



Kabir relevance in present time as an intellectual asset

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Abstract

We cannot challenge the amount of discussion and research on poetry and its language that has been done in Hindi literature. Being a researcher, I have always been interested in Hindi poetry and this is my attempt to present this interest and the inclination of my research paper with a new ideology. The purpose of my research paper is to understand this but also to bring out the significance of their poetry in the present times. One of the purposes of my selection for this research paper is that while Kabir Das was a poet of the Nirgun Bhakti stream. He conveyed his words, poems, to the common people in colloquial language. Here it was not a matter of conveying a common language and to the common people, but there is also a need to think and understand that when we read it in Hindi literature, our purpose is to interpret their works, whereas if we understand its historical importance, then somewhere we will have to understand a new ideology as well. Kabir was believed to an important exponent of the Bhakti Movement. According to Kabir, "the only way to God was through personally experience Bhakti which could be attained by Righteousness and Humility by Renunciation and Love.

Keywords: Kabir Das, nirgun bhakti, Hindi poetry, bhakti movement, colloquial language, intellectual asset

Introduction

This is mentioned in a popular saying

"भक्ति द्रविड. उपजी लाए रामानन्द,
प्रगट किया कबीर ने सप्त द्वीप नवखण्ड ।।"

As mentioned by different historians, Kabir was a saint who played a very significant role in transmitting the Southern Bhakti and Monotheism (belief in one God) to Northern India. The main texts written by Kabir Saheb Ji:

Kabir Bijak: Kabir's sayings were collected by his disciple Dharamdas in 1464 under the name 'Bijak.' This book mainly contains verses. The three main sections of the Bijak are:

Kabir Sakhi: These are a collection of writings that mention the teachings about the importance of practical knowledge, kindness, and equality.

Kabir Shabd: It is a collection of poems used to express inner feelings and experiences.

Kabir Ramaini: It contains verses in Hindi that are significant for discussions about the creation of the universe and the interaction of Jeev with Maya in the physical world.

The purpose of my research is to highlight the significance of Kabir's poetry in the present times. One of the reasons for selecting this topic for my research paper is that while Kabir Das was a poet of the Nirgun Bhakti stream, he conveyed his words and poems to the common people in colloquial language. My endeavour is not just conveying his sayings in simple words but also about interpreting his deep messages in reference to the present scenario. If we understand its historical importance, we may also relate it to the present approach. It is well known that various historians have used contemporary literature, buildings, sculptures and various poets to analyze the social, political, religious and cultural aspects of the middle period of the Bhakti movement.

We cannot challenge the amount of discussion and research on poetry and its language that has been conducted in Hindi literature. As a researcher, I have always been interested in Hindi poetry and presenting this paper is my attempt to put forward my presumption and inclination in research with a new ideology in historical perspective. Kabirdas was one of the most significant poets and saint of the medieval Bhakti movement. Not only have his religious-cultural aspects been seriously considered in the historical context, but his relevance in the modern time period is also discussed in this paper.

The entire written account of the Bhakti movement until the 18th century is preserved as a heritage of Hindi literature. This literature has also given historians an opportunity for comparative study. It is possible that this effort of mine will be helpful not only for those who study history but also for research students studying Hindi. Kabir propounded an absolute one-God discourse, meaning no image worship and no rituals. He believed that every human being must be pure in heart and karma, as everything will be judged by God only. He mentioned this in the following lines:

"There is impurity in birth, and again in death..
O pandit! tell me, who is pure"...

We have already learned that during the period of the 14th-15th centuries, Nirguna and Saguna, two ideologies opened for the worship of God. It is also accepted that the Nirguna style of bhakti opened the doors of salvation for all sections of society, including women, non-privileged groups, and untouchables. Nirguna Bhakti believed that salvation was possible only through knowledge. The Nirguna Bhakti saints included Raidas, Kabir, Nanak, etc. Bhakti was popularized by the disciples of Ramananda, such as Kabir, who used the local language for preaching. Kabir brought both social and spiritual transformation to society. The notion of Bhakti is clarified by Kabir as not worship; it means Mukti (liberation) from caste, class, gender, and superstitions. Kabir preached monotheism, which appealed

directly to the poor and assured them of their access to God without an intermediary. Through his songs, he bridged the gulf between Hindus and Muslims and thus acted as a harbinger of Hindu-Muslim unity.¹

As a poet, Kabir is closer to the simplicity of life. In his poetry, rhythm, figures of speech, the power of words, etc., are secondary, and the concern for the welfare of the people is primary. His followers have collected his words in the name of 'Bijak'. It has three parts: 'Ramaini', 'Sabad,' and 'Sakhi.' In his compositions, Kabir Sahib has opposed casteism, untouchability, superstition, a conservative viewpoint, worship, and religious rituals. Kabirdas's style of expression was very strong. His language is basically from the East, but due to the mixture of other dialects in it, it is called Sadhukkadi.

He clarified his point in the following lines:

"पाथर पूजै हरि मिले, तो मैं पूजूं पहार,
तासै तो चाकि भलि, पिस खाए संसार।"

In another couplet, Kabir realized and gave advice to people with the simplicity of his words on how to attain God, which I think is symbolic of our current challenging situation as well, where we have already gone through COVID-19.

"जब मैं था तब हरि नहीं, अब हरि हैं मैं नाहिं
सब अँधियारा मिटी गया, जब दीपक देखिया माहिं।।"

"When I (self Ego, arrogance) was there, realization towards God was not there, now my consciousness is present and my Ego and arrogance vanished as the darkness flew away when myself saw the lamp of intellectually"

There is such a deep mystery in these two lines of the couplet that to understand it, it is not necessary to be knowledgeable only, but in the present time, a way is visible for a common man to understand it. Undoubtedly, the couplet clarifies the deep meaning through fewer words. He believed that as long as there is a sense of ego in a man (whether it is of wealth, position, looks, or knowledge), until then he does not fully accept the personality of God and His existence. In the present Corona period, some have been affected by their religion, some by position, some by color and some by knowledge, and this is proof of the existence of nature and God. Then why is man busy with worldly things, and why are people running around with nothing to achieve? I believe that it is time to eradicate the darkness of pride, as we all know that the worldwide corona pandemic has put a question mark on everything. By imprisoning us within the four walls of our homes and forcing us to think that this lifelong rush will end in a moment, we realize that we are just running around in vain, and the need of the time is to have fewer needs, less work, and to give time to our families. It is time to understand and change ourselves, time to leave the ego and to become simple, and time to completely accept the power of God. The five elements that make up this body are also revealing their existence. By looking into our inner self, as soon as the darkness of ignorance is removed, a pure light appears. This couplet is proving meaningful by clarifying the Nirguna form which has been advocated by Kabir.

Another couplet of Kabir also mentions the importance of world peace. Through this couplet, Kabir Ji has explained

that the bondage of senses and illusion acts as a hindrance to understanding God and His knowledge. Everyone knows that lust, anger, greed, attachment, and ego are such sensory elements that if not controlled, then there is always a question mark on faith in God. The imagination of goodness everywhere, happiness everywhere, remains only an imagination because no one wants to give up greed.

"हम घर जालया आपणाँ, लिया मुराड़ा हाथि,
अब घर जालौं तास का, जे चलै हमारे साथि।।"

I burned my ego in search of peace and embrace myself while taking the torch of intellect light in my hands... kabir said, let find the people with same inner intellect to be a part of the conscience and make a way to the world peace.."

Clarifying this couplet of his in the form of positivity, Kabir Ji says that my only aim is to attain God. Appealing to all sections of society, he invoked that whoever wants to walk on the path of knowledge with him, whether he is rich, holds some position, or is poor, must renounce sensual pleasures to hold the torch of knowledge. If this sentiment is understood, then it will not remain a mere example. Making oneself an example is a challenge; everyone has the capability, but one needs to muster courage. By raising the torch of knowledge, Kabir Ji has tried to prove the significance of the couplet in the present times.

"Kabir, the capital belongs to the sah (principal merchant)

And you waste it all
There would be great difficulty for you.
At the time of rendering of accounts"

I have found from many of his couplets that Kabir had the ability to use simple and straightforward language to connect with every common man based on his experiences. If anyone carefully understands the current challenging situation through this couplet, it can be assumed that instead of having excessive desire and greed for position, we will have to meditate on God. Only then is it possible that we can live a satisfied, complete, and peaceful life.

Conclusion

When we study the Bhakti Movement, we have to make it a habit of looking at this perspective from all sides, and, insofar as possible, without prejudice to any faith commitment. The present-day academic study of history tries to achieve widely about what image has been given by the contemporary elites. Kabir meaningfully expressed his thoughts with different couplets, and wherever the mind hears all three rhythms, he had to say, "Yet keep his own course censured."

"सहजै मिले, संजोग से, मिलिबो अब कठिन।
होई तो तास से काटिये, बाजिये अपने जीव।।"

While reading the Hindi literature also, I found that many of his works explain Kabir's style in its spontaneity. It is never dull, never lacking its natural charm, which definitely gives inimitable charm to his language. Hazari Prasad Dwivedi found the best suggestive words to evoke Kabir's style:

"Tender as a flower, hard as a diamond."

Kabir, with his simple language, transparency, and sincerity, endeared himself to every heart. Through his timeless couplets, he expressed his profound thoughts. While he listened to the voices of the "three rhymes," he remained true to his own rhythm, expressing his views with clarity, grace, and authenticity.

I'd now like to conclude with these beautiful lines written by Kabir:

"सबसे हिलिए, सबसे मिलिए, सबसे लिजिए नाम,
हाँ जी सबसे कीजिए बसिए अपने गाँव।"

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