaa Sio Laaga,
Tell me, o Pandith, what is the sky attached to?

Boojhai Boojhanehaar Sabhaagaa.
Very fortunate is the Knower who knows this.

Sooraj Chandh Karehi Oujeearaa,
The sun and the moon give their light;

Sabh Mehi Pasariaa Braham Pasaara
God's creative extension extends everywhere.

Kahu Kabeer Jaanaigaa Soe,
Says Kabeer, he alone knows this,

Hiradhai Raam Mukh RaamaiHoe.
Whose heart is tilled with the Lord,
and whose mouth is also filled with
the Lord.

Kabir refused to accept the, dominance of the Brahmins. (17) He thought it was the Brahmin class who took advantage of the prevalence of caste system and was spreading superstition on the name of religion. He felt the Brahman class enjoyed life by exploiting the innocent people and thus were responsible for the pitiable condition of lower castes. Kabir expresses his views in Raag Asa. (18).

Ham Ghar Sooth Thanehi Nith Thaanaa,
Kanth Janaeoo Thumaarae.
In my house, I constantly weave the thread, while you wear
the thread around your neck o, Brahmin.

Thum Tho Baedh Parrahu Gaaeithree,
Gobindh Ridhai Hamaara .
You read the Vedas and sacred hymns,
while I have enshrined the
Lord of the universe in my heart.

Maeree Jihabaa Bisan Nain Naaraaein, Basehi Gobindhaa.
Upon my tongue, within my heart, resides the Lord, the Lord
of the universe.

Jam Dhuarr Jab Pooshhas Bavarae
Thab Kiaa Kehas· Mukandlia.

When you are interrogated at death's door,
O mad-man, what will you say then?

*Ham Goroo Thum Guaar Gusaaee,
Janam Janam Rakhavaarae.*

I am a cow and you are the herdsman, the sustainer of the
world. You are my saving grace; lifetime after lifetime.

Kabehoon N PaarOuthaar Charaaeihu, Kaisae Khasam Hamaarae.
You have never taken me across to graze there-what sort of a
herdsman are you?

*Thoon Baamhan Mai K.aaseek Julehhl,
Boojhahu Mor Giaanaa.*

You are a Brahmin, and I am a weaver of Banares;
Can you understand my wisdom?

*Thum Tho Jaachac Bhoopath Raajae,
Har So Mor Dhhaanaa.*

You beg from emperors and kings,
while immediate on the Lord.

Kabir was against caste system.(19) He became a target of Brahmins because he preached among lower castes and at that time, the elite thought that lower castes had no right for religious learning. The following verses of Kabir in Raag Gauri explain his views about caste system(20)

Garabh Vaas Mehi Kul Nehee Jaathee,

In the dwelling of the womb, there is no ancestry or social
status.

Breham Bindh Thae Sab Outhapaathee.

All have originated from the seed of God.

Kahu Rae Panddith Baaman Kab Kae Hoeae,
Tell me, O Pandit, O religious scholar;
since when have you been a Brahmin?

Baaman Kehi K.ehi Janam Math Khoeae.
Don't waste your life by continually claiming to be a
Brahmin.

Ja Thoon Braahman Brchanlancee Jaeiaa
If you are indeed a Braahman, born of a Brnhmip mother,
Tho Aan

Baatl Kaahae Nehee Aaciaa.
Then why didn't you come by some other way?

Thum Kath Braahmnan Ham Kath Soodh,
How is that you are a Brahmin, and I am of a low social
status.

Ham Kath Lohoo Thum Kath Dhoodhh,
How is that I am formed of blood, and you are made of milk?

Kahu Kabeer Jo Braham Becchaarai,
Says Kabeer, one who contemplates God

So Braahaman Keheeath Hai Hamaarai.

Is said to be a Brahmin among us.

Kabir always worked for religious tolerance and human equality. He considered all religions as different roads to the same goal. He said that differences among the Hindus and the Muslims are meaningless.(21) This has been explained by him in Raag Prabhati in Guru Granth Sahib:(22)

Aval Alah Noor Oupaaeiaa Kudharath Kae Sabh Bandhae,
First, Allah created the light; then by His creative power, He
made all mortal beings.

Eaek Noor Thae Sabh Jag OupajiaKoun Bhalae ko Mandhae.
From the one light, the entire universe welled up. So who is
good, and who is bad?

Logaa Bharam N Bhoolahu Bhaae,
O people, O siblings of Destiny, do not wander deluded by
doubt.

Khaalik Khalak Khalak Mehi Khaalik,
Poor Rehion Srab Thaanee
The creation is in the creator, and the creator is in the
creation, totally pervading and permeating all places.

Maattee Eaek Anaek Bhaanth Kar Saajee Saajaneharrai,
The clay is the same but the Fashioner has fashioned it in
various ways.

Na Kashh poch Maattee Kae Bhaanddae,
Na Kashh Poch Kunbhaarai.

There is nothing wrong with the pot of clay, There is
nothing wrong with the potter.

Sab Mehi Sachaa Eaeko Soe,
This Kaa Keeaa Sabh Kashh Hoe.
The one true Lord abodes in all; by His making, everything is
made.

Hukam Pashhaanai S Eaeko Jannai,
Bandhaa Keheei Soe.

Whoever realizes the Hukam of His command, knows the one Lord. He alone is said to be the Lord's slave.

*Alahu Alakh N Jae Lakhiaa,
Gur Gurr Dheena Meethaa.*

The Lord Allah is unseen; He cannot be seen. The Guru has blessed me with this sweet molasses.

*Kehi Kabeer Maeree Sankaa Naasee'
Sarab Niranjana Ddeetha.*

Says Kabeer, my anxiety and fear have taken away; I see the immaculate Lord pervading everywhere.

Kabir asks both Hindus and Muslims to understand the real meaning of religion. To him the true means of salvation was devotion to God with the freedom of the soul from all insincerity, hypocrisy and cruelty.(23) Kabir expresses in Raag Prabhati:(24)

*Alahu Eak Masccth Basath Hai
Avar Niulak kis Kaerra,*

If the Lord lives only in the mosque, then to whom the rest of the world belongs.

Hindoo Moorath Naam Nivaasee Dhuh Mehi Thath N Haerra

According to the Hindus, the Lord's Name abides in the idol, but there is no truth in either of these claims.

Aleh Raam Jeevo Thaerae Naaee Too Kar Miharaamath Saaee.

O Allah, O Ram, I live by your name. Please show mercy to me, O Master.

Dakhan Dhaes Hari Ka Baasaa Pashim Ak.eh Mukamma.

The God of the Hindus lives in the southern lands and the God of the Muslims lives in the west.

Dhil Mehi Khoj Dhi.lai Dhil Khojahu Eaehee Tour Mukamma.

So search in your heart -look deep into your heart of hearts;
this is the home and the place where God lives.

Brehaman Giass Karehi Choubeesa Kaajee Meh Ramajaanaa.
The Brahmins observe twenty -four fasts during the year and
the Muslims fast during the month of Ramadaan.

Giaareh Maas paas kai Raakhae Eaekai Maahi Nidhaanaa.
The Muslims set aside eleven months, and claim that the
treasure is only in the one month.

Kehaa Ouddeesae Majan Keeaa Kiaa Maseeth Sir Naaneaan.
What is the use of bathing at Orissa? Why do the Muslims
bow their heads in the mosque.

Dhil Mehi Kapatt Nivajj Gujaarai Kia Haj Kaabai Jaanean.
If someone has deception in his heart, what good is it for him to
utter prayers and what good is it for him to go on pilgrimage to
Mecca?

Eaethae Aourath Maradhaa Saajae Eae Sabh Roop 'Thumharrae.
You fashioned all these men and women, Lord, All these are
your forms.

Kabir Poongarra Ram Aleh Kaa Sabh Gur Peer Hamaarae.
Kabir is the child of God, Allah, Ram. All the Gurus and
Prophets are mine.

Kehath Kabir Sunahu Nar Naravai Parahu Eaek Kee Saranaa.
Says Kabir listen, O men and women; seek the sanctuary of the
one.

Kaeval Naam Japahu Rae Praanee Thab Hee.Nihachai Tharanaa.

Chant the naam, the name of the Lord, O mortals, and you shall surely be carried across.

Kabir appreciated the simplicity of the poor and condemned the vanity and pride of the rich. By such condemnation, Kabir preached the brotherhood to man.(25)
The following verse gives his point of view.(26)

*Niradhan Adhar Koe N Dhae,
Laakh Jathan Karai
Ouhu Chith N Dhharae.*

No one respects the poor man. He may make thousands of efforts, but no one pays any attention to him.

Jo Nirdhan Saradh an Kai Jae Aagae Baitha Peeth Firaae.
When the poor man goes to the rich man and sits right in front of him, the rich man turns back on him.

*Jo Saradhan Nirdhan Kai Jae,
Deeha Aadhar Leeya Buliah.*

But when the rich man goes to the poor man, the poor man welcomes him with respect.

*Nirdhan Sardhan Dhono Bhaae,
Prabh Kee Kalaa N Maettee Jaee.*

The rich men & poor men are brothers, God's preordain and plan cannot be erased.

Kehi Kabir Nirdhhan Hai Soee Jaa Kae Hiradhai Naam N Hoe.
Says Kabir, he alone is poor who does not have the naam, the name of the Lord, in his heart.

Rulers of the time appeared very small to Kabir. He expressed this in Raag Bilaaval:(27)

Kooo Har Saman Nehee Raaja
There is no King equal to the Lord.

Eae Bhoopath Sab Dhivas Chaar Kae Jhoothae Karath Dhivaaja.
All these Lords of the world last only for few days, putting on
their false displays.

Kabir calls this world a drama .No one can stay here
forever, so it is better to do good deeds because that only
pleases the Lord. He explains it in Raag Bilaaval:(28)

Aiso Elhu Sansaar Paekhamaa Rehan N Kooo Peehai Rae.
This world is a drama; no one can remain here.

Soodhhae Soodhhae Raeg Chalau Thum Nather Kudhhakae Dhive
-ehai Rae.

Walk the straight path; otherwise, you will be pushed around.

Baarac Boodtae Tharunae Bheea, Sabhehoo Jam lai Jeehai Rae.
The children, the young and the old, O siblings of Destiny,
you will be taken away by the Messenger of Death.

Kabir had clearly understood the religious pluralism of
India and that is why his teachings cannot be confined to one
or the other religion. In this age of intolerance, his teachings
become all the more important. I would like to conclude this
paper with one of his couplets :(29)

Bidhial N Paro Baadh Nehee Jaano,
I do not read books of knowledge, and I do not understand the
debates.

Har Gun Kathhath Sunath Bouraano,
I have gone insane, chanting and hearing the glorious praises of
the Lord.

Maerae Baabaa Mai Boura Saibh Khalak Saiaanee Mai Boura.
O my father, I have gone insane; the whole world is sane, and I
am insane.

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Ecosophical Concerns in the Utterances of Shaikh-ul-Aalam^(RA) and Bhagat Kabir

Dr. Shafqat Altaf

This paper is a tentative endeavour to explore ecological wisdom, embedded in the utterances of Shaikh-

ul-Aalam^(RA) and Bhagat Kabir in the context of environmental crises, climate change and global warming. The current year is being celebrated as "International year of Soils" and on 5th December all nations of the world joined together in celebrating the importance of soil and its role in the overall development and the welfare of living beings. If it is agreed that ecological imbalance is attributed to the estrangement/alienation of human life from Mother Nature, then it is the responsibility of the humans to establish again a filial relationship with her which, in turn, will develop into a certain subjective, emotional attitude towards Nature.

It is a grave concern that our contemporary transnational capitalist-technocratic world claims to have mastered the techniques of controlling and conquering Nature with its profit interests is, unfortunately, confronting the problems of environmental degradation - a basic threat to global living. The life giving mother earth (terra mater) is turned to be life destroying to the extent of self-annihilation. The scientific community, partially describe the crises-situation as deforestation, depletion of ozone layer, global warming, green house effect etc.

What is ecosophia? How do the teachings and poetry of Shaikh-ul-Aalam^(RA) and Kabir reflect ecosophical beauty and ecological consciousness? These are some inter-related queries that I have tried to expound in this paper.

The term ecosophia literally means the wisdom of the universe that is required for the promotion of sustainable and peaceful ecology. Ecosophia is the contraction of two Greek words Oikosa Sophos; Oikos means the Cosmos, the household of being while Sophos means ways of philosophy of ecological harmony and

equilibrium. Ecosophia is the articulation of religious, spiritual, mystic and world view about a "face to face relation with Nature".

Shaikh-ul-Aalam^(RA) and Kabir are arguably the best known spiritual and literary figures of the Indian subcontinent and have been venerated equally by all the people cutting across their faith. They both emerged as symbols of knowledge, peace and harmony of which any nation of the world can legitimately feel proud. The emotional - religious - spiritual and the philosophical attachment with Mother Nature is quite evident in their exhortative and didactic utterances. In their rapport with Nature, they promoted peace, justice and ecology. The chief forces behind their philosophical, spiritual and scientific activities were respectively R'sut - indigenous order of Kashmir mysticism and the North - Indian Bhakti (literally means devotion) tradition. Shaikh-ul-Aalam^(RA) and Kabir were verbally composed in their respective times but transmitted viva voce through 17th Century in which they were written down for the first time. Some scholars link Kabir to the Islamic mysticism for his sexual imagery that he used in some of his poems, wherein Kabir inverts the traditional Sufi representation of a God-woman and devotee-man longing for a lord -husband and devotee-bride. Shaikh-ul- Aalam^(RA) and Kabir composed their poems in the languages of evenplay life that were organic to their respective regions. They thrived among subaltern and labouring castes-generally oppressed by the social hierarchies of late medieval India. In many ways Reshi and Bhakti cults marked an early and revolutionary threshold of change in Indian subcontinent. Some scholars have sought to historicise Reshut in relation to Bhakti cult that swept

between fourteen and sixteen centuries. These were popular mobilizations that opposed hierarchical orthodoxy of religious monopolists and insisted on the revolutionary idea that a direct and loving communion between worshipsper and the Divine was possible without priestly interventions or ritual specialists. Many features of Kabir do bear affinity with Shaikh-ul-Aalam^(RA) especially the later's opposition to religious hierarchy, breaking away the egoistic, antagonistic and consumeristic attitude and developing harmony with the nature. Our profound scholar, researcher and critic M.Y. Teing views their relationship in this way: "Shaikh-ul-Aalam^(RA) has many common points with great exponents of Bhakti movement like Bhagat Kabir etc. But it is rather a lapse of first order that he is not so well-known outside the fold of Kashmiri speaking people. That perhaps was one of the reasons that when during his Century celebrations in 1978 we approached the central post and telegraph Ministry to issue a commorative stamp.

It is the repeated assertion of Shaikh-ul-Aalam^(RA) and Kabir that human mind, by being self conceited loses communion with Nature and ultimately with God. They reveal that the earth is endowed with a rich variety of life which are mostly governed by the laws of nature. Shaikh-ul-Aalam's^(RA)of-quoted saying "an po'she teli yeli van po'shi (Food is subservient to forest) while Kabir imparts the spirit of self righteousness to the entire subject of nature by saying "too jaini oh ha-o-jal ka meen; Jal meh raha-o-Jaleh bin Keen" (You are the ocean of water and I am just fish in that water; in that water if I remain without water, I would perish."

Shaikh-ul-Aalam^(RA) always spoke of the significance of natural environment and nature conservation on the planet

of earth. It is because of Shaikh-ul-Aalam's^(RA) innate far sight and intuitive knowledge, that was fully aware of some seven hundred years ago about the importance of natural resources and survival of life forms. He held the torch of ecological and scientific learning when the people especially from the west were shrouded into darkners of ignorance with regard to the conservation of totality of genes, species and eco-system of a region. He was thoroughly conversant with environment consisting of physical and biotic factors. He had a realization that the earth enveloped with air, water, forests, mountains etc. is the only abode of living creatures in the universe. In the below quoted "Shruk" Shaikh-ul-Aalam^(RA) describes 'Man' as the highest biological entity who is able to control vast facts of nature and subdue that for his own interests.

*Man was made of earth,
And his frame was cast in clay,
Out of the earth, grow all the bounties
In earthen-ware, do we cook our food?
Body is consigned to earth, when life goes out,
And earth gets mixed with earth for good.*

In contrast to philosophies that encourage world denial, Kabir affirms the reality of the earth. As per his philosophy, the earth is blessed with invaluable wealth and brimful treasurers of Lord's mediation. He fixed the earth a place for righteous action. He thus advised that one's relation to the world should be sacred and uncontaminated. He says:

*Water, fire, wind, earth and ether, adopt such a way of life
and you will be blessed to the Lord*

The egoistic human potency to corrupt and pollute has eroded the face of nature, while nature has all along been nourishing, protecting sheltering, life-giving, creative and maternal. Nature, earth, its biosphere and atmosphere have been mortally wounded due to the immortality in mad. It is because of their eco-centric and eco- friendly temperaments that our larger Himalayan glaciers are said to be still intact while glaciers are rapidly receding out side the Himalayan region, in the plight of global warning and the rise in average temperature. The essence of the utterances of these two illustrious saints has been the spiritual approach to the problems of life. They used their verses as an instrument for conserving with nature, wildlife and their habitat. They laid stress upon the balance between Nature and human beings. In this context they say:

*The sustenance precedes, thee and death follows
The world is the movement of breathing in and out,
(Shaikh-ul Aalam)*

*It is like the shadow of a tree,
When the breath of life passes out
of the mortal being tell me,
What becomes of his wealth?*

They have shown us a path within that they have advised to avoid inordinate greed, attachment to worldly desires, anger, pride and conceit. Their teachings, thus, left indelible mark on our pattern of thought. They launched potent spiritual movements with the intension to cause no harm to animale beings including plants, insects.They also

preached main to abstain from wine, meat and worldly lust. to abstain from wine, meat and worldly lust. Their following verses can be exemplified in this regard:

*One craves for a ready made house,
Life is short, of what avail is such a desire?
I have given up wine, bread and roasted fish
I have overcome the feeling of shame, let us
bury it for all times*

(Shaikh-ul Aalam)

*Says Kabir give up pleasures of corruption
or else your will surely die of them.
Meditate on the Lord, O mortal being,
through the world of His Bani; you
shall be blessed with eternal life.
In this way shall your cross over the
terrifying world-occean.*

(Kabir)

The history of Reshi and Bakhti cults is the history of class struggle that fought against all forms of political imperialism, economic exploitation and caste inequality and religious hypocrisy. Protesting the theory and practice of pollution be it untouchability or environment crises refers to land, water, soil, air etc. That is why Shaikh-ul-Aalam and Kabir called upon people to cultivate self discipline and piety. They put in their humanistic philosophy into the minds of people. They urged them to avoid wordly lust, and temptations as are the deadliest enemies of man on the path of his moral and spiritual attainments. They both share similar thought in this way:

*O Naser destroy thy sleep,
From whom will the Lord turn into coins of gold; Most
people are hungry for food.
Only the good realises the state of suffering.
God ordained it so that some should take to penance, Who
can scratch out the writ of fate?*

(Shaikh-ul Aalam)

*In the darkness no one can sleep in peace,
The King and the pauper both weep and cry,
As long as the tongue does not chant the Lord's name,
The person continues coming and going in reincarnation,
crying out in pain.*

(Kabir)

They both exhorted people to defeat the baser-self with all its passions and impulses, instinctive propensities and desires.

They made a plea that the creator and the creatures are on einessence. Their persistent insistence on aforesation, vegetarianism, conservation of all the living species, preservation of universal equity made them beloved among masses. They impressed upon people to purify their contaminated conscience for the attainment of the supreme purpose of human life:

*Alas, I have been done for by my ego;
concealing himself in darkness,
could I but catch hold of him,
With a sword would I slash his throat.*

(Shaikh-ul-Aalam)

*The bul is intoxicated and aroma widely;
He romps and eats and then falls into Hell*

(Kabir)

At many occasions their utterances provide valid ideological framework regarding socio-cultural stability to bio-diversity and natural eco-system. Man has exploited the environment for his material interests. By doing so, he is not killing the rest of the society but threatens his own-self from the very beginning of human industry on the earth. Because of this mischief, we see the majority of flora and fauna gradually disappearing from this land. Shaikh-ul-Aalam anticipated this natural disaster some six/seven hundred years before like this:

*First he studies and collects knowledge,
Then sells goodness to the people at large,
He builds a house upto the sky,
Considering it would have a lasting firm base,
Ignoring, hereafter, he runs after wealth,
Such sense, no doubt, is found in the brutes,
(Shaikh-ul-Aalam)*

*There is pollution in the water and
pollution on the land, whatever is
born is polluted,
There is pollution in birth and more
pollution in death; all beings are
ruined by pollution.*

(Kabir)

Factually all the living beings depend upon food, shelter and clothing. Shaikh-ul-Aalam knew some seven hundred years before that biodiversity provides food for humans and thus urged them to bring more and more land

under cultivation through his lucid and popular "Gongal Name" - Yus Kari gongul sasui Kari Krav (The spring festival of peasantry will surely celebrate the harvest). The poem describes the day to day activities of the farmer in the field, right from the day of tilling the land in spring to harvesting in autumn.

Finally, we may say that the utterness of Shaikh-ul-Aalam and Kabir actively respond to the promotion of ecological equilibrium and self righteousness of all beings in the cosmos. Reshut and Bakhti cults are foundationally ecosophical as they advocate steps for libration of life in its totality from false consciousness and unequal social structures. Shaikh-ul-Aalam and Kabir, in brief, serve as models to be followed in tackling downwith the environmental crises that pose major threat to the global living in this technocratic standardized world.

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Few Disciples of Kabir Das:

Dr. S. Iqbal Quraishi

*Nagma kujaa wa mann kuja saaz o sukhan bahaana eest
Sooye qataar me kunnam nakaye be zumaam raa*

Kabir Das is one of the leading spiritual poets of the 15th century in India who has given his philosophical ideas to promote the lives of people. His

philosophy of Oneness of God and Karma as a real Dharma has changed the mind of people towards goodness. His love and devotion towards the God is immense. He was found in the pond of Lahartara (in Kashi) lying at a huge lotus leaf. His early life was in a Muslim family, but he was strongly influenced by his teacher, the Hindu bhakti leader Ramananda. His writings influenced Bhakti Movement and his verses are found in Sikh's scripture Adi Granth.

Kabir's philosophy and teachings were propagated by a number of his disciples namely Loi, Raja Bhir Sinha, Bhagodas, Dharmadas and the legacy was continued by Kabir Panth ("Path of Kabir"), a religious community that recognizes him as its founder and is one of the Sant Mat sects.

Loi:

As per the Muslim traditions Loi was the wife of Kabir, Hindus however, are very careful to explain that she was not his wife, but only his disciple. When Kabir was thirty years old it is said that he was wandering in the forest and reached the hut of a Sadhu, where he took some rest. He met a twenty year old girl who enquired about his name, caste and order and got a reply as Kabir, Kabir and Kabir; the girl was surprised on the answer and said that she has met many Sadhus who were having names, castes and orders but Kabir had none.

Meanwhile six Sadhus had arrived and the girl brought seven cups of milk and set one before each. Kabir did not drink his milk, and said that he had kept it for another Sadhu who was on the further bank of the Ganges. To the bewilderment of the entire group of Sadhu appeared,

in further conversation it unraveled that once a Sadhu had lived in his hut that one day saw something in the middle of the Ganges wrapped in a woolen cloth and carried along by the stream. On getting hold of it he found a girl child whom he brought to his hut and reared her milk. As he found her wrapped in woolen cloth (Loi) he named her Loi. On his death bed he told her that one day a saint will come and be her guide. At the end Loi became the disciple of Kabir's trade and became a weaver.

Raja Bhir Sinha:

Raja Bhir Sinha had built a beautiful palace for himself at Jaunpur, when the construction was completed he invited many friends to great feast. All admired the new building except a Sadhu who was present and said that it has two serious defects; the first that the building would not last forever and second was that its owner would pass away even before the building. The Raja at first was very angry but eventually recognizing the unknown Sadhu as Kabir, he fell at his feet and acknowledged him as his Guru. On this occasion Kabir expressed his poem:

You built a spacious palace, and called many together to
make it famous

You crowned it with a dome of gold, but in a moment's
space you will go and leave it all, says Kabir

Though a house be built and decked with emeralds and
diamonds worth millions

It cannot be seen but four short days: death will come and
destroy it

Says Kabir, after death none will remember your name:all
will run to the inhabited city

Mad man, thou hast forgotten death: this body will be mingled with the earth, as the salt in the flour

Dharm Das:

Dharm Das is a famous disciple of (Kabir who became a leader of Kabir Panth in the Central Provinces, who was a wealthy merchant (Banya) of Bandhogarh. Dharm Das right from his childhood was very religious and spent much time and wealth in performing pious works. He first met Kabir in Muttra. Dharm Das is amongst the leading disciples of Kabir who played a very important role in propagating Kabir's teachings to the common masses.

Kabir Panth:

Kabir Panth is a philosophy and religious community of encompassing a wide spectrum of beliefs, traditions and practices based on the teachings of Kabir. This community was founded centuries after Kabir died, in various parts of India, over the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Its members, known as 'Kabir panthis,' are estimated to be around 9.6 million. 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. Its adherents are of Hindu, Buddhist and Jain ancestry (with majority being Hindu). Kabir Panthis 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.

One of the Kabir Panthi Kshitimohan Sen collected songs of Kabir across India; those were then translated to English by Rabindranath Tagore. New English translation of Songs of Kabir is done by Arvind Krishna Mehrotra.

Kabir: The Impact of his Teachings on Society

Dr Tanveer Hayat

Definitions and Meaning:

Kabir was undoubtedly the most remarkable saint that the middle age of India had produced. He was probably the most cosmopolitan of the saints of medieval India. Macauliff writes, " Kabir has written works which all religious denominations can accept, and which, if pursued

without bigotry, are advantageous for the salvation of all persons. Kabir was so steadfast in the utterance of god's name that in comparison with it he deemed worthless the rules of caste and the Hindu and Mohammedan religious observances."¹ Kabir was cosmopolitan in his outlook. He had a variety of religious experiences. He was most probably brought up in the family of a Muslim weaver. Kabir was not conversant with the religious scriptures of the Hindus or the Muslims but his association with the saints of different religions gave him knowledge of those religions. Kabir was a non-conformist. His desire was to teach people a true religion of the heart. He wanted to turn people from the empty ritualism of religion to show them the inner path that leads to union with the divine. In other words, he taught self realization and loving devotion to the formless divine that dwells within all. Kabir is a genius of a different order. He gazed into the mystery of life and saw the vision of the ineffable light. He brings from the world of beyond a new message for the individual and for society. He dreams of a future purified of insincerities, untruths, ugliness's, inequalities, he preached a religion based on the foundation on which faith can stand, namely personal experience, observes Dr Tara Chand². Kabir was no retiring ascetic who had abandoned the world in despair, nor was he an idealizer who found good in all things, he was eager to lift the sword in the moral struggle of the world and strike a doughty blow for the victory of righteousness, and he was not afraid of administering stern even harsh rebuke to all infringements of rational conduct and all degradations of human dignity. Evelyn Underhill writes, "Kabir is a mighty Warner, an intrepid path-finder, the great pioneer of the unity of the Hindu-Muslim

communities of the India and the apostle of the faith of humanity” who taught that, “the divine disclosed itself in the human race as whole”³. According to Nabhaji, Kabir refused to acknowledge caste distinctions or to recognize the authority of the six schools of Hindu Philosophy, nor did he set any store by the four divisions of life prescribed by Brahmins.⁴ Kabir held that religion without Bhakti was no religion at all, and that asceticism, fasting and almsgiving had no value if unaccompanied by Bhajan (Devotional worship). By means of Ramaini, Shabdas and Sakhis, Kabir imparted religious instruction to Muslims and Hindus alike. He had no preference for either religion, but gave teaching that was appreciated by the followers of both.

He spoke his mind fearlessly and never made it his object merely to please his hearers.⁵ The mission of Kabir was to preach a religion of love which would unite all castes and creeds. He rejected those features of Hinduism which were against this spirit, and which were of no importance for the real spiritual welfare of the individual. Kabir used both Sanskrit and Persian terms and both forms of the vernacular, Rekhtas, and Hindi Bhasa. He placed the greatest value upon the inwardness of religion and impartially condemned the external formalism of both. He deliberately abandoned the divisions between the two faiths and taught a middle path.⁶

The Hindi verses called Sakhis, Dubas and doctrinal poems, jointly known as Ramaini, form the majority of Kabir's poems..... the verses in the Adi Granth, the Kabir Granthawali and the Bijak (treasury) are the most reliable.⁷ Kabir rejected caste, image worship and the doctrine of re incarnation, denounced the Brahmins, and declared that the chief object of men should be to attain purity of life and perfect faith in god.⁸ Belief in oneness of god also leads Kabir to the conclusion that all religions were different roads to the same

goal. Hence, he considered the differences among the Hindus and the Muslims to be meaningless⁹. The Islamic doctrine of Wahdat-ulWajud had interesting parallels in India: it had no difficulty accommodating the various versions and interpretations of non-dualism given by Indian philosophers and saints. The cultural ethos was at this level conducive to a greater interaction between different sects and the mutual appreciation of apparently divergent thoughts and practices, for all were believed to be 'one' in the ultimate analysis. This idea was also expressed in Nirguna Bhakti assertion of the fundamental unity of Hindus and Turks. Kabir, for instance, saw no difference between Ram and Rahmaan, observes Prof Muzaffar Alam¹⁰. Notable in his poetry is the coalescence of Hari and Hazrat, Krishna and Karma, Muhammad and Mahadeva, Ram and Rahim. This, in my view, represented a fact within the common man's religious ethos, and was much more than a verbal equation. Concept of absolute reality and its compatibility with the Wahdat ai-Wujud was responsible for Kabir's fame as a Muwahhid. He says:

As the bubbles of the river are accounted water and blend with the water of the ocean.

So the man, who looked on all with an equal eye, shall become pure and blend with the infinite.¹¹ Another of Kabir's hymns states:

When a stream is lost in the Ganges,
It becomes as the Ganges itself;
Kabir is similarly lost in god by invoking him;
I have become as the true one and need not to go elsewhere.¹²

Kabir's Nirgun Brahma has both a transcendental and immanent nature. He is god of gods, supreme lord, primal

and omnipotent. He is unfathomable, unknowable, stainless and changeless. He is neither low nor high; in him is neither honour nor dishonour. He is eternal, all pervading, diffused and equally contained in all things. He extinguishes worldly sparks from the hearts of his saints and dwells in their hearts permanently. Their music is intoxicated with god's elixir. The man in whose heart nothing dwells but god is perfect.¹³ Kabir was conscious of his apostolic mission and his life and teachings followed the line which is analogous to that of the Imams and Shaikhs of Sufi sects: for example, Kabir says in one of his Duhas as, "I am the servant of the absolute (avigat) god and I have come to save the devotees (Hamsa). I have taught to the world by word of mouth the knowledge which has the true stamp. I was sent here because the world was seen in misery, all were bound in chains of birth and death and no one had found the lasting home. The almighty sent me to show clearly the beginning and the end". After discussing the creation of the world from Sruti, Kabir says,

I have taught the word from house to house. Those who will not listen to me, they will surely be drowned in the ocean of existence, in the midst of eighty-four lakh currents..... this, says the awakened teacher Kabir, is the decree(Farman) of the almighty"¹⁴. And, again, "those who will not listen to my teachings will go to the gates of Yama, but those who will listen they will come to my abode (salvation)"¹⁵. The expression of Kabir's teachings was shaped by that of Sufi saints and poets. In the Hindi language he had no precursors, and the only models which he could follow were Muslim ones, e.g Pandnama of Farid-ud-Din Attar; a comparison of the headings of the poems of both brings that out clearly. He must also have heard the poems of Rumi and Sa'di besides the teachings of other Sufis, for they echo there in his works. For instance, "when you came into the world the people laughed but you wept, do not conduct yourself in a

manner that after your (death) people should laugh at you ¹⁶
is a paraphrase of the well known lines of Sa'di.

And he further says:

"This always is a bubble (Hubab) on the motionless sea, the bubble is essentially the sea, although seemingly the wave, the sea and the vision are separate. It is a bubble when it rises, but in its mingling its aim is god. Both the bubble and the sea are Kabir, and all other names are unmeaning¹⁷. Kabir further says, " I am not the follower of law (Dharma) nor am I without law, I am not an ascetic, nor a devotee of desire. I am not a speaker, nor a listener; I am not a servant, nor a master"¹⁸.

All these quotations prove that Kabir was greatly indebted to Sufi literature. Ahmad Shah, the translator of his Bijak found over two hundred Arabic and Persian words in the poetry of Kabir, and an analysis of these words shows how deeply his mind was imbued with Sufi doctrines. The main proof of Muslim influence on Kabir, however, lies in his teachings and to that it is necessary to advert. Kabir is not a systematic philosopher but a poet and mystic and his language is not always clear. There is therefore some difficulty in analyzing his thought. Kabir's central theme is god, whom he indifferently calls by many names, but his favourite name is Sahib. In the Das Muqam Rekhta (the poem describing the ten stations), Kabir in his own way reproduces the whole story of Muhammad's Miraj. Kabir asks both Hindus and Muslims to have reverence for all living creatures and to abstain from bloodshed. He asks them both to give up pride whether of birth or position, to give up extremes of asceticism and worldliness, and consider life as a dedication. Kabir was the first to come forward boldly to proclaim a religion of the centre, a middle path, and his cry was taken up all over India and was re-echoed from a

hundred places. He had numerous Hindu and Muslim disciples, and today his sect numbers a million.

All these teachings of Kabir had a profound effect on the society. Different ideas have been expressed on the influence of Kabir on the large mass of the Hindus and the Muslims. Despite Kabir, the two religions continued in their set ways. Kabir's mission needs to be seen in a broader context. He created a climate of opinion which continued to work through the ages, so that Kabir became a symbol of human equality, Hindu-Muslim unity, and opposition to hypocrisy in all forms¹⁹. The influence of Kabir, who was the earliest teacher to mingle Islam and Hinduism, may be gathered from the number of sects in Hinduism which trace their origin either directly or indirectly to him. Eleven sects, whose present-day followers probably exceed five millions, are given by Dr Faruquhar. They are scattered everywhere throughout the Hindi speaking region of northern and central India, as far north-west as the Punjab, and through Bihar down into Bengal. The list, as Dr Faruquhar²⁰ gives it, is as follows:

Name of Sect	Founder	Approx.	Center
1. Kabir Panthis	Kabir	1470	Benares
2. Sikhs	Nank	1500	Punjab
3. Dadu Panthis	Dadu	1575	Rajputana
4. Lal Oasis	La! Das	1600	AI war
5. Satnamis	-----	1600	Narnol, South of Delhi
6. Baba Lalis	Baba Lal	1625	Dehanpur, Sirhand
7. Sadhs	Birhan	1658	Near Delhi
8. Charan Dasis	Charan Das	1703	Delhi
9. Siva Narayanis	Siva	1734	Chandrawar Ghazipur
10. Garib Dasis	Garib Das	1740	Chudani Rohtak
11. Ram Sanehis	Ram Charan	1750	Shahapur Rajputana

Kabir's teachings were of so independent in a character that both Hindus and Muslims were greatly offended, and they tried to suppress him by all the means. There were in the beginning bitter and prolonged discussions and petty persecutions and when they failed, the aid of the state was invoked. Legend has thrown a veil woven of marvelous occurrences and miraculous escapes round the actual facts, but this much may be probable that Sikandar Lodi (1488-1517AD), impressed by the simple earnestness of Kabir, allowed him to get out of the hands of the Pundits and Moulvis persecuting him by a temporary exile. Besides Kabir imitated saint Mat the practice of spending time in the company of saintly people. He admonished people to give up their egos and seek the company of saintly people. There are now many branches of sant Mat throughout the world. Another practice initiated by Kabir is Sahaj Yoga, the path of natural union with god through meditation on the world. This natural or easy union with god leads to Sahaj Samadhi, conscious realization of one's unity with God. One then sees god manifesting everywhere through his omnipresence²². Among some of his most telling influences, Kabir refined and clarified the devotional movement of Indian spirituality known as Bhakti. Kabir founded Nirguna Bhakti, the practice of loving devotion to the formless divine. Prior to Kabir, Bhakti had been practiced and understood through the lens of Sarguna Bhakti or devotion to the multiple physical forms that the divine took. Kabir strongly emphasized vegetarianism so one would not inflict harm on other living creatures, since he argued their lives are as dearer to

them as our lives are to us. Kabir's teachings are now being taught in many schools, colleges and universities in India. Many people are able to quote him freely, including those who are not members of Kabir Panth (religious and mystical path based on Kabir's teachings). Many academic theses had been written on the life and works of Kabir. In addition to this research, other writers have written about Kabir and his teachings strictly out of the spiritual interest that his life and teachings elicit.

Kabir's influence on the development of the religious life of the people of India is quite substantial. He has been hailed as the father of Hindi Poetry. Prior to Kabir, scriptural teachings were generally in Sanskrit, a language confined to scholars and the priesthood and not understood by people at large. Kabir conveyed his spiritual teachings in the spoken language of the people so everyone could understand. For this reason Kabir's Duhas and songs are still sung by people all over India. On his death anniversary at Kabir Chaura in Benares, the Hindus gather every year at Marghar, the Muslim followers congregate to keep fresh his memory. But it is not the number of his following which is so important, it is his influence which extends to the Punjab, Gujarat, Bengal and which continued to spread under the Mughal rule till a sovereign estimating its value attempted to make it religion approved by the state during Akbar's time. The overall effect of the activities of the Kabir was immense on the local populace. From lessening the rigidity of the caste system, checking the tyranny of priests, discouraging polytheism and encouraging toleration, stressing upon charity and devotion, the moral and spiritual tone of society was uplifted. The common men comprehended their simple

but profound concepts and followed them in hordes, and Bhakti became a way of life for the people of this land.

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Kabir Das: His Life and Teaching

Dr. Md. Meraj Ahmad

Sufism and Bhakti Movement are mystical-ascetic aspects of Islam and Hinduism respectively. During Medieval period these movements were responsible for many rites and rituals associated with the worship of God among Hindus and Muslims of Indian subcontinent. Both aspects consider that love to be the means of reaching God. The union of human soul with God through love and

devotion was the essence of teachings of Sufi and Bhakti saints.

The concept of Bhakti or devotion of God was not new to Indians. It is very much present in Vedas. The chief exponents of this movement were Ramanuja, Ramananda, Kabir, Nanak and Chaitnya. Among them Kabir Das preached the doctrine of love and devotion to realize God.

Kabir Das, one of the chief exponents of Bhakti Movement is a mystical poet and a great saint of India. The name "Kabir Das" derived from Arabic language 'Al-Kabir' which means 'the great' the 37th name of God in Islam. There are many legends about the birth, life and death of Kabir, it is considered that the great poet, Saint Kabir was born in the month of Jyestha on purinima in the year 1440. That's why Kabir Das Jayanti or birthday anniversary is celebrated every year with great enthusiasm by his followers and lovers on the purinima of May or June (Hindi Month Jyestha).

He died in the year 1518. There is no clue of birth parents of Kabir Das. Some say he was the son of a Brahman widow, others say that he was of a virgin birth. But it is considered that he was cared by Muslim weaver family, childless Niru and Nima found him near Lahar Tara Pond adjacent to the Holy city Varanasi. His parents extremely poor and uneducated but they very heartily adopted the little baby and trained him about there own business. He lived a balanced life of a simple house holder and a mystic.

Kabir Das, a weaver by profession, is most quoted Saint in India. The Holy 'Guru Granth' Sahab contains over 500 verses by Kabir. It is considered that he got his spiritual training from Ramananda; [Guru of Kabir].

Initially Ramananda was not agreeing to accept Kabir Das as his disciple. Once upon a time, Saint Kabir Das had lied down on the ladders of the pond and reading the mantra of Rama. In the early morning Ramananda was going for taking bath and Kabir came down below his feet. Ramananda felt guilty for that activity and then Ramananda was forced to accept him as his disciple.

Philosophy of Kabir

Saint Kabir was influenced by the existing religious mood such as Brahmanic Hinduism, Buddhism, Tantrism, Teaching of Nath Yogis and the personal devotionism mixed with the imageless God of Islam. The influence of these various doctrines is clearly evident in Kabir's verses. Kabir Das is the first Indian saint who has coordinated Hinduism and Islam by giving universal path which could be followed by the Hindus and the Muslims alike. According to Kabir Das, every life is an interplay of two spiritual doctrines one is the personal soul (Jivatma) and the other is God (Parmatma). In Kabir's view salvation (Moksha) is the process of bringing into union these two divine principles. Kabir Das's great writing 'Bijak' has huge collection of poems (Doha) which makes a clear view of his spirituality. He simply believes in oneness of God.

Kabir's philosophy represented a synthesis of the Hindu and the Muslim concepts. From Hinduism, he accepts the concept of reincarnation and the law of Karma and from Islam he takes the outer practices of Indian Sufi ascetics and Sufi mysticism. Not only Kabir has influenced the Muslims and the Hindus but he is one of the major inspiration behind Sikhism as well. The presence of

much of his verses in Sikh scripture is the testimony of the fact that Kabir was a predecessor of Nanak.

Kabir composed poems in style. His poems in vernacular Hindi has borrowings from various dialects including Avadhi, Braj and Bhojpuri. Kabir Das's greatest work is the 'Bijak' (the seedling) an idea of universal oneness. This is a collection of poems (Dohas) that expresses the Kabir's own universal view of spirituality. He often advocated leaving aside the Quran and Vedas and to simply follow 'Sahaj-Path' or simply the way to oneness of God. He believed in the vedantic concept of 'atman' but unlike earlier orthodox Vedantis. He followed the vedant philosophy to its logical end by spurning the Hindu social caste system and idol worship showing clear belief in both Bhakti and Sufism. Kabir's poems are called variously as Doha, Sabad, and Sakhi. Sakhi means to be memorized and to remind the highest truth. These utterances comprise a way to the spiritual awakening.

'Kabir Math' at Kabirchaura (Varanasi) is the home, workplace and meditation place of Sant Shiromani Kabir Das. He was the only saint of his type known as the "Sab-Santan Sartaj". The medieval Indian saints got their spiritual education from this place. 'Kabir chabutara' is the Sadhana place of Kabir Das, from this place Kabir had given Bhakti, Gyan Karma and Manavata to his disciples. Kabir's disciples were called 'Kabirpanthin'.

Kabir Das did not classify himself as Hindu or Muslim. According to Kabir Das, real religion is a way of life, the people live it and is not made by the people own. He said, work is worship and responsibility is religion and doing hard work makes life eternal. He emphasized not go away from the responsibilities of the life like having

‘Sanyasa’. He appreciated and valued the family life which is the real meaning of life. Living as a householder is also a great and real Sanyasa. He has given the people an authentic fact: about what is religion of human being is. He always said that “I am neither Hindu nor a Muslim, I am both and Hindu and Muslim are same”. He was devoted to the Nirguna Bhakti. His Rama was absolute, pure Sat- Chit- Anand (Ultimate reality) not the son of Dashrath or king of Ayodhya. He was greatly influenced by Islam and never differentiated between Allah and Rama. He said that there should be a religion of love and brotherhood among people without any high or low class or caste. Devote and Surrender yourself towards God who has no religion or caste. He said:-

“Nirguna Nama Japahu re Bhaiya,
Avigati ki gati Lakhi na Jaiya”

(I worship absolute eternal God and who has no religion)

Mystic saint Kabir Das tried determinedly to bring about unity amongst Hindu and Muslims Kabir died in 1518 A.D, at Magahar. Legends speak that both Hindus and Muslims quarrelled over his dead body. But when the shroud was removed from his body there were only a bunch of flowers instead of corpse. The assembled people were taken aback by the miracle. Hindus collected some flowers and cremated them at Varanasi while the Muslims took the remaining flowers for burial at Magahar - in Gorakhpur district, Uttar Pradesh.

Kabir Teachings: -

Kabir's philosophical tenets were extremely simple. He was known as the guiding spirit of the Bhakti

Movement. He preached Bhakti or devotion through the medium of his 'Dohas; (Couplets) Kabir's Dohas touched everybody's heart and he was endeared by all.

Love:-

'Love for all' was Kabir's principle tenet. He emphasized love to be the only medium which could bind the entire human kind in an unbreakable bond of fraternity. Kabir detested the frivolities and rituals in Hinduism and Islam for these could never bind together mankind. Hence he advised all to give up hatred and perpetuate love for one and all. He said:-

*"Pothi dadhi padhi jag muys, Pundit bhaya na kaye,
Dhai akshar prem ka, padhe so Pandit hoye".*

God:-

God was the focal point of Kabir's philosophy. In his opinion God alone was Ram, Rahim, Govind, Allah, Khuda, Hari etc. Kabir said God is everywhere and His domain is unlimited. God is pure, sacred, absolute, endless and inseparable. Hence in his view, God is powerful and he could be worshiped through love and devotion. In fact Kabir preached Monotheism to the world.

*"Sab dharti Kagaz Karu, Lekhani Sab Banrai Saat
Samandar Masi Karu, Hari gun likha na jai"*

*"Bura jo dekhan main chala, bura na mila koye, Jo man
dekha aapna, mujhse bura no koye"*

*"Loot Sake to loot le, Ram naam ki loot paache
pachhtayega, jab pran jayenge choot"*

Teacher:-

In Kabir's dictum the "Teacher or Guru" has been accorded the prime position. The teacher according to him was the incarnation of God. The guidance of a teacher leads a man to the proper direction, which helps him in developing the right insight. Thus Kabir says;

*"Guru Govind dau Khade, Kaku lagun pai,
Balihari Guru Aapna jin Gavind diya Batai"*

(Both Guru and Govind (God) are before me, whom shall I respect first? I shall respect first to Guru because through him I have realised (Govind).

Soul:-

Mystic saint Kabir Das got spiritual thought from his Guru Ramanand. Soul and purity of soul is integral part of Kabir's spiritual message. According to him soul is life, breath and knowledge and it is the ultimate knowledge. The soul is itself the creation and the creator. It is also the knowledge and knowledgeable. Kabir Das emphasized that soul is the creator and the destroyer of all things. He says as cows may be of different colours but milk is same in the same way the ideas, thoughts, personalities can be different but the soul is same

*'Jab mein tha tab hari nahin, ab hari hain main Nahin
Sab Andhiyara mit gaya, jab Deepak dekhye Main'*

*"Bura jo dekhani mein challa, bura na milaya koye
Jo man dekha aapna, mujhse bura na koye"*

World: -

Kabir Das believed that world is not eternal and asserted that all things in the world are the victim of impermanence. All living things like insects, animals, trees, rivers, mountains and human beings are only temporary. He emphasized through Dohas to his followers that in this impermanent world, the only truth and permanent reality is God who could be attained through Bhakti or love and devotion. Kabir says: -

*"Chalti Chakki dikha kar Kabira diya roye
Dou Patan ke bich sabit bacha na kaye"*

(The sky and the earth is like two circles moving restlessly.
Those who will come between these two circles must die).

Salvation:-

In Hindu philosophy or Hinduism, Salvation or Moksha is a central concept which means freedom from the cycle of death and rebirth. Epistemologically, Salvation connotes freedom, self-realization and self knowledge. According to Kabir Das, Salvation or liberation is a state of 'fearlessness'. He explains salvation by giving examples that as water flows out of a hole in a pot and mixes with water outside, similarly after death the individual soul moves out of the gross body to merge with cosmic soul leading to liberation. He always objected to the ritualistic and ascetic methods as a means of salvation. Kabir Das

says one's heart with goodness includes all the prosperity of whole world. A person with mercy has strength, and individual with righteousness can easily attain the never-ending life that is called Salvation. He says about salvation and illusion as:

*"Maya mari na man mara, mar gaya sarir
Asha trishna na mari, kah gaye das Kabir"
"Maati Kahe Kumhar se, tu na rondhe mohe
Ek din aisa aayega, mein rondhunge tohe"
"Main na Mandir main na Masjid mein
Na kabba mein na Kailash mein mai Karun har dil vaas"*

Basically Kabir urged people to look within and consider all human beings as manifestation of God's living form. All the men and women of the world are God's living form. He says look within your heart, for there you will find both Ram and Rahim.

In conclusion we can say .that Kabir's teaching deeply influenced the religious reform movement in medieval India. He opened the deep eyes of the people and taught them genuine lessons of humanity, morality and spirituality. He was a follower and a promoter of the 'ahimsa'. His teachings are universal and equal to all. His life history is legendary and still teaches the human beings real humanity. Kabir's poetry influenced Indian folk, Sufi, traditions and progressive rock music. Shobha Mudgal in India and Sufi singer Abida Parveen in Pakistan have sung Kabir's verses in a full album. Now Kabir shodh sansthan' works as a research on Kabir Das. At the end we can say that Bhakti and Sufi movements got real

expressions through Kabir's teachings. Kabir's legacy continues to be carried forward by the Kabir Panth (Path of Kabir)

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Humanistic Approach of Shaikh-ul Aalam's Poetry

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Aristotle has remarked, “every human being adheres to a philosophy whether we are aware of it or not” (Metaphysics Nicomachean Ethics). All adult human beings conduct their lives according to some general pattern of behavior that is more or less conscious, more or less consistent, more or less adequate, to cope with the everyday affairs and inevitable crises of the human scene. This guiding pattern in the life of individuals is their philosophy, even though it is implicit in their actions rather

than explicit in their minds; an "inarticulate major premise," as Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes puts it. Such is the strength of tradition that we have always tended to accept the particular philosophy or religion prevailing in the group into which we were born. In any case, human beings, primitive or civilized, educated or uneducated, plodding or brilliant, simply cannot escape from philosophy. Philosophy is everybody's business. There can be no doubt that if a philosophy of life is to fulfill its proper role, it must be a philosophy of living, a philosophy to live by, a philosophy of action. Philosophy at its best is not simply an interpretation or explanation of things. It is also a dynamic enterprise that aims to stimulate people in the direction of those ends and values that are supremely worthwhile and desirable; to bring us closer to those standards of truth and methods of truth-seeking that are most reliable. All this implies the working out of effective methods for the application of tried and tested philosophic wisdom. Hence philosophy has the task, not only of attaining the truth, but also of showing how that truth can become operative in the affairs of human beings, of helping to bridge the age-long gap between thinkers and doers, between theory and practice. Philosophy could well recommend as a universal motto Henri Bergson's striking epigram: "Act as men of thought; think as men of action."

Since the earliest days of philosophic reflection in ancient times in both East and West, thinkers of depth and acumen have advanced the simple proposition that the chief end of human life is to work for the happiness of humans upon this earth and within the confines of the Nature that is our home. This philosophy of enjoying, developing, and making available to everyone the abundant material,

cultural, and spiritual goods of this natural world is profound in its implications, yet easy to understand and congenial to common sense. This human-centered theory of life has remained relatively unheeded during long periods of history. While it has gone under a variety of names, it is a philosophy that I believe is most accurately designated as Humanism.

As a developed study and discipline of philosophy, Humanism has for its purpose the analysis and clarification of human aims and actions, problems and ideals. It brings into the light of intelligence the half-conscious, half-expressed groping of individuals and of groups. It teaches us to say what we mean and to mean what we say. It is the tenacious attempt of reasoning persons to think through the most fundamental issues of life, to reach reasoned conclusions on first and last things, to suggest worthwhile goals that can command the loyalty of individuals and groups. Humanistic Philosophy as criticism boldly analyzes and brings before the supreme court of the mind prevailing human values, ideas, and institutions.

Casting a glance over the huge pages of history, one comes to know, that the period of time that ran from the mid of 14th century including the 15th century as whole was a period of transition. A period that marked a transition from the religious centric world to the human centric populace and the term coined for the same is Renaissance. The first and the foremost reason for this transition is the corruption of church in the European Canters. As a result, Religion that should have been a boon for the masses turned a bane; Religion that would have provided solace to an individual proved dreadful than the hell-fire.

Subsequently, during the same era in India, Hinduism as a religion too had undergone metamorphosis in which the elite religious class of Brahmans used to exploit the masses on the basis of caste distinctions. Elite Brahman class became a sort of intercessor between "Baghwaan", and the common masses leading to a mass exploitation of Hindus on the religious double standards. As a result, in India too, we come across such spiritual movements like "Bhakti movement that swept across the country and tried its hand at washing of such false notions preached by the religious elite of India. Its chief features were love and passion for God without surrendering one's will before the corrupted Brahmans. In the scenario of Kashmir in the very 14th and the 15th Century, we have two towering personalities; one of Lala Ded and the other of her younger contemporary Shaikh Noor-ud Din both of whom time and again preached the local masses the true spirit of religion. Lala's practical rebellion was against the elite Brahmans of her times.

Shaikh Noor-ud Din (Shaikh-ul Aalam) was highly influenced by the Islamic doctrines and this was the basic motto of his leading mission of converting the people of Kashmir to Islam. The basic fundamentals of Islam, the very concept of God and the man's place in the world, devotion, purity of soul and clarity of human actions and social commitment were the chief features that categorized the religion of Islam. As such Shaikh ul Aalam apart from a saint was a religious reformer who believed that the salvation to one and all is provided by the religion. As such Islam was a religion that taught a person to be tolerant, pious, and lovable so that he would turn a true Muslim and not a Muslim just for a name-same. In such a case, Shaikh-

ul Aalam could be called as a humanist but not a fanatic one who would otherwise consider only the human as the centre of reality and universe and provide lesser importance to God. I personally believe that had the religion (Christianity, Hinduism or any else for that instance) not turned corrupt, leading general masses towards the borders of neglect, the fanatic notion of humanism would not have evolved. Contrary to this, if we see Shaikh ul Alam and his preaching style, we notice that he didn't divide the philosophic notion of humanism from the religion (Islam). Rather he deliberated upon the need to follow Islam in its true sense and essence so that it would help the masses to generate a humanistic temperament, the philosophy of which is ingrained in the religion of Islam."The Shaikh had not had his felt of wandering about the villages. He brought moral solace to the ignorant and taught religious lessons wherever he went. His message had the luminosity of personal conviction, and heat of personal practice, to make it effective."¹Human society is not a unified whole. One finds various shades and levels, representing strikingly opposite behavior patterns."Kashmiri society of Shaikh Nurrudin's times was full of tension and crises. In such a landscape, where evil doers dotted predominantly, one could not accept totally flawless social activities. Since Shaikh's period was one of transition and change, people were in a flux which one to accept and which one to dismiss. In his outdoor activity, Shaikh ul Aalam got a chance to interact with the general masses and the mission of Shaikh during his tour was not conditioned exclusively to make people aware about the truth of oneness of God but it was equally guided by a social objective to keep people away from social evils by cultivating in them the sense and

spirit of human ethics and fellow feelings"² The valley wide tour opened up before Shaikh various forms of oppression that the general masses of Kashmir were subjected to ranging from; feudal oppression and highhandedness of various official cadres and the machinations of Pseudo- religious preachers and scholars. In his view, the religion was corrupted by the mal-practices of world centric Mullahs that turned dangerous for a better relation between religion and general people. In this regard Shaikh says;

Pretending to be Rishis, the dancers go from house to house;

As actors play their parts on the stage
Exploited are the witless to slave for them
In cultivating crops of beans, cotton and cereals
To feed themselves fat upon the same³

You have acquired knowledge for selfish ends, Your
endeavour is to see each other fall,
You consider yourself to be the favourites of
The Lord here,
But there, not one per thousand can escape from the
Punishment.⁴

Caste Consciousness

The period in which Shaikh lived was characterized by orthodox caste orientation and social ranking. Shaikh emerged as a people's voice to fight against these man-made barriers and through-out his career championed the cause of downtrodden and under-privileged. Shaikh says;

Adam is the progenitor of the human race, the mother Eve has the same primodality, so from where have the low castes descended? How can a high born decide his own ancestry?⁵

Wherever Shaikh went, he forcefully preached against the highhandedness of those people who acted as the agents to tarnish the doctrine and the value of social harmony and oneness.

Displaying thy caste in the world,
What wilt thou gain?
Into dust will turn the bones
When the earth envelops thy body
To utter disgrace will be the lone
Who, forgetting himself, jeers at others⁶

Shaikh ul Aalam urged the people to walk on the set paradigm of religion that would in turn help them change their outlook to be called as true religious followers. Shaikh was of the view that one, whose actions are humane, is a Muslim in a true sense and mere caste won't guarantee heaven to a person. Shaikh says;

One who harps proudly upon one's caste?
Is bereft of reason and wisdom
Here the good alone can claim noble descent;
In the Hereafter, caste will be extinct.⁷

In his sayings Shaikh ul Aalam has always called upon the people to follow the path of peace and harmony. He strongly pleaded for tolerance, fellow-feeling, love and affection among all sections of the society. He says:

Shaikh ul Aalam states about the falsely interpreted knowledge of elite religious cadre as:

Their palate and tongue wore out with reading
And writing tired out their hands
Still they lost not their attachment to the world,
Neither care nor counsel prevailed over them.⁹

To Conclude, hence, we can say, that Shaikh ul Aalam's personality bore a variegated out-look that helped the Socio- religious preacher to think and rethink on the paradigms that could together work out the two pathway programme; one that leads to truth ie God and another that leads to the development of one's personality, leading one to God's premises. Of all the attributes we associate with Shaikh ul Aalam, perhaps His Humanistic philosophy dramatically stands to be the trunk of his philosophy that provides support to his doctrine of contemplation.

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Social Justice Reflected in the Poetry of Shaikh-ul Aalam

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Definitions and Meaning:

The word justice has been derived from the Latin word "JUS" which means bond or tie, also means fair and proper administration of laws conforming to the natural laws that all persons irrespective of ethnic origin, general possessions, race, religion etc are to be treated equally

without any prejudice. The word justice also means equity, quality of being just, the exercise of authority in the maintenance of rights. Do justice means treat someone fairly or appropriately, show due appreciation of. Poetical justice means nature's redistribution etc as shown in the poems or peace of writings.¹

The cardinal aspects of justice are political, legal, economical and social. The social aspects of justice are known as social justice and the word "Social" in its strict sense refers to mutual relation of men in a given society. Social system thus covers the whole range of mutual relations and the goodness of this largely depends on the laws which control it. Keeping the above meaning of "social" in mind let us discuss various connotations of social justice. Social Justice is defined as the idea of creating a society or institution that is based on the principles of equality, solidarity that understands values human rights and recognizes the dignity of every human being. It also means giving each individual what he/she deserves and freedom in opportunities that is each person has right to climb up the social ladder according to one's capacity. Social justice is based on the concept of human rights and equality involves degree of economic egalitarianism through progressive taxation, income redistribution or even property redistribution.

Islam's social aspect is essentially concerned with social justice to be realized at all levels under all circumstances. In Islam, the term justice may be equated to the concept of "*Adl, Qist, Mizan*" as used in the Qur'an² Justice has many aspects.

a. Justice between man's own self and his Allah which means man should always obey Allah's commandments.

b. Man should do justice with his own self by keeping away from all such actions and things that may destroy his life spiritual and physical. Here justice and patience are related with each other.

c. Justice between man's own self and rest of the creations. In this he should behave towards the whole creation with love and sincerity. From the religious point of view justice means that Allah has given moral absolutes as a means of governing human relationships and structures and these are embodied in the concept of human rights, respect, equity, impartiality and advocacy. These five principles can be termed as the components of social justice⁴. In Islam justice assumes central place and is one of the fundamental principles of Islamic thought and practice and its foundation is based on freedom of conscience, equality of human beings and mutual responsibility.⁵

Other references related to social justice present in the revealed holy book (the Qur'an) are Tawheed, Zakat, Charity, Salah and Hajj.

Social Justice thus defined according to the principle of divine law is:

- a. To treat man as an individual with liberty and equality as his birth right.
- b. To provide him with equal opportunity of developing his personality so that he is better fitted to fill the situation to which he is entitled.
- c. To give each individual his due.
- d. To regulate his relation with society in such a manner that far from being harmful to the interest of society, contributes his own to its moral value and welfare⁶.

Shaikh-ul Aalam and his Concept of Social Justice

Shaikh-ul Aalam ^(RA) also called Shaikh Noor-ud Din and Nund Resh is a remarkable Kashmiri saint who belonged to the Rishi order. He was one of those personalities of the medieval times who had special concerns with reforming society and social justice. Born in 1377C.E, corresponding to 799 Hijri in a village called Kaimoh (old name Katimusha) 7Kms to the west of Bijbehara which is 60kms south east of Srinagar. His father was Shaikh Salar-ud Din and his mother Sadra Moji or Sadra Deddi. It was a period when there was Muslim Sultanate in Kashmir and Islam began to spread rapidly, brought about a great transformation in the life of the people. The cultural contacts that were established with Persia and Turkistan and influx of large number of people from these countries also affected profound social changes. But despite the foreign impact, which was far reaching, links with the past were not broken, for the Kashmiris refused to give up the beliefs and practices completely. That is why throughout the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries there was a constant conflict between those who wanted to cling to their traditional manners, customs and those who were eager to introduce the Perso-Islamic way of life⁷, AI Biruni says about this:

"A society based on general consensus is likely to be a society of stable equilibrium. Conflict between different groups and segments or between their views on society as it is and as it should be build up pressure and provides an impetus for change. Competition, pronounced value differences, deep cleavages of interest wide inequalities and a sense of denial and injustice between different groups give rise to conflict, action to resolve these differences leads to change."⁸

In the end, however, the conflict was resolved by fusion of old and new. This resulted in emergence of a society in which the old ideas and institutions were mixed up with new.

Shaikh-ul Aalam^(RA) the prominent social reformer of the fourteenth century used his poetry as a tool to spread the true knowledge of Islam, that is message of love, simplicity, tolerance, harmony, fraternity between all human beings irrespective of religion, colour, race which ultimately led to a struggle against social injustice and discrimination prevailing during his times.

'If you persistently repeat the prescribed zikr
No one can compete with you in being the true believer
If you value justice higher than the piety
Then you will leave the world as true, believer

ذکر ہا اور ادینو دو وظیفہ اسی
ہیکہ گس گر تھڑے ستر مان
کزپہ کھوتہ ژورہ دے انصاف اسی
توے ستر لگی ایمان

Shaikh-ul Aalam (RA) condemns caste system and highlights in his poetry that Adam is the progenitor of human race and differentiating people on caste and colour is superficial. He clearly emphasizes in his poetry that any one who believes in caste system is bereft of reasons and wisdom.

حضرت آدم بابہ آدم مولیہ
آمیہ حوا ستر آوو
اد کتہ دین دوئب ژرولو
کلس ہمکل کیناہ ہڈور

Adam is the progenitor of the human race
From him came wife, our mother Eve
From where have the low castes descended
How can a high born call the low born bad.

He also relates the equality of human beings with
the three forms of water (snow, ice and water, the source of
which is same.

Ice, frozen water and snow
seem three different entities
But God created all the three
from a single source only,
The moment they get exposed
to warm sunlight
They get melted into water
which is the source of all

سَخ تَلِّهْ گَر تِه شَمِین
تَم بُون بُون پَادِ کَر آشَن
یَا مَتَّه پِیکھ آفَنَاجِ پَرُو
تَا مَتَّه تَرَبِن وَنِ اُکَّے گُو

Shaikh-ul Aalam ^(RA) explained that basic social obligations
are not to be neglected even after a complete surrender to
divine obligations. He also mentions quality social order
and personal relations in such a manner which lead to
proper contentment with God.⁹

Chimpanzees and
monkeys live in forests
Rats make their home deep
in the earth
Those purify themselves
five times a day,
Live with and take care of
family are Godly people
They alone will be
crowned the Judgment
day

وَنَنْ پھرتیہ واندرا آسن
گلر گوچھن برن واس
یم پانژن و قفس آگہ مل کاسن
نہیہ آسن باژن تہیہ چھہ خاص
گرگز اس تاج لاگنس سرس

The Prophet maintained the family and won God's
pleasure.10

Shaikh-ul Aalam(RA) condemns anger, pride, begging,
greed, capitalism which are the outcome of one's selfish
desires.

لوئس تیہ موئس کرؤ دھ اہنکارس
کوگم ڈارس ویم نیہ پانی
دیار ہا سوریم سوداگارس
چھون بازارس کیا بہہہ وانی
زیرک تھپ گیم عمر سبزارس
یاون رالیس مکتو کپ وانی
آخر ژمہہ دو ساری مزارس
نارس وونی کتہ سارس پانی

Let not wave thy being with Avarice! Anger!Lust pride
 Bootless thou be like saffron couches with abundant
 Insolvent be a trader with such trading account
 Hence can't strike a bargain in busy market Withered am I
 of my verdant youth
 Which of my numerous vendees shall i vend my manhood
 Assimilated will be all in the grave desolate
 Hence can't carry water to put out the fire

Let thou purge thy soul from
 avarice, allurements, anger and
 ego
 Vice art these reading towards the
 inferno Muhammad(SAW) in
 the happy tiding
 A currency note it's not to be
 wasted
 True devotion and pious deeds
 act thy companions
 Justice and fair play is there, for
 the lord
 himself is the judge ¹²

لؤب تہ موہ کزؤد اہنکار چھے
 دوزخن نار چھے دوان برائے
 حضرت محمدؐ ہوا دار چھے
 چندس دیار چھی موکر ضاے
 کر یہ تہ کارون تہ لہد آوار چھے
 پیٹہ و بزارس بیہہ پانہ خداے

Shaikh-ul Aalam(RA) was a social reformer and his message was not confined to one race or class but addressed to mankind as a whole. Shaikh-ul Aalam^(RA) didn't approve the division of society on the basis of socio-religious status, instead he advocated total surrender before Allah and be compassionate to all His creatures. There was not even a slice of space in his socio-religious thought which would approve the negative devices of exploiting agencies. Wherever, Shaikh-ul Aalam^(RA) went, he had ridiculed the oppressive forces, agents and associated himself with downtrodden, unheard and unprivileged people.

He vehemently criticizes selfish mullahs (superficial religious men) and other pseudo scholars who wanted to exploit the masses and try to tarnish the fair image of Islam. Shaikh-ul Aalam^(RA) deliberates and expounds the moral preaching as a base of upliftment of man and harmonious living. He clearly defines social justice as the most balanced synthesis of human freedom, brotherhood, equality and which embodies the divine attributes of benevolence, providence and justice.

Shaikh-ul Aalam^(RA) vehemently revolted the institution of priesthood that had created a division between clergy and the common people on the basis of cast of pedigree. Shaikh-ul Aalam^(RA) made a clean sweep of such a doctrine and threw open the door to spiritual opportunity for one and all by expounding the Qur'anic concept of dignity of man in a number of verses. Man's pedigree was not to be esteemed since it generated pride not worthy of a true servant of Allah. Nobility of birth didn't guarantee nobility of mind, on the contrary it guarded the wretches

and even fools to covet honour not by their own virtue but only because of the merit of their ancestors. The contempt in which the common man was held by the Brahmans is sure to have struck the socially alert soul of Shaikh-ul Aalam^(RA) In order to tame the ferocity or their pride, he challenged the concept of purity of Brahman's birth in terms of the (Tawhidic humanism and universalism).

Thus the main desire of Shaikh-ul Aalam^(RA) was to transmit the real message of social reformation and its social dynamics which stood for classless and casteless society free of exploitation and religious discord.¹³

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