

The Poems of Kabir Das

Kabīr is famous in India for his Doha –‘couplets’, pithy two-line nuggets of wisdom, but only three of these are included in Tagore’s translations (*which also do not include the poems quoted by Shri Mataji in Her talks!*). So a selection of some of his more famous couplets (*and the poems Shri Mataji quotes*) have been added at the end of this book. These sayings are deeply embedded in Indian culture (*especially in the north*) and children grow up learning them at home and in school, often performing them as songs.

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A Brief Biography of Kabīr by the RiSY Editor

Sant Kabīr Dās -‘Great¹ Saint’ (c.1440-1518), weaver, poet and Bhakti saint, grew up in a low-caste Muslim family, who may have been recent converts to Islam, judging by Kabīr’s familiarity with esoteric Hindu teachings (*Kuṇḍalinī, etc.*) and relative ignorance of Islamic traditions.

Like Gurū Nānak, Shīrdi Sāi Bābā and Ramana Mahārṣhi, Kabīr advocates a Sahaj –‘simple, natural’ path (*poem XLI, p.79*). He saw the performance of rituals by both Hindus and Muslims (*whom he refers to as Turks*) as hypocrisy if one’s nature continued to be full of lust, greed, anger and sensuality. He advocated Advaita –‘non-duality’; the idea that the Divine exists in and is manifested as all of creation. His songs express an intense desire for union with God.

Apart from the Sikh Gurus themselves, He is the largest contributor to the Guru Granth Sahib, the holy book of the Sikhs, and Gurū Nānak’s own poems forty years later show signs of His influence.

His Guru was Swāmī Rāmānanda, a great revitaliser of Hinduism, whom Kabīr reputedly tricked into giving Him a mantra by causing him to trip over His concealed body in the early morning twilight.

Kabīr courted disfavour with both the Brāhmins and Muslims for His ‘heretical’ (*and critical*) views, but as a Sufi, Kabīr was afforded a degree of tolerance. However, at the age of sixty he was brought before the local Muslim ruler charged with claiming divine powers and was banished from His home-town of Varanasi. He traveled with a group of disciples and died at the age of 78 in Maghar, U.P. about 180kms away.

Kabīr’s poems and couplets were passed down orally for two hundred years before collections such as the Bījak –‘list’ were made. Inevitably many interpolations and additions accrued; however whatever was added by later Bhakti saints and followers may be taken as an elaboration of Kabīr’s message.

¹ Kabīr has the same Arabic K-B-R root as Akbar and means ‘great’.

Kabīr, Shri Mataji and Sahaja Yoga

Shri Mataji was a great admirer of Sant Kabīr Dās and quotes from Him often in Her talks and writings, especially in the early days (1970's-80's). She refers to Him as Kabīr Dās or Kabīr Dās-ji (*Dās -'servant' was his surname, -ji is a term of respect*). There are some Dohas –'couplets' which She was particularly fond of and a few of these are listed below.

“When I read Kabīr first time, long time back when I was very young, when I was a child I should say, I read Kabīr, who is very straightforward and very furious, tremendous fellow. “ 29-11-80

“Especially Kabīra who was such a great poet and such a great incarnation, I would say the way he talked right from all these Brahmins to all the hypocrites and everything he gave them left and right. He was like Saint Michael with a sword in his hand cutting everybody; like your William Blake, he was really like your William Blake who gave left and right to all these nonsensical people“. 20-09-85

Shri Mataji quotes several lines from this song where Kabīr mentions the Chakras and the three Channels:

Nirbhay nirgunḡ guḡ re gāūngā

Mūl kamal dṛidh āsan bāndhū-jī ulṭī pavan chaḍāūngā

Man mamtā ko thir kar lāūn-jī pāncho tatt milāūngā

Iṅgalā Piṅgalā Sukhman nāḍī-jī tirvenī pe haun nahāūngā

Pānch pachhīsoṅ pakadḡ mangāūn-jī ek hi ḍor lagāūngā

Śhūnya shikhar par anhad bāje-jī rāg chhattīs sunāūngā

Kahat Kabīr: 'Suno bhāī sādho-jī jīt niśhān ghurāūngā'

*Fearlessly I will sing the attributes of the one without attributes,
Using the root lotus as a steady seat, I will make the wind rise in reverse,
Steadying the mind's attachments, I will unify the five elements,
Ingālā, Piṅgalā and Sukhman are the channels,
I will bathe at the confluence of the three rivers,
The five and twenty five I will master by my wish,
And string them together on one common thread,
At the summit of emptiness the un-struck Anahad sound reverberates,
I will play the thirty-six rāgas,
Says Kabīr: 'Listen, O brother seekers, I will wave the victory flag.'*

Notes: **Mūl kamal** – 'Root Lotus' is **Mūlādhāra Chakra** on which He is 'firmly seated'. 'Wind rising' is the **Kuṇḍalinī**.

'**Ingālā, Piṅgalā, Sukhman nāḍī**' – are **Idā, Piṅgalā** and **Suṣhumnā** which, after rising from **Mulādhāra Chakra**, all meet again at **Āgñyā Chakra (Tirvenī** – 'joining of the 3 rivers').

The '**five**' are the 5 senses and the '**twenty-five**' are the 25 **Tattvas** - 'principles' of the **Sāmkhya** philosophy. **Kabīr** has mastered these so they become unified as a single consciousness in meditation.

Śhūnya śhikhar – 'summit of emptiness' is the **Sahasrāra** where the pulsation of the **Kuṇḍalinī (Anhad = Anāhat** – 'unstruck sound') is felt.

“Kabīra has talked so clearly. He has said: 'Idâ, Pingalâ, Sushumnâ. (Ingala, Pingala, Sukhman)' Everything He has talked about, talked about Kundalini!“

24-11-80

“Kabīr says, 'I get twenty-five of them together and put them into one head.' This is the mind of a realized Soul. He thinks of the Collective Consciousness.”

13-11-78, also 10-07-82

Anāhata

”Kabîr Dâs has said, ‘On the top of the head the Anâhata [*the unstruck sound*] beats’.”
15-07-73, 06-04-81

”You will be able to see with your eyes, if you use stethoscope then you will be able to see It where It is rising. In the end It reaches here, on which Kabîr has said, ‘Shunya shikhara par anahata baje’; means ‘Its pulsation is felt’. Anahat means it pulsates.” **12-03-79, also 10-07-79, 23-03-80, 15-07-80, 20-07-80, 19-09-81, 07-10-82**

“Like He [*Kabîr*] said, ‘Pañcha pacchisoñ pakad mañgaum, eka hi dor lagaunga’ [*controlling five senses and twenty-five ways of experiencing the world and stringing them with the oneness of Inner Self like a garland*]. In this Kabîr Dâs-ji, is talking about Collective Consciousness. He has spoken of Ida, Pingala, and Sushumna Nadi, also about Shunya Shikhar –‘zero state’. Guru Nanak also has mentioned in His Granth.”
22-03-76

“Kabîra has said, ‘I will take control of all five elements, will tie them all with a single thread.’ How courageous! He said, ‘I will do it.’ It’s not that He had to coax in front of Almighty, ‘Hey God, I did not...’ One who has found it, why would he sing a song of separation (*virah*). So, if you say that we must read all, it’s wrong. If you are seeking, then read someone who has already found it.”

15-02-77

”Śhiva Tattwa, which ultimately permeates into the whole. Kabîra has said it in a beautiful couplet, I don’t know if you people have understood. It is: ‘Mana mamatā ko thira kara lāūñgā (*line 3 of the poem*).’ ‘The compassion of my heart I will vibrate, I’ll bring it out’. ‘Aur pancho tattve milaunga,’ ‘and put it into the five elements.’ See Kabîra, do you follow Him how great He is?

People talk of Kabîr Dās. See, He says that, ‘Take it out of the heart and put it into all the five elements.’

22-02-82

The Goat

Fakhar bakre ne kiya mere sivā koyi nahiñ

Maiñ hī maiñ hūm is jahān mein, dūsrā koyi nahiñ

In life the goat does nothing but think of himself

‘Me, Me’ his whole life, not thinking of others.

Maiñ maiñ jab na tark kī us mahave-asbāb ne

Pher dī chal kar chhuri gardan pe tab kassāb ne

‘Me, me’, always self-absorbed

Then, when the butcher swings the knife

Khūn, gosht, haddiyān jo kuchh tha jisme sār meiñ

Lut gaya kuchh pis gaya kuchh bik gaya bazār meiñ

Reducing his essence to flesh, blood and bones

Taken out, chopped up, and sold in the market

Reh gayin ānteñ faqat main, maiñ sunāne ke liye

Le gayā naddāf use dhunki banāne ke liye

Only the remaining intestines can be heard

Cleaned up and stretched on the cotton-carder

Zarb ke jhonkoñ se jab vo ānt ghabrāne lagī

Maiñ ke badle Tu hi Tu hi ki sadā āne lagī

By strokes and blows, when his suffering has come to an end

Instead of ‘Me’, he always sings ‘You are, you are’.

“Kabîr-das-ji has written a beautiful poem about it that: when the goat is living and kicking, she says, ‘Main, main,’ that is ‘I, I.’ But then she dies and her intestines are drawn out into wires and some Saint fixes them on the tutari - that instrument that they have, ektari as they call it - and he goes on pulling it with his fingers, then it says ‘Tu hi, Tu hi, Tu hi’ that is, ‘You are, You are, You are.’ That is how we have to die and we have to be resurrected.”

30-03-76

“My own domain, my own room, my own house, my car, my, my, my, my, my!” But it is not, it is Thy, it is Thy. Kabîr says that, ‘When the goat is living she says, ‘Main, main, main’ means ‘I, I, I,’ but when she dies and when her intestines are taken out and made into a part of the - you don’t have that kind of thing, we use it for spinning the cotton - then she says ‘Tu hi, Tu hi, Tu hi’ ‘You are the one, You are the one, You are the one.’”

19-06-78, 05-11-94

“Tu hi’ when you say, you say it to your guru or to God that ‘You are the one, I’m no more, I’m dissolved, I’m finished, I am become one with this Ocean of Love.’ And then you say to others, ‘You are, you are’ – that is Sahaj Culture.”

04-05-97, 10-05-98, 31-12-80, 06-02-82

Reading Makes Stupid

**Pothî paḍh-paḍh jag muā, paṇḍit huā na koy
Ekai ākhar prem kā, paḍhe so paṇḍit hoy**

The whole world dies reading, reading books – no one became wise.

Reading one word of love, one becomes wise.

(Kabir wrote many Dohe on the uselessness of reading to reach the spiritual goal)

“It is said that, ‘Ek hi akshar prema ka padhe so pandita hoye’. Akshara (Akshara’ -‘letter, word’ is modern Hindi, in Kabîr’s Hindi it is ‘Ākhar’). ‘Akshara’ means, actually ‘word’ in the normal way. But what is akshara? I mean the one that is never destroyed, which never diminishes. So ‘ek’ – only one word of love, the one who can read that word becomes the pandita, the one who becomes the vidvana -‘learned’. All the rest of knowledge is useless.” 24-05-81

“Just by mustering of a single letter of word love (*prem*), one can become a pandit [*knowledgeable*]. ‘Ek hi akshar prema ka padhe so pandita hoye’; this is our Sahaja Yoga. There is no need for you to become a great pandit [*intellectual*].”

03-02-78

“Learned fools are those whom Kabîr Dâs has described as ‘Padhi, padhi pandit mûrkha bhaye’ [*as they went on reading, the pandits turned into fools*].“

02-03-76

“Râmdâs Swâmî has told that, ‘In this world there are some people whose name is padhat mûrkh.’ Padhat mûrkh means who keeps reading and reading and becomes great fool (*mahamûrkh*), who Kabîr Dâsji has called, ‘Padhi padhi pandit mûrkha bhaye’ [*by reading and reading a learned man can become stupid*].”

23-03-77 – also 12-06-78, 28-03-79, 18-07-80, 06-04-81

“We had a great poet Kabîr he said: ‘Padhi padhi pandit mûrkha bhaye’ meaning: ‘By reading these great educated people have become stupid.’ He was very-very straight. He has said ‘By shaving your head or by wearing your crown if you can go to God then what about the sheep which is shaved twice a year?’ All such beautiful things he has said and then you start understanding the great poets like Khalil Gibran and all such poets which have reached the state of Oneness with God.“

29-04-80

**Mûnd mudāye Hari mile, sab koī ley mudāy
Bār-bār ke mudate, bhed na baikunth jāy**

*Everyone thinks that by shaving the head they will see God;
The sheep is often shaved, but will not reach heaven.*

“I can tell about My granddaughter. She must have been around five years that time. They had gone to Ladakh. There was a Lama person sitting there. He was decked in his grand attire and My grand-daughters were speaking in Hindi. So everyone paid respects by bowing at his feet. The moment her parents bowed down, she did not appreciate it as they themselves were accomplished Sahaja Yogis. So she stood in front of him and said, ‘Wearing this long gown and shaving your head does not let you become a realized soul, so why do you accept obeisance from

others when you are not connected to God?’ She said frankly, just like Kabîr. Kabîr has thrashed such matters so badly. One must read Kabîr to get strength. He says that, ‘If by shaving your head you meet the Divine, then the goat and sheep get shaved every day, these must be close to God.’ He has thus reprimanded all such people, the people who wear long gowns and call themselves sannyasîs.”

26-02-79

The Shawl

Jhīnī jhīnī bīnī chadariyā

This is a very, very fine shawl (the human being with body, mind, etc.)

Kāh ke tānā, kāh ke bharnī, kaun tār se bīnī chadariyā

Why so many warp threads, so many weft threads, who can count the threads?

Īnglā Piṅglā tānā bharnī, Suṣhumna tār se bīnī chadariyā

With Left and Right as warp and weft, embroidered with the Central Channel

Ashta kamal dal charkhā dole, pāñch tatva, gun tīnī chadariyā

From eight lotus-chakras, five elements and three attributes, it is made

Sāin ko siyat mas dus lage, thonk-thonk ke bīnī chadariyā

The Lord takes ten moons to weave this shawl, without any beating

So chādar sur nar muni oḍhī, oḍhī ke mailī kīnī chadariyā

This shawl is worn by Gods, men and saints, but they all made it dirty!

Dās Kabīr jatan kari oḍhī, jyoñ kī tyoñ dhar dīnī chadariyā

Your servant Kabīr has worn it carefully and is returning it to You as it was,

O Lord! (Note: Kabīr was a weaver, hence all the weaving technical terms!)

“You have to ask for one thing, ‘Tav Charana arvinde priti.’ ‘Oh Lord let me be at Your Lotus Feet so that one day my Kundalini would be awakened and that my Atma would be enlightened within my awareness. Let me keep my life so beautiful,’ ‘Ye chadar rishi muni jan odhi, Odhi ke maili kini chadariya, Dâsa Kabîr jatan se odhi, Jaisi ki taisi rakha dini chadariya.”

07-02-81

“Like Kabîr Dâs I have said: ‘Jaisi ki taisi' rakha dini chadariya,’ ‘And I had this chadar [*shawl*] on my body, I kept it as it was’. We have spoilt it [*the subtle system*], complicated it, it is hooked to

many things. We have one great advantage, that you are great seekers, very great seekers, of ages born. This is a very big advantage. And is your seeking only has brought Sahaja Yoga to this Earth.”

16-08-82

“But if you have carefully kept your Kundalini properly like as Kabîra has said, ‘Dâs Kabîr jatan se odhi, Jaisi ki taisi rakha dini chadariya.”

11-03-79

“Kabîr said of himself that, ‘I used this body with great care.’ He was such a great person (*Mahapurush*), then what is there to feel bad about it?”

01-02-75

“Jaise rakha ho taisi hi raho’ [*Whatever way you keep me I’ll enjoy’ as said by Shri Kabîr*]. This is the theme of Sahaj Yoga. ‘Jaise rakha ho taisi hi raho.’”

30-12-79

A couplet by Kabîr on the theme of Advaita – ‘non-duality’:

Ek kahūñ to hai nahiñ, dūjā kahūñ to gār

Hai jaisā taisā hī rahe, kahe Kabîr vichār

*If I say it’s one, it’s not, if I say it’s two, that’s a violation,
Let it be as it is, that’s Kabir’s thought*

1 ‘jyon kī tyon’, ‘jaisā taisā’ and ‘jaisī kī taisī’ all mean ‘as it is’.

The Rosary

Mālā pherat jug bhayā, phirā na man kā pher

Kar kā man.kā dār de, man kā man.kā pher

*Turning the beads of a rosary, does not change the mind,
Turn the beads of the mind, and change the mind.*

“You know people have an idea of using the mala – ‘rosary’, that’s why Kabîra has said ‘Kar ka man.ka dar de, man ka man.ka pher’ (*turn the beads of the mind and change the mind*) – finished! Even the children have understood the joke, this is what we are doing,

that when it is told that you have to have God in your heart and don't do these (*empty*) rituals.” 07-02-81

Disciple of Râmânanda

“Kabîr wanted to become the disciple of Râmânanda Swâmî, but he was a Muslim or low-caste or whatever it is, so he could not reach Râmânand Swâmî; the disciples would not allow him to go near.

So one day Kabîra went and slept on the steps of the River Ganges, all night in the cold waiting for Râmânand Swâmî to come, because he used to always pass the same way. And his feet fell on Kabîra and he said, ‘Oh my child, what are you doing here?’ So Kabîra got up and he said, ‘Sir, you have accepted me as your disciple today.’ He said, ‘Yes, I have.’ And then Râmânand Swâmî took him and he trained him into something great.” 06-05-87

“Then came Kabîra. He was the one who flouted: who really slashed all the false gurus and false methods which are not in the construction of your Spirit. He has described clearly how the Kundalini rises up to the head, and how It then becomes silence, and then how It starts ... you start feeling in your hands the Cool Breeze. They say He was brought up by a Muslim but his guru was a Hindu, and he told Him about these Nadis, the channels” 28-08-82

Other Quotes

“You reach a stage where you stop understanding it through words, as if the cup with which you were drinking breaks into that ocean and you get completely dissolved into it. Kabîra has said that, ‘When you are drunk and completely dissolved into that, what are you going to say?’” (*poem XXXIII, p.71*) 17-04-80

“Just by proposing that you are in the centre you do not become. ‘Sahaja, sahaja’ you see, Kabîra has said it: ‘Sahaja sahaja, saba karata,’ ‘All say Sahaja, Sahaja, but they are not!’” (p.142) **22-04-79**

**Sahaj sahaj sabko kahe, sahaj na chînhe koyi,
Jinha sahajai viṣhiyā tajī, sahaj kahī jai soyi.**

Everybody says Sahaj Sahaj, but they are not.

Only one who has renounced sensual desires can be called Sahaj.

“Kabîra has very clearly said that I do not go anywhere. He was a married man, he keeps in the centre, don’t have to use any extreme or exterior things, to express your spirituality, it is within yourself that you will find it, keep to the centre.” **05-02-81**

“Now Mahâvîra also was one of them, who was born again and again and he was Markandeya and he was Kabîra, the way Kabîra lashes people you can see that he is tremendous, he is like Bhairava and the Power of Bhairava, Kabîra has used in his language, but for Hindi poets it is Sadhukkadi [*medieval North Indian dialect of Hindi+Punjabi+Maravari*] and they have made fun of it.” **07-02-81**

“Kabîr has said, ‘No use of shaving head, shave your mind inside. No use of wearing chogas [*cloaks*], change the chogas inside.’ OK, I tied them all together, again some will fall under these chogavalas’ feet.” **15-02-77**

“But Kabîr has written, Tukaram has written. Kabîr has lashed these people with threatening and this and that, lashed them completely. But who reads Kabîr? These pishachas [*demons*], these rakshasas [*devils*], have been lashed by so many poets of this country.” **23-02-77**

“As Kabîra has said, ‘I do not take any medicines, for Me Parabrahma is the one who is My Vaidya [*Doctor*], He treats Me.’

And is a fact! Now the time has come to prove what Kabîra has said, what Nanaka has said, what Adi Shankaracharya has said, what Christ has said. There is no need to take medicine to cure this centre (*Centre Heart*). 09-02-81

“In the Vedas, you see the Primordial Mother was called as \hat{I} (*‘ee’*) and that’s why Kabîra has used this \hat{I} -pada means the State of \hat{I} , the Primordial Mother.” 01-06-81

“When Nânaka came in, He saw that Hindus and Muslims were fighting. So He started His theme with Kabîra, saying that, ‘Râm and Rahim are both the same, and how can you differentiate between the two?’” 29-04-80

“Kabîra has said, ‘Kehi samujhavo, sab jag andha’, ‘How am I to explain, the whole world is blind.’” 07-12-91, TV interview

Notes by the RiSY editor

Rabîndranâth Tagore’s Translations

Tagore’s 1912 visit to UK produced two English-language gems – his *Gitanjali* and the *Poems of Kabîr*. His empathy with the spiritual path of Kabîr makes his translations luminous and heart-felt.

He worked on the translations with Evelyn Underhill, an English adherent of Christian mysticism. In her interesting and erudite introduction (*p.15*) she compares Kabîr with Christian and Sufi mystics. Her influence coupled with Tagore’s educated poeticism somewhat softened Kabîr’s famously blunt and earthy language. Kabîr was illiterate and part of his enduring popularity is his use of the vernacular which was a mixture of medieval Hindi and various local dialects.

Tagore took some liberties with the text presumably to make it more acceptable to a western readership. For example Kabîr addresses the songs to groups of people; *Bhâi sâdho* – ‘*brother seekers*’, *Sakhiyo* –

'friends', Avadhū –'ascetics', but Tagore translates these in the singular –'O Sadhu', 'O Friend', etc.

Notes on Hindi

Tagore's original English edition had the full Hindi text of the poems but the American edition (*which is the one now widely available*) dropped this, giving only the first line. The RiSY team has added back the Hindi texts sourced from the internet; they may differ slightly from Tagore's originals. One purpose in adding the Hindi is that the reader may wish to see what word has been translated as 'love' or 'truth', etc.

Medieval Hindi² used 'b' instead of 'v' so where Tagore has 'Vandan' the original text is 'Bandan'; Basant –'spring' is Vasant now.

In Hindi a short 'a' is dropped before long vowels and at the end of words. So muralī –'flute' becomes 'murlī', sādhanā is sādhnā, etc.

'ñ' at the end of a word is a nasalized vowel ending and is hardly heard, eg. Nahīñ –'not' sounds like nahī but nasalized. In Tagore's text this is written 'ṅ'.

Page numbers (*like 762*) refer to Kabīr Samagra –'collection' – available at the Open Library (*Devanagari version only*).

² *Tulsidas (1532-1623) used similar Hindi in the Hanuman Chalisa which has 'Bajra' and 'Bikram' where today's Hindi would be 'Vajra' and 'Vikram'. Tagore's name Rabīndranāth [rabi = ravi –'sun', indra –'king', nāth –'lord, master'] would be spelled Ravīndranāth. 'Tagore' is a westernization of Thākur – a Brahmin land-owning caste.*

This is the end of the RiSY introduction and what follows is the original text of Rabindranath Tagore's book.

One Hundred Poems of Kabir

Translated By Rabīndranāth Tagore

INTRODUCTION by Evelyn Underhill (1915)

THE poet Kabīr, a selection from whose songs is here for the first time offered to English readers, is one of the most interesting personalities in the history of Indian mysticism. Born in or near Benares, of Mohammedan parents, and probably about the year 1440, he became in early life a disciple of the celebrated Hindu ascetic Rāmānanda. Rāmānanda had brought to Northern India the religious revival which Rāmānuja, the great twelfth-century reformer of Brāhmanism, had initiated in the South.

This revival was in part a reaction against the increasing formalism of the orthodox cult, in part an assertion of the demands of the heart as against the intense intellectualism of the Vedānta philosophy, the exaggerated monism which that philosophy proclaimed. It took in Rāmānuja's preaching the form of an ardent personal devotion to the God Vishnu, as representing the personal aspect of the Divine Nature: that mystical 'religion of love' which everywhere makes its appearance at a certain level of spiritual culture, and which creeds and philosophies are powerless to kill.

Though such a devotion is indigenous in Hinduism, and finds expression in many passages of the Bhagavad Gītā, there was in its mediaeval revival a large element of syncretism. Rāmānanda, through whom its spirit is said to have reached Kabīr, appears to have been a man of wide religious culture, and full of missionary enthusiasm.

Living at the moment in which the impassioned poetry and deep philosophy of the great Persian mystics, Attar, Sadi, Jalalu'ddin Rumi

and Hafiz, were exercising a powerful influence on the religious thought of India, he dreamed of reconciling this intense and personal Mohammedan mysticism with the traditional theology of Brāhmanism. Some have regarded both these great religious leaders as influenced also by Christian thought and life: but as this is a point upon which competent authorities hold widely divergent views, its discussion is not attempted here.

We may safely assert, however, that in their teachings, two - perhaps three - apparently antagonistic streams of intense spiritual culture met, as Jewish and Hellenistic thought met in the early Christian Church: and it is one of the outstanding characteristics of Kabīr's genius that he was able in his poems to fuse them into one.

A great religious reformer, the founder of a sect to which nearly a million northern Hindus still belong, it is yet supremely as a mystical poet that Kabīr lives for us. His fate has been that of many revealers of Reality. A hater of religious exclusivism, and seeking above all things to initiate men into the liberty of the children of God, his followers have honoured his memory by re-erecting in a new place the barriers which he laboured to cast down. But his wonderful songs survive, the spontaneous expressions of his vision and his love; and it is by these, not by the didactic teachings associated with his name, that he makes his immortal appeal to the heart.

In these poems a wide range of mystical emotion is brought into play: from the loftiest abstractions, the most other-worldly passion for the Infinite, to the most intimate and personal realization of God, expressed in homely metaphors and religious symbols drawn indifferently from Hindu and Mohammedan belief. It is impossible to say of their author that he was Brāhman or Sufi, Vedantist or Vaishnavite. He is, as he says himself, 'at once the child of Allah and of Rām.' That Supreme Spirit Whom he knew and adored, and to Whose

joyous friendship he sought to induct the souls of other men, transcended whilst He included all metaphysical categories, all credal definitions; yet each contributed something to the description of that Infinite and Simple Totality Who revealed Himself, according to their measure, to the faithful lovers of all creeds.

Kabīr's story is surrounded by contradictory legends, on none of which reliance can be placed. Some of these emanate from a Hindu, some from a Mohammedan source, and claim him by turns as a Sufi and a Brāhman saint. His name, however, is practically a conclusive proof of Moslem ancestry: and the most probable tale is that which represents him as the actual or adopted child of a Mohammedan weaver of Benares, the city in which the chief events of his life took place.

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

him, and though Mohammedan legends speak of the famous Sufi Pīr, Takki of Jhansi, as Kabīr's master in later life, the Hindu saint is the only human teacher to whom, in his songs, he acknowledges indebtedness.

The little that we know of Kabīr's life contradicts many current ideas concerning the Oriental mystic. Of the stages of discipline through which he passed, the manner in which his spiritual genius developed, we are completely ignorant. He seems to have remained for years the disciple of Rāmānanda, joining in the theological and philosophical arguments which his master held with all the great Mullahs and Brāhmans of his day; and to this source we may perhaps trace his acquaintance with the terms of Hindu and Sufi philosophy. He may or may not have submitted to the traditional education of the Hindu or the Sufi contemplative: it is clear, at any rate, that he never adopted the life of the professional ascetic, or retired from the world in order to devote himself to bodily mortifications and the exclusive pursuit of the contemplative life.

Side by side with his interior life of adoration, its artistic expression in music and words - for he was a skilled musician as well as a poet - he lived the sane and diligent life of the Oriental craftsman. All the legends agree on this point: that Kabīr was a weaver, a simple and unlettered man, who earned his living at the loom. Like Paul the tent-maker, Boehme the cobbler, Bunyan the tinker, Tersteegen the ribbon-maker, he knew how to combine vision and industry; the work of his hands helped rather than hindered the impassioned meditation of his heart. Hating mere bodily austerities, he was no ascetic, but a married man, the father of a family - a circumstance which Hindu legends of the monastic type vainly attempt to conceal or explain and it was from out of the heart of the common life that he sang his rapturous lyrics of divine love.

Here his works corroborate the traditional story of his life. Again and again he extols the life of home, the value and reality of diurnal existence, with its opportunities for love and renunciation; pouring contempt upon the professional sanctity of the Yogi, who 'has a great beard and matted locks, and looks like a goat,' and on all who think it necessary to flee a world pervaded by love, joy, and beauty - the proper theatre of man's quest in order to find that One Reality Who has spread His form of love throughout all the world.'

It does not need much experience of ascetic literature to recognize the boldness and originality of this attitude in such a time and place. From the point of view of orthodox sanctity, whether Hindu or Mohammedan, Kabīr was plainly a heretic; and his frank dislike of all institutional religion, all external observance - which was as thorough and as intense as that of the Quakers themselves - completed, so far as ecclesiastical opinion was concerned, his reputation as a dangerous man. The 'simple union' with Divine Reality which he perpetually extolled, as alike the duty and the joy of every soul, was independent both of ritual and of bodily austerities; the God whom he proclaimed was 'neither in Kaaba nor in Kailash.' Those who sought Him needed not to go far; for He awaited discovery everywhere, more accessible to 'the washerwoman and the carpenter' than to the self-righteous holy man.

Therefore the whole apparatus of piety, Hindu and Moslem alike - the temple and mosque, idol and holy water, scriptures and priests - were denounced by this inconveniently clear-sighted poet as mere substitutes for reality; dead things intervening between the soul and its love -

The images are all lifeless, they cannot speak:

I know, for I have cried aloud to them.

The Purana and the Koran are mere words:

Lifting up the curtain, I have seen.

This sort of thing cannot be tolerated by any organized church; and it is not surprising that Kabīr, having his headquarters in Benares, the very centre of priestly influence, was subjected to considerable persecution. The well-known legend of the beautiful courtesan sent by the Brāhmans to tempt his virtue, and converted, like the Magdalen, by her sudden encounter with the initiate of a higher love, preserves the memory of the fear and dislike with which he was regarded by the ecclesiastical powers. Once at least, after the performance of a supposed miracle of healing, he was brought before the Emperor Sikandar Lodi, and charged with claiming the possession of divine powers. But Sikandar Lodi, a ruler of considerable culture, was tolerant of the eccentricities of saintly persons belonging to his own faith.

Kabīr, being of Mohammedan birth, was outside the authority of the Brāhmans, and technically classed with the Sufis, to whom great theological latitude was allowed. Therefore, though he was banished in the interests of peace from Benares, his life was spared. This seems to have happened in 1495, when he was nearly sixty years of age; it is the last event in his career of which we have definite knowledge. Thenceforth he appears to have moved about amongst various cities of northern India, the centre of a group of disciples; continuing in exile that life of apostle and poet of love to which, as he declares in one of his songs, he was destined 'from the beginning of time.' In 1518, an old man, broken in health, and with hands so feeble that he could no longer make the music which he loved, he died at Maghar near Gorakhpur.

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

II

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

Kabīr's songs are of this kind: outbirths at once of rapture and of charity. Written in the popular Hindi, not in the literary tongue, they were deliberately addressed - like the vernacular poetry of Jacopone da Todi (1230-1306) and Richard Rolle (1300-1349) - to the people rather than to the professionally religious class; and all must be struck by the constant employment in them of imagery drawn from the common life, the universal experience. It is by the simplest metaphors, by constant appeals to needs, passions, relations which all men understand - the bridegroom and bride, the guru and disciple, the pilgrim, the farmer, the migrant bird - that he drives home his intense conviction of the reality of the soul's intercourse with the Transcendent. There are in his universe no fences between the 'natural' and 'supernatural' worlds;

everything is a part of the creative Play of God and therefore - even in its humblest details - capable of revealing the Player's mind.

This willing acceptance of the here-and-now as a means of representing supernal realities is a trait common to the greatest mystics. For them, when they have achieved at last the true theopathic state, all aspects of the universe possess equal authority as sacramental declarations of the Presence of God; and their fearless employment of homely and physical symbols - often startling and even revolting to the unaccustomed taste - is in direct proportion to the exaltation of their spiritual life. The works of the great Sufis, and amongst the Christians of Jacopone da Todi, Ruysbroeck (1293-1381), Boehme (1575-1624), abound in illustrations of this law. Therefore we must not be surprised to find in Kabīr's songs - his desperate attempts to communicate his ecstasy and persuade other men to share it - a constant juxtaposition of concrete and metaphysical language; swift alternations between the most intensely anthropomorphic, the most subtly philosophical, ways of apprehending man's communion with the Divine. The need for this alternation, and its entire naturalness for the mind which employs it, is rooted in his concept, or vision, of the Nature of God and unless we make some attempt to grasp this, we shall not go far in our understanding of his poems.

Kabīr belongs to that small group of supreme mystics amongst whom St. Augustine (354-430), Ruysbroeck and the Sufi poet Jalalu'ddin Rumi (1207-1273) are perhaps the chief, who have achieved that which we might call the synthetic vision of God. These have resolved the perpetual opposition between the personal and impersonal, the transcendent and immanent, static and dynamic aspects of the Divine Nature; between the Absolute of philosophy and the 'sure true Friend' of devotional religion. They have done this, not by taking these apparently incompatible concepts one after the other; but by

ascending to a height of spiritual intuition at which they are, as Ruysbroeck said, 'melted and merged in the Unity,' and perceived as the completing opposites of a perfect Whole. This proceeding entails for them - and both Kabīr and Ruysbroeck expressly acknowledge it - a universe of three orders: Becoming, Being, and that which is 'More than Being,' i.e., God. [*Nos. VII and XLIX*] God is here felt to be not the final abstraction, but the one actuality. He inspires, supports, indeed inhabits, both the durational, conditioned, finite world of Becoming and the unconditioned, non-successional, infinite world of Being; yet utterly transcends them both. He is the omnipresent Reality, the 'All-pervading' within Whom 'the worlds are being told like beads.' In His personal aspect He is the 'beloved Fakir,' teaching and companioning each soul. Considered as Immanent Spirit, He is 'the Mind within the mind.' But all these are at best partial aspects of His nature, mutually corrective: as the Persons in the Christian doctrine of the Trinity-to which this theological diagram bears a striking resemblance-»represent different and compensating experiences of the Divine Unity within which they are resumed. As Ruysbroeck discerned a plane of reality upon which 'we can speak no more of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but only of One Being, the very substance of the Divine Persons'; so Kabīr says that 'beyond both the limited and the limitless is He, the Pure Being.' [*No. VII*]

Brahma, then, is the Ineffable Fact compared with which 'the distinction of the Conditioned from the Unconditioned is but a word': at once the utterly transcendent One of Absolutist philosophy, and the personal Lover of the individual soul-'common to all and special to each,' as one Christian mystic has it. The need felt by Kabīr for both these ways of describing Reality is a proof of the richness and balance of his spiritual experience; which neither cosmic nor anthropomorphic symbols, taken alone, could express. More absolute than the Absolute,

more personal than the human mind, Brahma therefore exceeds whilst He includes all the concepts of philosophy, all the passionate intuitions of the heart. He is the Great Affirmation, the font of energy, the source of life and love, the unique satisfaction of desire. His creative word is the *_Om_* or 'Everlasting Yea.' The negative philosophy which strips from the Divine Nature all its attributes and defining Him only by that which He is not-reduces Him to an 'Emptiness,' is abhorrent to this most vital of poets.-Brahma, he says, 'may never be found in abstractions.' He is the One Love who Pervades the world. discerned in His fullness only by the eyes of love; and those who know Him thus share, though they may never tell, the joyous and ineffable secret of the universe. [*Nos. VII, XXVI, LXXVI, XC*]

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

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

Next, he is protected from the soul-destroying conclusions of pure monism, inevitable if its logical implications are pressed home: that is, the identity of substance between God and the soul, with its corollary of the total absorption of that soul in the Being of God as the goal of the spiritual life. For the thorough-going monist the soul, in so far as it is real, is substantially identical with God; and the true object of existence is the making patent of this latent identity, the realization which finds expression in the Vedantist formula 'That art thou.' But Kabīr says that Brahma and the creature are 'ever distinct, yet ever

united'; that the wise man knows the spiritual as well as the material world to 'be no more than His footstool.' [*Nos. VII and IX*]

The soul's union with Him is a love union, a mutual inhabitation; that essentially dualistic relation which all mystical religion expresses, not a self-mergence which leaves no place for personality. This eternal distinction, the mysterious union-in-separateness of God and the soul, is a necessary doctrine of all sane mysticism; for no scheme which fails to find a place for it can represent more than a fragment of that soul's intercourse with the spiritual world. Its affirmation was one of the distinguishing features of the Vaishnavite reformation preached by Rāmānuja; the principle of which had descended through Rāmānanda to Kabīr.

Last, the warmly human and direct apprehension of God as the supreme Object of love, the soul's comrade, teacher, and bridegroom, which is so passionately and frequently expressed in Kabīr's poems, balances and controls those abstract tendencies which are inherent in the metaphysical side of his vision of Reality: and prevents it from degenerating into that sterile worship of intellectual formulae which became the curse of the Vedantist school. For the mere intellectualist, as for the mere pietist, he has little approbation. [*Cf. especially Nos. LIX, LXVII, LXXV, XC, XCI*] Love is throughout his 'absolute sole Lord': the unique source of the more abundant life which he enjoys, and the common factor which unites the finite and infinite worlds. All is soaked in love: that love which he described in almost Johannine language as the 'Form of God.'

The whole of creation is the Play of the Eternal Lover; the living, changing, growing expression of Brahma's love and joy. As these twin passions preside over the generation of human life, so 'beyond the mists of pleasure and pain' Kabīr finds them governing the creative acts of God. His manifestation is love; His activity is joy. Creation springs

from one glad act of affirmation: the Everlasting Yea, perpetually uttered within the depths of the Divine Nature. [*Nos. XVII, XXVI, LXXVI, LXXXII*] In accordance with this concept of the universe as a Love-Game which eternally goes forward, a progressive manifestation of Brahma—one of the many notions which he adopted from the common stock of Hindu religious ideas, and illuminated by his poetic genius—movement, rhythm, perpetual change, forms an integral part of Kabīr's vision of Reality. Though the Eternal and Absolute is ever present to his consciousness, yet his concept of the Divine Nature is essentially dynamic. It is by the symbols of motion that he most of ten tries to convey it to us: as in his constant reference to dancing, or the strangely modern picture of that Eternal Swing of the Universe which is 'held by the cords of love.' [*No. XVI*]

It is a marked characteristic of mystical literature that the great contemplatives, in their effort to convey to us the nature of their communion with the supersensuous, are inevitably driven to employ some form of sensuous imagery: coarse and inaccurate as they know such imagery to be, even at the best. Our normal human consciousness is so completely committed to dependence on the senses, that the fruits of intuition itself are instinctively referred to them. In that intuition it seems to the mystics that all the dim cravings and partial apprehensions of sense find perfect fulfilment. Hence their constant declaration that they see the uncreated light, they hear the celestial melody, they taste the sweetness of the Lord, they know an ineffable fragrance, they feel the very contact of love. 'Him verily seeing and fully feeling, Him spiritually hearing and Him delectably smelling and sweetly swallowing,' as Julian of Norwich has it. In those amongst them who develop psycho-sensorial automatisms, these parallels between sense and spirit may present themselves to consciousness in the form of hallucinations: as the light seen by Suso, the music heard by Rolle,

the celestial perfumes which filled St. Catherine of Siena's cell, the physical wounds felt by St. Francis and St. Teresa. These are excessive dramatizations of the symbolism under which the mystic tends instinctively to represent his spiritual intuition to the surface consciousness. Here, in the special sense-perception which he feels to be most expressive of Reality, his peculiar idiosyncrasies come out.

Now Kabīr, as we might expect in one whose reactions to the spiritual order were so wide and various, uses by turn all the symbols of sense. He tells us that he has 'seen without sight' the effulgence of Brahma, tasted the divine nectar, felt the ecstatic contact of Reality, smelt the fragrance of the heavenly flowers. But he was essentially a poet and musician: rhythm and harmony were to him the garments of beauty and truth. Hence in his lyrics he shows himself to be, like Richard Rolle, above all things a musical mystic. Creation, he says again and again, is full of music: it is music. At the heart of the Universe 'white music is blossoming': love weaves the melody, whilst renunciation beats the time. It can be heard in the home as well as in the heavens; discerned by the ears of common men as well as by the trained senses of the ascetic. Moreover, the body of every man is a lyre on which Brahma, 'the source of all music,' plays. Everywhere Kabīr discerns the 'Unstruck Music of the Infinite'-that celestial melody which the angel played to St. Francis, that ghostly symphony which filled the soul of Rolle with ecstatic joy. [*Nos. XVII, XVIII, XXXIX, XLI, LIV, LXXVI, LXXXIII, LXXXIX, XCVII*] The one figure which he adopts from the Hindu Pantheon and constantly uses, is that of Krishna the Divine Flute Player. [*Nos. L, LIII, LXVIII*] He sees the supernal music, too, in its visual embodiment, as rhythmical movement: that mysterious dance of the universe before the face of Brahma, which is at once an act of worship and an expression of the infinite rapture of the Immanent God.' Yet in this wide and rapturous vision of the universe Kabīr never loses touch with

diurnal existence, never forgets the common life. His feet are firmly planted upon earth; his lofty and passionate apprehensions are perpetually controlled by the activity of a sane and vigorous intellect, by the alert common sense so often found in persons of real mystical genius.

The constant insistence on simplicity and directness, the hatred of all abstractions and philosophisings, [*Nos. XXVI, XXXII, LXXVI*] the ruthless criticism of external religion: these are amongst his most marked characteristics. God is the Root whence all manifestations, 'material' and 'spiritual,' alike proceed; [*Nos. LXXV, LXXVIII, LXXX, XC*] and God is the only need of man-'happiness shall be yours when you come to the Root.' [*No. LXXX*] Hence to those who keep their eye on the 'one thing needful,' denominations, creeds, ceremonies, the conclusions of philosophy, the disciplines of asceticism, are matters of comparative indifference. They represent merely the different angles from which the soul may approach that simple union with Brahma which is its goal; and are useful only in so far as they contribute to this consummation. So thorough-going is Kabīr's eclecticism, that he seems by turns Vedāntist and Vaishnavite, Pantheist and Transcendentalist, Brāhman and Sūfī. In the effort to tell the truth about that ineffable apprehension, so vast and yet so near, which controls his life, he seizes and twines together-as he might have woven together contrasting threads upon his loom-symbols and ideas drawn from the most violent and conflicting philosophies and faiths.

All are needed, if he is ever to suggest the character of that One whom the Upanishad called 'the Sun-coloured Being who is beyond this Darkness': as all the colours of the spectrum are needed if we would demonstrate the simple richness of white light. In thus adapting traditional materials to his own use he follows a method common amongst the mystics; who seldom exhibit any special love for

originality of form. They will pour their wine into almost any vessel that comes to hand: generally using by preference-and lifting to new levels of beauty and significance-the religious or philosophic formulae current in their own day.

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

In the collection of songs here translated there will be found examples which illustrate nearly every aspect of Kabīr's thought, and all the fluctuations of the mystic's emotion: the ecstasy, the despair, the still beatitude, the eager self-devotion, the flashes of wide illumination, the moments of intimate love. His wide and deep vision of the universe, the 'Eternal Sport' of creation (*LXXXII*), the worlds being 'told like beads' within the Being of God (*XIV, XVI, XVII, LXXVI*), is here seen balanced by his lovely and delicate sense of intimate communion with the Divine Friend, Lover, Teacher of the soul (*X, XI, XXIII, XXXV, LI, LXXXV, LXXXVI, LXXXVIII, XCII, XCIII; above all, the beautiful poem XXXIV*).

As these apparently paradoxical views of Reality are resolved in Brahma, so all other opposites are reconciled in Him: bondage and liberty, love and renunciation, pleasure and pain (*XVII, XXV, XL, LXXIX*). Union with Him is the one thing that matters to the soul, its destiny and its need (*LI, I, II, LIV, LXX, LXXIV, XCIII, XCVI*); and this union, this

discovery of God, is the simplest and most natural of all things, if we would but grasp it (*XLI, XLVI, LVI, LXXII, LXXVI, LXXVIII, XCVII*). The union, however, is brought about by love, not by knowledge or ceremonial observances (*XXXVIII, LIV, LV, LIX, XCI*); and the apprehension which that union confers is ineffable - 'neither This nor That,' as Ruysbroeck has it (*IX, XLVI, LXXVI*).

Real worship and communion is in Spirit and in Truth (*XL, XLI, LVI, LXIII, LXV, LXX*), therefore idolatry is an insult to the Divine Lover (*XLII, LXIX*) and the devices of professional sanctity are useless apart from charity and purity of soul (*LIV, LXV, LXVI*). Since all things, and especially the heart of man, are God-inhabited, God-possessed (*XXVI, LVI, LXXVI, LXXXIX, XCVII*), He may best be found in the here-and-now: in the normal, human, bodily existence, the 'mud' of material life (*III, IV, VI, XXI, XXXIX, XL, XLIII, XLVIII, LXXII*). 'We can reach the goal without crossing the road' (*LXXVI*) - not the cloister but the home is the proper theatre of man's efforts: and if he cannot find God there, he need not hope for success by going farther afield. 'In the home is reality.' There love and detachment, bondage and freedom, joy and pain play by turns upon the soul; and it is from their conflict that the Unstruck Music of the Infinite proceeds. Kabīr says: 'None but Brahma can evoke its melodies.'

This version of Kabīr's songs is chiefly the work of Mr. Rabindranath Tagore, the trend of whose mystical genius makes him - as all who read these poems will see - a peculiarly sympathetic interpreter of Kabīr's vision and thought. It has been based upon the printed Hindi text with Bengali translation of Mr. Kshiti Mohan Sen; who has gathered from many sources-sometimes from books and manuscripts, sometimes from the lips of wandering ascetics and minstrels-a large collection of poems and hymns to which Kabīr's name is attached, and carefully sifted the authentic songs from the many spurious works now

attributed to him. These painstaking labours alone have made the present undertaking possible.

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

E. U.

The reference of the headlines of the poems is to: Shantiniketana; Kabîr by Sri Kshiti-mohan Sen, 4 parts, Brahmachary'asrama, Bolpur, 1910-1911.

Rabindranath Tagore

Rabīndranāth Thākūr, anglicised to Tagore, was born on 7 May, 1861 to a wealthy family based in Calcutta, British India. Tagore composed beautiful songs, wrote elegant poems, novels and plays, created celebrated artworks and was a life-long political advocate of equality and freedom. He consequently denounced the Raj and British control of Indian life, inspirationally changing his region's politics, literature and music. *Gitānjali (Song offerings)*, *Gora (Fair-Faced)*, and *Ghare-Baire (The Home and the World)* are his best-known works, acclaimed for their contemplative nature mixed with an unflinching naturalism. Two of his compositions were chosen by India and Bangladesh as their national anthems.

His legacy also endures in Visva-Bharati University; the establishment which Tagore founded himself. Tagore is still little known outside Bengal. However his profound, if smaller than deserved, reception has helped to introduce the best of Indian culture to the West and vice versa. Tagore started writing poetry when he was just eight years old, and released his first substantial collection of poems, *The Songs of Bhanusingho Thakur*, at the age of sixteen. These were published under the pseudonym *Bhānusimha (Sun Lion)* and were immediately seized upon by the literary authorities; hailed as long-lost classics.

However due to his father's wishes for Tagore to become a barrister, he moved to England at the age of sixteen and enrolled at a public school in Brighton. He briefly read law at University College London, but left to independently study the literature of Shakespeare, especially *Coriolanus* and *Anthony and Cleopatra*. The young man was impressed by the lively English, Irish and Scottish folk tunes, and he returned to Bengal in 1880, resolving to reconcile European and Brahmin traditions.

In 1883 he married Mrinalini Devi, with whom he had five children. From 1890 onwards, Tagore managed his vast ancestral estates in Shelaida. and it was here that he released his Manasi poems (1890). probably his best known work. The period 1891-1895 was his most productive. and it was during this time that Tagore wrote more than half of the 84 story long Galpaguccha. This collection revealed the poverty and suffering in an otherwise idealised rural Bengal.

In 1901, Tagore moved to Shantiniketan to found an ashram (*a place of spiritual hermitage*). it had an experimental school attached, beautiful groves of trees, substantial gardens and a well-stocked library. During his time at Shantiniketan, Tagore's wife and two of his children died. However he kept up his campaigns for social justice in the Indian provinces, as well as maintaining his prolific writing career. Tagore also kept composing, amassing a massive 2,230 songs to his credit. He became the first non-European to win the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913, for his Gitānjali – '*Song offerings*'.

Two years after this accolade, Tagore was knighted by George V; however he repudiated this award in 1919 after the outrages of the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre. He asserted that 'the time has come when badges of honour make our shame glaring in the incongruous context of humiliation; and I for my part wish to stand, shorn of all special distinctions, by the side of those of my countrymen who, for their so called insignificance, are liable to suffer degradation not fit for human beings.' As a result of his extensive travels, Tagore felt affirmed in his opposition to societal divisions and continued reflecting on such themes in his later works Chitra (1914). Dui Bon (1933) and Patraput (1936). Tagore died at the age of 80, in Calcutta, the place of his birth, on 7 August, 1941.

One Hundred Poems of Kabir

Translated by Rabindranath Tagore

Assisted by Evelyn Underhill

Published in 1915

I. I.13. *Mo ko kahān dhūnro bande*

Moñko kahāñ dhūnḍhe bande, maiñ to tere pās meñ
Nā maiñ deval nā maiñ masjid, nā kābe kailās meñ
Nā to kāun kriyā karam main, nahīñ yog vairāg meñ
Khojī hoyā to turate mili hauñ pal bhar kī tālās meñ
Kahaiñ Kabīr: 'Suno bhāi sādho sab sāmsan kī sāms meñ'

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

II. I.16. *Santan jāt na pūcho nirguniyān*

Santan jāt na pūchho nirguniyān
Sādh brāhman sādha chhattī, sādhai jāti baniyān
Sādhan māt chhattīs kaun hai, tedhī tor pūchhaniyān
Sādhai nāu sādhai dhobī, sādha jāti hai bariyān
Sādhan māt raidās sant hai, supach ṛishi so bhangiyān
Hindū-turk duī dīn bane hain, kachhū na pahachaniyān 753

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

* *'Rishi Swapacha' – 'the outcaste saint' refers to Raidas in the previous line, a great saint who was born in an untouchable caste (tanners). He was also a disciple of Rāmānanda and an older contemporary of Kabīr.*

III. 1.57. *Sādho bhāi, jīval hī karo ās'ā*

Sādho bhāi jīvat hī karo āsā
Jīvat samjhe jīvat bījhe jīvat mukuti nivāsā
Jīvat karam kī phāñs na kātī muye mukti kī āsā
Abhūñ milā to tabhūñ milegā, nahīñ to jam pur vāsā
Satt gahe satgurū ko chīn haiñ, satt.nām visvāsā
Kahaiñ Kabīr: 'sādhan hitkārī, ham sādhan ke dāsā
Sab santan māñ sant baḍe hai sabad rūp jin dohiyāñ
Kahaiñ Kabīr: 'Suno bhāi sādho satt.rūp bahi janiyāñ'

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

IV. 1.58. *Bâgo nâ jâ re nâ jâ*

Bâgoñ nâ jâ re nâ jâ
Terī kāyā meñ guljār
Sahas-kamal par baiṭh ke
Tū dekhe rūp apār

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

V. 1.63. *Avadhû, mâyâ tajî na jâi*

Avadhû mâyâ tajî na jâi
Girah taj ke bastar bāñdhā bastar taj ke pherī
Kām tajeteñ krodh na jâi krodh tajeteñ lobhā
Lobh taje ahañkār na jâi mān baḍāi sobhā
Man bairāgī mâyâ tyāgī shabd meñ surat samāi
Kahaiñ Kabīr: 'Suno bhāi sādho yah gam birle pāi'

Tell me, Brother, how can I renounce Maya?
When I gave up the tying of ribbons, still I tied my garment about me:
When I gave up tying my garment, still I covered my body in its folds.
So, when I give up passion, I see that anger remains;
And when I renounce anger, greed is with me still;
And when greed is vanquished, pride and vainglory remain;
When the mind is detached and casts Maya away,
Still it clings to the letter.
Kabīr says, "Listen to me, dear Sadhu! The true path is rarely found."

VI. 1.83. *Chandâ jhalkai yahi ghat mâhîn*

Chandâ jhalkai yahi ghat mahîñ, andhi ānkhan sūjhe nahîñ
Yahi ghat chanda yahi ghat sūr, yahí ghat gājey anhad tūr
Yahi ghat bajey tabal-nisān, bahira sabad sune nahîñ kān
Jab lag meri meri karey, tab lag kāj ekou nahîñ sarey
Jab meri mamata marjāye, tab prabhu kāj sanwāre āye
Gyān ke kāran karam kamāye, hoye gñyān sab karam nasāye
Phal kāran phūley banrāye, phal lagñye par phūl sūkhāye
Mrigā hās kastūri bās, āp na khoje khoje ghās

The moon shines in my body, but my blind eyes cannot see it:
The moon is within me, and so is the sun.
The unstruck drum of Eternity is sounded within me;
But my deaf ears cannot hear it.
So long as man clamours for the *I* and the *Mine*, his works are as
naught:
When all love of the *I* and the *Mine* is dead,
Then the work of the Lord is done.
For work has no other aim than the getting of knowledge:
When that comes, then work is put away.
The flower blooms for the fruit: when the fruit comes, the flower
withers.
The musk is in the deer, but it seeks it not within itself:
It wanders in quest of grass.

VII. 1.85. *Sādho, Brahm alakh lakhâyâ*

Sādho brahm alakh lakhâyā jab āp āp darsāyā
Bīj-maddh jyoñ brichchhā darsai brichchhaā maddhe chhâyā
Jayo nabh-maddhe sunn dekhiye sunn anant ākārā
Nih-achchharte achchhar taise achchhar chhar bistārā
Jyo ravī-maddhe kiran dekhiye kiran-maddhe paragāsā
Par.mātām meñ jīv braham imī jīv-maddh timi svāñsā
Svāñs-maddhe shabd dekhiye arth shabd ke māñhñ
Brahte jīv jīvate man yoñ nyārā milā sadā hī
Āphi virchchh bīj añkurā āp phūl-phal chhâyā
Āphi sūr kiran parkāsā āp braham jīu māyā
Anant-kār sunn nam āpai man jīv braham samāyā
Ātam meñ parmātām darsai parmātām meñ jhāññ
Jhāññ meñ parchhāī darsai lakhai Kabīrā sāññ

When He Himself reveals Himself,

Brahman brings into manifestation That which can never be seen.

As the seed is in the plant, as the shade is in the tree,

As the void is in the sky, as infinite forms are in the void-

So from beyond the Infinite, the Infinite comes;

And from the Infinite the finite extends.

The individual being is in Brahman, and Brahman is in the individual being:

They are ever distinct, yet ever united.

He Himself is the tree, the seed, and the germ.

He Himself is the flower, the fruit, and the shade.

He Himself is the sun, the light, and the lighted.

He Himself is Brahman, individual being, and Maya.

He Himself is the manifold form, the infinite space;

He is the breath, the word, and the meaning.
He Himself is the limit and the limitless:
And beyond both the limited and the limitless is He, the Pure Being.
He is the Immanent Mind in Brahman and in the individual being.
The Supreme Soul is seen within the soul,
The Point is seen within the Supreme Soul,
And within the Point, the reflection is seen again.
Kabīr is blest because he has this supreme vision!

VIII. I.101. *Is ghaṭ antar bāg bagīche*

Is ghaṭ-antar bāg-bagīche, isī meñ sirjanhārā
Is ghaṭ-antar sāt samundar, isī meñ nau lakh tārā
Is ghaṭ-añgar pāras motī, isī meñ parakhan-hārā
Is ghaṭ-antar anhad garjai, isī meñ uṭhat phuhārā
Kahat Kabīr ‘Suno bhāī sādho, isī meñ sāīñ hamārā’

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

IX. I.104. *Aisâ lo nahîṅ taisâ lo*

Aisâ lo nahîṅ taisâ lo maiṅ kehi vidhi kithoṅ gañbhîrâ
Bhîtar kahūṅ to jag mai lâjai bāhar kahūṅ to jhūṭhâ lo
Bāhar-bhîtar sakal nirantar chit-achit do.ū pīṭhâ lo
Dishti na mushṭî na pargaṭ agochar bātan kahâ na jāi lo

O how may I ever express that secret word?

O how can I say He is not like this, and He is like that?

If I say that He is within me, the universe is ashamed:

If I say that He is without me, it is falsehood.

He makes the inner and the outer worlds to be indivisibly one;

The conscious and the unconscious, both are His footstools.

He is neither manifest nor hidden, He is neither revealed nor
unrevealed:

There are no words to tell that which He is.

X. I.121. *Tohi mori lagan lagāye re phakīr wā*

Tohiñ mori lagan lagāye re phakīr vā

Sovat hī maiñ apne mandir meñ sabdan māri jagāye re phakīr vā

Būḍat hī bhau ke sāgar meñ bahiyāñ pakri sujhy re phakīr vā

Ekai bachan bachan nahīñ dūjā tum mose band chhuḍāye re phakīr vā

Kahaiñ Kabīr: 'Suno bhāi sādho prānan parān lagāye re phakīr vā'

To Thee Thou hast drawn my love, O Fakir!

I was sleeping in my own chamber, and Thou didst awaken me;

Striking me with Thy voice, O Fakir!

I was drowning in the deeps of the ocean of this world,

And Thou didst save me: upholding me with Thine arm, O Fakir!

Only one word and no second-

And Thou hast made me tear off all my bonds, O Fakir!

Kabīr says, "Thou hast united Thy heart to my heart, O Fakir!"

XI. I.131. *Nis' din khelat rahî sakhiyân sang*

Nis-din khelat rahî sakhiyan sañg mohi baḍā ḍar lāge
More sāhab kī ūñchī aṭariyā chḍhat meñ jiyarā kāñpe
Jo sukh chahaiñ to lajjā tyāge piyāse hil-mil lāge
Ghūñghaṭ khol añg bhar bheñṭe nain ārtī sāje
Kahaiñ Kabīr: 'Suno sakhi morī prem hoai so jāne
Jin pirītam kī ās nahī hai nāhak kājar pāre'

I played day and night with my comrades, and now I am greatly afraid.
So high is my Lord's palace, my heart trembles to mount its stairs:
Yet I must not be shy, if I would enjoy His love.
My heart must cleave to my Lover;
I must withdraw my veil, and meet Him with all my body:
Mine eyes must perform the ceremony of the lamps of love.
Kabīr says: "Listen to me, friend: he understands who loves.
If you feel not love's longing for your Beloved One,
It is vain to adorn your body, vain to put unguent on your eyelids."

XII. 11.24. *Hamsâ, kaho purâtan vât*

Haṁsâ kāho purātan bāt

Kon des se āyā hansā utarnā kone ghāṭ

Kahāñ hansā bisrām kiyā hai kahāñ lagāye ās

Abhī hansā chet saberā chalo hamāre sāth

Sansai-sok vahāñ nahīñ vyāpe nahī kāl kai trās

Hi.āñ madan-ban phūl rahe haiñ āve soham bās

Man bhañvrā jahñ arujh rahe hai sukh kī nā abhīlās

Tell me, O Swan, your ancient tale.

From what land do you come, O Swan? to what shore will you fly?

Where would you take your rest, O Swan, and what do you seek?

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

There is a land where no doubt nor sorrow have rule:

Where the terror of Death is no more.

There the woods of spring are a-bloom,

And the fragrant scent "He is I" is borne on the wind:

There the bee of the heart is deeply immersed,

And desires no other joy.

XIII. II.37. *Angadhiyâ devâ*

Aᅅgaᅇhiyâ devâ kaun krai terî sevâ
Gaᅇhe dev kâ sab koî pūje nit hî lâvai sevâ
Pūran braham akhandit svāmî tâko na jânai bhevâ
Das autâr niranjar kahiye so apnâ nâ koî
Ye to apnî karnî bhoge kartâ aur-hi koî
Jog jatî tapî sanyâsî âp âp meñ laᅇiyâñ
Kahaiñ Kabîr: 'Suno bhâî sâdho râg lakhai so tariyâñ'

O Lord Increate, who will serve Thee?
Every votary offers his worship to the God of his own creation:
Each day he receives service,
None seek Him, the Perfect: Brahman, the Indivisible Lord.
They believe in ten Avatars; but no Avatar can be the Infinite Spirit,
For he suffers the results of his deeds:
The Supreme One must be other than this.
The Yogi, the Sanyasi, the Ascetics, are disputing one with another:
Kabîr says, "O brother! he who has seen that radiance of love, he is
saved."

XIV. II.56. *Dariyâ kî lahar dariyâo hai jî*

Dariyāv kī lahar dariyāv hai jī
Dariyā aur lahar meñ bhinn koyam
Uṭhai to nīr hai baiṭhe to nīr hai
Kaho jī dūsrā kis tarah hoyam
Usī kā pher ke nām lahar dharā
Lahar ke kahe kyā nīr khoyam
Jakt hī pher sab jakt par braham meñ
Gyān kar dekh māl goyam

The river and its waves are one surf:
Where is the difference between the river and its waves?
When the wave rises, it is the water;
And when it falls, it is the same water again.
Tell me, Sir, where is the distinction?
Because it has been named as wave,
Shall it no longer be considered as water?
Within the Supreme Brahman, the worlds are being told like beads:
Look upon that rosary with the eyes of wisdom.

XV. II.57. *Jānh khelat vasant riturāj*

Jahāñ khelat basant ritu-rāj, Jahāñ anhad bājā bajai bāj
Chhuñ disi joti kī bahai dhār, Birlā jan ko.ī utrai pār
Koṭi kirshn jah.ñ jo.de hāth, Koṭi vishnu jah.ñ nāveñ māth
Koṭin barahmā pa.dhai purān, Koṭi mahesh gharai jah.ñ dhyān
Koṭi sarasvatī jah.ñ gharai rāg, Koṭi indr jah.ñ gagan lāg
Sur-gandharv muni-ganain nā jāyeñ, Jah.ñ sāhab pargaṭe āp āy
Chaubā chandan aur abīr, Puhar-bās ras raho gañbhīr

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

XVI. II.59. *Jānh, cet acet khambh dôû*

Jah.ñ chet-achet khambh da.ũ man rachyā hai hindor
Tañh jhūlaiñ jīv jahāñ jahñ kahtuñ nahīñ chir ṭhaur
Aur chand sūr do.au jhūlai nahīñ pāvai ant
Chaurāsī lachchhahū jiv jhūlai jhūlai ravi sasi dhāy
Koṭin kalp jug bītiyā āne na kabhuñ hāye
Chaturāñ jhūlai chaturā.iyāñ aur jhūle rājā save
Aur chand sūr da.ũ jhūlai nahīñ pāvaiñ bhev
Dharnī akāсахū da.ũ jhūlai jhūlai pavanhu nīr
Dhari deh hari āpahu jhūlaiñ jo lakhahiñ dās 'Kabīr'

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

XVII. II.61. *Grah chandra tapan jot varat hai*

Grah chandra tapan jot barat hai, surat rāg nirat tār bājai
Naubatiyā ghurat hai rain din sunn meñ, kahaiñ Kabīr ‘piu gagan gājai’
Chhan aur palak kī ārtī kaun sī, rain-din ārtī visv gāvai
Ghurat nissān tañh gaib kī jhālar gaib kī ghañt kā nād āvai
Kahaiñ Kabīr: ‘Tañh rain din ārtī jagat ke takhat par jagat sāiñ’
Karm aur bharm sansār sab karat haiñ pīv kī parakh koī premī jānai
Surat aur nirat dhār man meñ pakaḍ kar gañg aur jaman ke ghāt ānai
Pāñch ko nāth kari sāth soñh liyā adhar dariyāv kā sukh mānaiñ
Kahaiñ Kabīr: ‘Soī sant nirbhay dharā janm aur marn kā maram bhānai’
Nīr nirmal tahāñ rain-din jharat hai janam aur marn tab ant pāi
Dekh vojūd meñ ajab bisrām hai hoai maujūd to sahī pāvai
Surat kī ḍor sukh-sidh kā jhūlnā ghor kī sor tañh nād gāvai
Nīr bin kañval dekh ati phuliyā kahai Kabīr ‘man bhañvar chhavai
Chakr ke bīch meñ kañval ati phuliyā tāsū kā sukh koī sant jānai
Shabd kī ghor chhuñ or tañh hote hai asīm samundar kī sukh mānai
Kahaiñ Kabīr: ‘Yo ḍūb sūkh sidh meñ janm aur maran kā bharm bhānai’
Pāñch kī pyās tañh dekh pūrī bha.ī tīn kī tāp tañh lagai nahīñ
Kahaiñ Kabīr: ‘Yah āgam kā khel gaib kā chāñd nā dekh māñhīñ’
Janam-maran jahāñ tārī parat hai hot ānand tañh gagan gājai
Uthat jhanakār tañh nād anhad ghurai tiralok mahal ke prem bājai
Chand tapan koti dīp barat hai tūr bājai tahāñ sant jhūlai
Pyā jhanakār tañh nūr barsat rahe ras pīvai tañh bhakt jhūlai
Janam-maran beach dekh antar nahī dachchh aur bām yūñ ek āhī
Kahaiñ Kabīr: ‘Yā sain gūñgā ta.ī ved katted kī gamm nāhīñ’

Adhar āsan kiyā āgam pyāla piyā jog kī mūl jag juguti pāi
 Panth bin jāi chal sahar be-gam pure dayā jagdev kī sahaj āi
 Dhyān dhar dekhiyā nain bin pokhiyā āgam agādh sab kahat gāi
 Sahar begampurā jammo ko nā lahai, hoai be-gamm jo gamm pāvai
 Gunā kī gamm nā ajab bisrām hai, sain jo lakhai soī sain gāvai
 Mukkh bānī tiko svād kaise kahai svād pāvai soī sukkh mānai
 Kahaiñ Kabīr: ‘Yā sain gūñgā ta.ī hoai gūñgā joī sain jānai
 Chhakyāñ audhōt mastān mātā rahai gyān vairāg sudhi liyā pūrā
 Svāñs-usvāñs kā prem pyāla piyā gagan garjai tahā bajai tūrā
 Bin kar tāñtiyā nād tīgā rahai jatan jaranā liyā sadā khelai
 Kahaiñ Kabīr: ‘Parān-parān sindh meñ milāvai
 Param sukh dhām tañh parān melai
 Āthahū pahar matvālī lāgī rahai āthahū pahar kī chhāk pīvai
 Āthahū pahar mastān mātā rahai braham ke deh maiñ bhakt jīvai
 Sāñch hī kahat aur sāñch hī gahat hai kāñch kūñ tyāg kar sāñch lāgā
 Kahaiñ Kabīr: ‘Yūñ bhakt nirbhar huā janm aur marn kā bharm
 bhāgā’
 Gagan garjai tahāñ sadā pāvas jharai hot jhankār nit bajat tūrā
 Divas aur rain tañh nek nahīñ pā-iyē prem parkās ke sindh māhī
 Sadā ānand dukh-dard vyāpe nahīñ pūrnānand bharpūr dekhā
 Dharm aur bhrāñti tañh nek nahīñ pāiye kahaiñ Kabīr: ‘Ras ek pekhā’
 Khel brahmāñd kā pind meñ dekhiyā jagat kī bharamnā dūr bhāgī
 Bāhrā-bhītarā ek ākāsvat ghariyā meñ adhar bharpūr lāgī
 Dekh dīdār mastān maiñ hoai rahyā sakal bharpūr hai nūrā terā
 Gyān kā thāl aur prem dīpak ahai adhar āsan kiyā āgam ḍerā
 Kahaiñ Kabīr: ‘Tañh bharm bhāsai nahīñ janm aur maran kā mita pherā’

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The light of the sun, the moon and the stars shines bright:
The melody of love swells forth,
And the rhythm of love's detachment beats the time.
Day and night, the chorus of music fills the heavens;
And Kabīr says "My Beloved One gleams like the lightning flash in the sky."

Do you know how the moments perform their adoration?
Waving its row of lamps, the universe sings in worship day and night,
There are the hidden banner and the secret canopy:
There the sound of the unseen bells is heard.

Kabīr says: "There adoration never ceases;
There the Lord of the Universe sitteth on His throne."
The whole world does its works and commits its errors:
But few are the lovers who know the Beloved.

The devout seeker is he who mingles in his heart
The double currents of love and detachment,
Like the mingling of the streams of Ganges and Jumna;
In his heart the sacred water flows day and night;
And thus the round of births and deaths is brought to an end.

Behold what wonderful rest is in the Supreme Spirit!
And he enjoys it, who makes himself meet for it.
Held by the cords of love, the swing of the Ocean of Joy sways to and fro;
And a mighty sound breaks forth in song.
See what a lotus blooms there without water!
And Kabīr says: "My heart's bee drinks its nectar."

What a wonderful lotus it is, that blooms at the heart
Of the spinning wheel of the universe!
Only a few pure souls know of its true delight; Music is all around it,
And there the heart partakes of the joy of the Infinite Sea.
Kabīr says: "Dive thou into that Ocean of sweetness:
Thus let all errors of life and of death flee away."

Behold how the thirst of the five senses is quenched there!
And the three forms of misery are no more!
Kabīr says: "It is the sport of the Unattainable One: look within,
And behold how the moon-beams of that Hidden One shine in you."
There falls the rhythmic beat of life and death:
Rapture wells forth, and all space is radiant with light.
There the Unstruck Music is sounded;
It is the music of the love of the three worlds.

There millions of lamps of sun and of moon are burning;
There the drum beats, and the lover swings in play.
There love-songs resound, and light rains in showers;
And the worshipper is entranced in the taste of the heavenly nectar.
Look upon life and death; there is no separation between them,
The right hand and the left hand are one and the same.
Kabīr says: "There the wise man is speechless;
For this truth may never be found in Vedas or in books."

I have had my Seat on the Self-poised One,
I have drunk of the Cup of the Ineffable,
I have found the Key of the Mystery,
I have reached the Root of Union.

Travelling by no track, I have come to the Sorrow-less Land:
Very easily has the mercy of the great Lord come upon me.

They have sung of Him as infinite and unattainable:
But I in my meditations have seen Him without sight.
That is indeed the sorrow-less land,
And none know the path that leads there:
Only he who is on that path has surely transcended all sorrow.

Wonderful is that land of rest, to which no merit can win;
It is the wise who has seen it, it is the wise who has sung of it.
This is the Ultimate Word: but can any express its marvellous savour?
He who has savoured it once, he knows what joy it can give.
Kabīr says: "Knowing it, the ignorant man becomes wise,
And the wise man becomes speechless and silent,

The worshipper is utterly inebriated,
His wisdom and his detachment are made perfect;
He drinks from the cup of the in-breathings and the out-breathings of love.
There the whole sky is filled with sound,
And there that music is made without fingers and without strings;
There the game of pleasure and pain does not cease.
Kabīr says: "If you merge your life in the Ocean of Life,
You will find your life in the Supreme Land of Bliss."

What a frenzy of ecstasy there is in every hour!
And the worshipper is pressing out and drinking the essence of the hours:
He lives in the life of Brahman.
I speak truth, for I have accepted truth in life;
I am now attached to truth, I have swept all tinsel away.

Kabīr says: "Thus is the worshipper set free from fear;
Thus have all errors of life and of death left him."

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

Kabīr says: "There have I witnessed the sport of One Bliss!"

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

XVIII. II.77. *Maddh âkas' âp jahân baithe*

Maddh akās āp jahñ baiṭhe jot shabd ujjārā ho
Set sarūp rāg jahñ phūlai sāñī karat bihārā ho
Koṭin chand-sūr chhip jaihaiñ ek rom ujjārā ho
Vahī pār ek nagar bastu hai barsat amrit dhārā ho
Kahaiñ Kabīr: 'Sunō dharmdāsā lakho purush darbārā ho'

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

XIX. II.20. *Paramâtam guru nikaṭ virâjain*

Paramâtam gurū nikaṭ birājaiñ
Jāg-jāg man mere
Dhāy ke pītam charnan lāgaiñ
Sāñī khaḍā sir tere
Jugnū jugn toñhi sovat bītā
Ajhuñ nā jāg sabere

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

XX. II.22. *Man tu pār utar kâṅh jaiho*

Man tū pār utar kahañ jaiho
Āge panthī panth na koī kūch maqām na paiho
Nahīñ taññ nīr nāv nahīñ khevaṭ nā gun khaiñchanhārā
Dharnī gagan kalp kachhu nāhī nā kachhu vār nā pārā
Nahīñ tan nahīñ man nahī apanpau sunn meñ sudh na paihau
Balīvān hoai paiṭhau ghaṭ meñ vāhīñ ṭhauraiñ hoihai
Bār hī bār bichār dekh man ant kahūñ mat jaihau
Kahaiñ Kabīr: 'sab chhāḍi kalpanā jyoñ-ke-tyoñ ṭhahrai hau

To what shore would you cross, O my heart?
There is no traveller before you, there is no road:
Where is the movement, where is the rest, on that shore?
There is no water; no boat, no boatman, is there;
There is not so much as a rope to tow the boat, nor a man to draw it.
No earth, no sky, no time, no thing, is there: no shore, no ford!
There, there is neither body nor mind:
And where is the place that shall still the thirst of the soul?
You shall find naught in that emptiness.
Be strong, and enter into your own body:
For there your foothold is firm.
Consider it well, O my heart! go not elsewhere,
Kabīr says: "Put all imaginations away,
And stand fast in that which you are."

XXI. II.33. *Ghar ghar dīpak barai*

Ghar ghar dīpak barai lakhai nahīñ añdh hai
Lakhat lakhat lakhi parai kaṭai jam ke phand hai
Kahan-sunan kuchhu nāhiñ kachhu karan hai
Jīte-jī mari rahai bahuri nahīñ maran hai
Jogī paḍe viyog kahaiñ ghar dūr hai
Pās hi basat hajūr tū chḍhat khajūr hai
Bāmhan dichchhā detā ghar ghar ghāli hai
Mūr sajīvan pās tū pāhan pāli hai
Aisan sāhab Kabīr 'salonā āp hai
Nahīñ jog nahīñ jāp punn nahīñ pāp hai

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Lamps burn in every house, O blind one! and you cannot see them.
One day your eyes shall suddenly be opened, and you shall see:
And the fetters of death will fall from you.
There is nothing to say or to hear, there is nothing to do:
It is he who is living, yet dead, who shall never die again.
Because he lives in solitude,
Therefore the Yogi says that his home is far away.
Your Lord is near: yet you are climbing the palm-tree to seek Him.
The Brâhman priest goes from house to house
And initiates people into faith:
Alas! the true fountain of life is beside you,
And you have set up a stone to worship.
Kabīr says: "I may never express how sweet my Lord is.
Yoga and the telling of beads, virtue and vice –
These are naught to Him."

XXII. II.38. *Sādho, so satgur mohi bhāwai*

Sādho so satguru mohi bhāvai
Satt prem kā bhar-bhar pyāla āp pivai mohiñ pyāvai
Paradā dūr karai āñkhin kā braham daras dikhlāvai
Jis daras meñ sab lok darsai anhad sabd sunāvai
Ekhi sab sukh-dukhlāvai sabd meñ surat samāvai
Kahaiñ Kabīr: 'Tāko bhay nahīñ nirbhay pad parsāvai'

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

XXIII. II.40. *Tinwir sãñjh kã gahirã âvai*

Timir sãñjh kã gahirã âvai chhavai prem man-tan meñ
Pachchhim dis ki khiḍkī kholo ḍūbahū prem-gagan meñ
Chet kañval-dal ras piyo re lahar lehu yã tan meñ
Sañgh-ghaṭ sahnãī bãjai sobhã siñgh mahal meñ
Kahaiñ Kabīr: 'Sunõ bhãī sãdho amar sãhab lakh ghaṭ meñ'

The shadows of evening fall thick and deep,
And the darkness of love envelops the body and the mind.
Open the window to the west, and be lost in the sky of love;
Drink the sweet honey that steeps the petals of the lotus of the heart.
Receive the waves in your body:
What splendour is in the region of the sea!
Hark! The sounds of conches and bells are rising.
Kabīr says: "O brother, behold! the Lord is in this vessel of my body."

XXIV. II.48. *Jis se rahani apār jagat meñ*

Jis se rahni apār jagat meñ so pirītam mujhe pyārā ho
Jaise pur.ini rahi jal bhītar jal hi meñ karat pasārā ho
Vā ke pānī patr na lāgai dharki chalai jas pārā ho
Jaise satī chaḍhai agni par prem-bachan nā tārā ho
Aap jarai auranī ko jārai rakhai prem marjādā ho
Bhau sāgar ik nadī āgam hai ahad agāh dhārā ho
Kahaiñ Kabīr: 'Suno bhāī sādho birle utare pārā ho '

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More than all else do I cherish at heart that love
Which makes me to live a limitless life in this world.
It is like the lotus, which lives in the water and blooms in the water:
Yet the water cannot touch its petals, they open beyond its reach.
It is like a wife, who enters the fire at the bidding of love.
She burns and lets others grieve, yet never dishonours love.
This ocean of the world is hard to cross: Its waters are very deep.
Kabīr says: "Listen to me, O Sadhu!
Few there are who have reached its end."

XXV. II.45. *Hari ne apnâ âp chipâyâ*

Hari ne apnâ âp chhipâyâ
Hari ne naphīj kar dikhrâyâ
Hari ne mujhe kathin vidh gherī
Hari ne duvidhā kātī merī
Hari ne sukh-dukh batlāye
Hari ne sab dund mitāye
Aise hari pai tan-man bārūñ
Parān hi tajūñ hari nahīñ bisārūñ

My Lord hides Himself, and my Lord wonderfully reveals Himself:
My Lord has encompassed me with hardness,
And my Lord has cast down my limitations.
My Lord brings to me words of sorrow and words of joy,
And He Himself heals their strife.
I will offer my body and mind to my Lord:
I will give up my life, but never can I forget my Lord!

XXVI. II.75. *Ômkâr siwae kôî sirjai*

Omkâr sabai koî sirjai rāg-sovarūpī aṅg
Nirākār nirgun avināsī kar vāhī ko saṅg
Nām niranjan nainan maddhe nānā rūp dharant
Nirañkār nirgun abināsī apār avāh aṅg
Mahā-sukkh magan koî nāchai upjai aṅg-taraṅg
Man aur tan thir na rahtū mahā sukkh ke saṅg
Sab chetan sab anand sab haiñ dukh gahant
Kahāñ ādi kañh ant āp sukkh bich parant

All things are created by the Om;

The love-form is His body.

He is without form, without quality, without decay:

Seek thou union with Him!

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

He is pure and indestructible,

His form is infinite and fathomless,

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

The body and the mind cannot contain themselves,

When they are touched by His great joy.

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

He has no beginning and no end;

He holds all within His bliss.

XXVII. II.81. *Satgur sôî dayâ kar dînhâ*

Sad-gurū soī dayā kari dinhā
Tāte an chinhār maiñ chīnhā
Bin pag chalnā bin par uḍnā binā chūñchā kā chugnā
Binā nain kā dekhan-pekhan binā sarvan kā sunñā
Chand na sūr divas nahīñ rajnā tahāñ surat lau lāī
Binā ann amrit-ras-bhojan bin jal trishā bujhāī
Jahāñ haras tahñ pūran sukh hai yah sukh kāsau kahnā
Kahaiñ Kabīr: 'bal bal satgurū kī dhann sishya kā lahnā

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

XXVIII. II.85. *Nirgun âge sargun nâcai*

Nirgun âge sargun nâchai, Bâjai sohañg tūrā
Chelā ke pāñv gurū jī lāgaiñ , Yahī achambhā purā

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

XXIX. II.87. *Kabīr kab se bhaye vairâgī*

Prashn: 'Kabīr, kab se bhaye bairāgī
Tumharī sūrati kahāñ ko lāgī'

Uttar: Ba.ī chitrā kā melā nahīñ nahīñ gurū nahīñ chelā
Sakal pasārā jin din nahīñ jihi din purūsh akelā
Gorakh ham tab.ke ahai bairāgī
Ham.rī surti braham so lāgī
Braham nahīñ jab topī dīnhi bisnu nahīñ jab tīkā
Śhiv-shaktī kai janmau nahīñ tabai jog ham sīkhā
Kāsī meñ ham pargat bhaye hai rāmā-nand chetāy
Pyās anhad kī sāth ham lāye milan karne ko āye
Sahajai sahajai melā hoigā jāgī bhakti utañgā
Kahaiñ Kabīr: 'Suno ho Gorakh chalo gīt ke sañg

Gorakh-nāth asks Kabīr:

"Tell me, O Kabīr, when did your vocation begin?
Where did your love have its rise?"

Kabīr answers: "When He whose forms are manifold
had not begun His play:

When there was no Guru, and no disciple:

When the world was not spread out:

When the Supreme One was alone,

Then I became an ascetic;

Then, O Gorakh, my love was drawn to Brahman.

Brahman did not hold the crown on his head;

Lord Vishnu was not anointed as king;

The power of Shiva was still unborn;

When I was instructed in Yoga.

I became suddenly revealed in Benares,

And Rāmānanda illumined me;

I brought with me the thirst for the Infinite,

And I have come for the meeting with Him.

In simplicity will I unite with the Simple One;

My love will surge up.

O Gorakh, march thou with His music!"

XXX. II.95. *Yâ tarvar meṅ ek pakherû*

Yâ tarivar meñ ek pakherû, bhog saras bah dolai re
Bākī sañgh lakhai nahīñ koī kaun bhāv soñ bolai re
Duramm-ḍār tahñ ati ghan chhāyā panchhī baserā le.ī re
Āvai sāñjh uḍi jāi baserā maram na kāhū de.ī re
So panchhī mohiñ koī na batāvai jo bole ghaṭ māñhī re
Abran-baran rūp nahīñ rekhā baiṭh prem ke chāñhī re
Āgam apār nirantar bāsā āvat jāt na dīsā re
Kahaiñ Kabīr: 'Suno bhāi sādho yah kuchh āgam kahānī re
Yâ panchhī ke kaun ṭhaur hai būjho paṇḍit gyānī re 766

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

XXXI. II.100. *Nis`din sâlai ghâw*

Nis-din salai ghāv nīñd āvai nahīñ
Piyā milan ko ās naihar bhāvai nahīñ
Khul ga.e gagan-kivāḍ mandir ujjīyār bhayo
Bhayo hai purush so bheṭ tan-man bār dayo

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

XXXII. II.103. *Nâco re mero man, matta hoy*

Nâcho re mere man matt hoi

Prem kâ rog bajây rain-din shabd sunai sab koi

Râhû-ketû nav-grah nâchai janm-janm ânand hoi

Girî samundar dhartî nâchai lok nâchai hans roî

Chhâp-tilak lagâi bân̄s chaḍḥ ho rahâ jag se nyârâ

Sahas kalâ kar man merau nâchai rîjhe sirjanhârâ

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Dance, my heart! dance to-day with joy.

The strains of love fill the days and the nights with music,

And the world is listening to its melodies:

Mad with joy, life and death dance to the rhythm of this music.

The hills and the sea and the earth dance.

The world of man dances in laughter and tears.

Why put on the robe of the monk,

And live aloof from the world in lonely pride?

Behold! my heart dances in the delight of a hundred arts;

And the Creator is well pleased.

XXXIII. II.105. *Man mast huâ tab kyõñ bole*

Man mast huâ tab kyõñ bole

Hîrâ pâyo gāñṭh gaṭiyāyo bār-bār bā ko kyõñ khole

Halkî thî tab chaḍhî tarājû pûrî bha.î tab kyõñ taole

Surat-kalārî bha.î matvārî madvâ pî ga.î bin tole

Hañsâ pâye mānsarover tāl talaiyya kyõñ ḍole

Terâ sâhab hai ghar māñ hîñ bāhar nainâ kyõñ khole

Kahaiñ Kabîr: 'Suno bhâî sādho sâhab mile ga.e til ole

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Where is the need of words, when love has made drunken the heart?

I have wrapped the diamond in my cloak; why open it again and again?

When its load was light, the pan of the balance went up:

Now it is full, where is the need for weighing?

The swan has taken its flight to the lake beyond the mountains;

Why should it search for the pools and ditches any more?

Your Lord dwells within you: why need your outward eyes be opened?

Kabîr says: "Listen, my brother! my Lord, who ravishes my eyes,

Has united Himself with me.'

XXXIV. II.110. *Mohi tohi lâgî kaise chute*

Moñhî toñhi lâgî kaise chhuṭe
Jaise kamal-patr jal bāsā
Aise tum sāhab ham dāsā
Jaise chakor takat nis chandā
Aise tum sāhab ham bandā
Mohī-tohī ādi ant ban āī
Ab kaise lagan durāī
Kahaiñ Kabīr: 'hamrā man lâgā
Jaise saritā sidh samāī'

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

XXXV. II.113. *Vâlam, âwo hamâre geh re*

Bâlam âvo hamâre geh re, tum bin dukhiyâ deh re
Sab koî kahai tumhârî nârî mokoñ lâgat lâj re
Dil se nahîñ dil lagâyâ tab lag kaisâ saneh re
Ann na bhâvai nîñd na âvai grih-ban dharai na dhîr re
Kâmin ko hai bâlam pyârâ jayo pyâse ko nîr re
Hai koî aisâ par-upgârî piv soñ kahai sunây re
Ab to behâl Kabîr ‘Bhayo hai bin dekhe jiv jâi re’

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

XXXVI. II.126. *Jāg piyârî, ab kân̄ sowai*

Jāg piyārî ab kâ sovai, rain ga.ī din kâhe ko khovai
Jin jāgā tin mānik pāyā, taiñ baurî sab soai gañvāyā
Piya tere chatur tū mūrakh nārî, kabhuñ na piyā kî sej sañvārî
Taiñ baurî baurāpan kinhî, bhar-joban piya apan na chīnhî
Jāg dekh piya sej na tere, tohi chhāñḍ u.ṭhi ga.e sabere
Kahaiñ Kabîr: 'soī dhun jāgai, shabd-bān ur antar lāgai

O Friend, awake, and sleep no more!
The night is over and gone, would you lose your day also?
Others, who have wakened, have received jewels;
O foolish woman! you have lost all whilst you slept.
Your lover is wise, and you are foolish, O woman!
You never prepared the bed of your husband:
O mad one! you passed your time in silly play.
Your youth was passed in vain, for you did not know your Lord;
Wake, wake! See! your bed is empty: He left you in the night.
Kabîr says: "Only she wakes,
Whose heart is pierced with the arrow of His music."

XXXVII. 1.36. *Sûr parkâs', tanh rain kahân pāiye*

Sûr-parkâs tah.ñ rain kahañ pā-iyē, rain-parkâs nahī sūr bhāsai
Gñyān-parkâs gñyān kahañ pā-iyē, hoai agñyān tahñ gñyān nāsia
Kām balvān tahñ prem kahañ pā-iyē, prem jahāñ hoai tahñ kām nāhī
Kahaiñ Kabīr: 'yah satt vichār hai, samajh vichār kar dekh māñhī

Pakaḍ samser sañgrām meñ paisiye, deh-parajant kar juddh bhāi
Kāṭ sir bairiyāñ dāb jañh-kā-tahāñ, āy darbār meñ sīs navāi

Sur sañgrām ko dekh bhāgai nahīñ, dekh bhāgai soī sūr nahīñ
Kām aur krodh mad-lobh se jūjhanā, machā ghamsān tan-khet māñhīñ

Sīl aur sāñch santosh sāhī bhay, nām samser tahāñ khūb bāje
Kahai Kabīr 'Koī jujhīhai sūrmā, kāyrāñ bhīḍ tahñ turt bhāje'

Sādh ko khel to bikaṭ beñḍā matī, satī aur sūr kī chāl āge
Sūr ghamsān hai palak do-chār kā, satī ghamāsān pal ek lāgai
Sādh sañgrām hai rain-din jūjhanā, deh parajant kā kām bhāi

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

Lay hold on your sword, and join in the fight.
Fight, O my brother, as long as life lasts.
Strike off your enemy's head, and there make an end of him quickly:
Then come, and bow your head at your King's Durbar.

He who is brave, never forsakes the battle:
he who flies from it is no true fighter.
In the field of this body a great war goes forward,
Against passion, anger, pride, and greed:
It is in the kingdom of truth, contentment and purity,
That this battle is raging;

And the sword that rings forth most loudly is the Sword of His Name.
Kabīr says: "When a brave knight takes the field,
A host of cowards is put to flight'.

It is a hard fight and a weary one, this fight of the truth-seeker:
For the vow of the truth-seeker is more hard than that of the warrior,
Or of the widowed wife who would follow her husband.
For the warrior fights for a few hours,
And the widow's struggle with death is soon ended:
But the truth-seeker's battle goes on day and night,
As long as life lasts it never ceases.

XXXVIII. 1.50. *Bhram kâ tâlâ lagâ mahal re*

Bhram kâ tâlâ lagâ mahal re prem kī kunjī lagāv
Kapaṭ-kivaḍiyā khol ke re yahi bidhi piya ko jagāv
Kahaiñ Kabīr: 'Suno bhāī sādho phir na lagai as dāv'

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

XXXIX. 1.59. *Sādho, yah tan thāth tanvure ka*

Sādho yah tan thāth tañbūre kâ
Aiñchat tār marorate khūñṭī nikāsat rāg hajūre kâ
ṭūṭe tār bikhār ga.ī khūñṭī ho gayā dhūram-dhūre kâ
Kahai Kabīr 'Suno bhāī sādho āgam panth koī sūre kâ

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

XL. I.65. *Avadhû bhûle ko ghar lâwe*

Avadû bhûle ko ghar lâvai, so jan ham ko bhāvai
Ghar meñ jog bhog ghar hī meñ ghar taj ban nahīñ jāvai
Ghar meñ jukt-mukt ghar hī meñ jo gurū alakh lakhāvai
Sahaj sunn meñ rahai samānā sahaj samādhi lagāvai
Unmani rahi barahmā ko chīnahai param tatv ko dhyāvai
Surat-nirat soñ melā kar ke anhad nād bajāvai
Ghar meñ basat bastu bhī ghar hai ghar hī bastu bilavai
Kahaiñ Kabīr: 'Suno ho sādhu jyoñ-kā-tyoñ ṭhahrāvai

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

XLI. I.76. *Santo, sahaj samādh bhalī*

Santo sahaj samādhī bhalī

Sāñ te milan bhayo jā din te surat na ant chalī

Āñkh na mūñdūñ kān na rūdhūñ kāyā kasṭ na dhārūñ

Khule nain maiñ hañs-hañs dekhūñ sundar rūp nihārūñ

Kahūñ so nām sunūñ so sumirān jo kachhu karūñ so pūjā

Girah uddhyān ek sam dekhūñ bhāv miṭā.ūñ dūjā

Jañh-jañh jā.ūñ soī pakiramā jo kachhu karūñ so sevā

Jab so.ūñ tab karūñ danḍavat pūjūñ aur na devā

Shabd nirantar manuā rātā malin bachan kā tyāgī

Uṭhat-baiṭhat kabhuñ na bisrai aisī tārī lāgī

Kahaiñ Kabīr: ‘yah unmuni rahnī so pargaṭ kar gāī

Sukh-dukh ke ik pare param sukh tehi meñ rahā samāī

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O Sadhu! The simple union is the best.

Since the day when I met with my Lord,

There has been no end to the sport of our love.

I shut not my eyes, I close not my ears, I do not mortify my body;

I see with eyes open and smile, and behold His beauty everywhere:

I utter His Name, and whatever I see, it reminds me of Him;

Whatever I do, it becomes His worship.

The rising and the setting are one to me;

All contradictions are solved.

Wherever I go, I move round Him,

All I achieve is His service:

When I lie down, I lie prostrate at His feet.

He is the only adorable one to me: I have none other.
My tongue has left off impure words, it sings His Glory day and night:
Whether I rise or sit down, I can never forget Him;
For the rhythm of His Music beats in my ears.
Kabīr says: "My heart is frenzied,
And I disclose in my soul what is hidden.
I am immersed in that one great bliss
Which transcends all pleasure and pain."

XLII. 1.79. *Tīrath meñ to sab pānī hai*

Tīrath meñ to sab pānī hai hove nahī kachhū anhāy dekhā
Partimā sakal to jaḍ hai bhāī bole nahī bolāy dekhā
Purān-kurān sabai bāt hai yā ghaṭ kā paradā khol dekhā
Anubhau kī bāt Kabīr 'kahai yah sab hai jhūṭhī poll hai dekhā

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

XLIII. 1.82. *Pânî vic mîn piyâsî*

Pânî vich mîn piyâsî
Mohiñ sun-sun āvai hāñsî
Ghar meñ vastū najar nahīñ āvat
Ban-ban phirat udāsî
Ātam gñyān jag jhūñṭhā
Kyā mathurā kyā kāsî

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

XLIV. 1.93. *Gagan math gaib nisân gade*

Gagan maṭh gaib nisân gaḍe
Chandr-hār chañdavā jahñ ṭāñge muktā mānik maḍhe
Mahimā tāsū dekh man thirakar ravi-sasi-jot jare
Kahaiñ Kabīr: 'piye joī jan mātā phirat mare'

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

XLV. 1.97. *Sādho, ko hai kâñh se âyo*

Sādho ko hai kañh se âyo

Tohi ke man dhauñ kahāñ basat hai ko dhauñ nāch nachāyo

Pāvak sarv aṅg kāṭhahī meñ dhauñ ḍahak jagāyo

Ho gayā khāk tej puni vā ko kahu dhauñ kahāñ smāyo

Ahai apār pār kachhu nāhī satgurū jinhai lakhāyo

Kahaiñ Kabīr: 'Johi sūjh-būjh jas ta.ī tas āj sunāyo' 771

Who are you, and whence do you come?

Where dwells that Supreme Spirit,

And how does He have His sport with all created things?

The fire is in the wood; but who awakens it suddenly?

Then it turns to ashes, and where goes the force of the fire?

The True Guru teaches that He has neither limit nor infinitude.

Kabīr says: "Brahman suits His language

to the understanding of His hearer."

XLVI. 1.98. *Sādho, sahajai kâyâ s'odho*

Sādho sahjai kâyā sodho

Jaise baṭ kā bījā tāhi meñ patr-phūl-phal chhāyā

Kāyā-maddhe bīj birāje bijā-maddhe kâyā

Agni pavan pānī pirathī nabhtā bin milai nahīñ

Kājī paṇḍit kāro niranay ko na āpā māñhīñ

Jal-bhar kumbh jalai bich dhariyā bāhar-bhītar soī

Un ko nām kahan ko nāhī dūjā dhokā hoī

Kahaiñ Kabīr: 'Suno bhāī sādho satya-shabd nij sārā

Āpā maddhe āpai bolai āpai sirjanhārā'

O Sadhu! purify your body in the simple way.

As the seed is within the Banyan tree,

And within the seed are the flowers, the fruits, and the shade:

So the germ is within the body, and within that germ is the body again.

The Fire, the Air, the Water, the Earth, and the Ether;

You cannot have these outside of Him.

O, Kazi, O Pundit, consider it well: what is there that is not in the soul?

The water-filled pitcher is placed upon water,

It has water within and without.

It should not be given a name, lest it call forth the error of dualism.

Kabīr says: "Listen to the Word, the Truth, which is your essence.

He speaks the Word to Himself; and He Himself is the Creator."

XLVII. 1.102. *Tarvar ek mûl vin thâdâ*

Tarvar ek mûl bin ṭhâḍhâ bin phûle phal lāge
Sākh-patr kachhu nahīñ tāke sakal kamal-dal gājai
Chaḍh tarvar do panchhī bole ek gurū ek chelā
Chelā rahā so ras chun khāyā gurū nirantar khelā
Panchhī ke khoj āgam pargaṭ kahai Kabīr ‘baḍī bhārī
Sab hī mūrat beach amūrt mūrat kī balihārī’

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

XLVIII. I.107. *Calat mansâ acal kînhî*

Chalat man.sâ achal kînhî man huā rañgī
Tattv meñ nîḥ-tattva darśhā sañg meñ sañgī
Bañdhte nirbañdh kînhā toī sab tañgī
Kahaiñ Kabîr: 'Āgam gam kiyā prem rañg rañgī'

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

XLIX. I.105. *Jo dīsai, so to hai nāhī*

Jo dīsai so to nāhī hai so kahā na jāī
Bin dekhai paratīt na āvai kahai na ko patiyānā
Samjhā hoai to shabdai chīnagai achraj hoai ayānā
Koī dhyābai nikārā ko koī dhyāvai ākārā
Yā vidhī in donoñ te nyārā jānai jānanhārā
Vah rāg to lakhā na jāī mātrā lāgai na kārā
Kahaiñ Kabīr: 'So paḍhai na paralai surat nirat jin jānā'

That which you see is not:
And for that which is, you have no words.
Unless you see, you believe not:
What is told you you cannot accept.
He who is discerning knows by the word;
And the ignorant stands gaping.
Some contemplate the Formless, and others meditate on form:
But the wise man knows that Brahman is beyond both.
That beauty of His is not seen of the eye:
That metre of His is not heard of the ear.
Kabīr says: "He who has found both love and renunciation
Never descends to death."

L. .126. *Muralî bajat akhand sadâye*

Mur.lî bajat akhand sadây tahāñ prem jhankārā hai
Prem-haī tajī jab bhāī satt lok kī had punī āī
Uṭhat sugandh mahā achikāī jāko vār na pārā hai
Koṭi bhāg rāg ko rūpā bīn sat-dhun bajai anūpā

The flute of the Infinite is played without ceasing,
And its sound is love:
When love renounces all limits, it reaches truth.
How widely the fragrance spreads!
It has no end, nothing stands in its way.
The form of this melody is bright like a million suns:
Incomparably sounds the Vīna, the Vīna of the notes of truth.

LI.I.129. *Sakhiyo, ham hūñ bhâi vâlamâs'î*

Sakhiyo hamahūñ bha.ī balmāsī
Āyo joban birah satāyo ab maiñ gñyān galī aṭhilātī
Gñyān-galī meñ khabar mil gaye hame milī piyā kī pātī
Vā pātī meñ āgam sandesā ab ham marne ko na ḍarātī
Kahat Kabīr 'Suno bhāi pyāre barpāye abināsī'

Dear friend, I am eager to meet my Beloved!
My youth has flowered,
And the pain of separation from Him troubles my breast.
I am wandering yet in the alleys of knowledge without purpose,
But I have received His news in these alleys of knowledge.
I have a letter from my Beloved:
In this letter is an unutterable message,
And now my fear of death is done away.
Kabīr says: "O my loving friend!
I have got for my gift the Deathless One."

LII. I.130. *Sâîñ vin dard kareje hoy*

Sâîñ bin darad kareje hoy

Din nahîñ chain rât nahîñ nindiyā kāse kahuñ dukh roy

Ādhī ratiyāñ pichhle paharvā sâîñ binā taras taras rahī soy

Kahat Kabīr 'Suno bhāi pyāre sâîñ mile sukh hoy'

When I am parted from my Beloved, my heart is full of misery:

I have no comfort in the day, I have no sleep in the night.

To whom shall I tell my sorrow?

The night is dark; the hours slip by.

Because my Lord is absent, I start up and tremble with fear.

Kabīr says: "Listen, my friend! there is no other satisfaction,

Save in the encounter with the Beloved."

LIII. I.122. *Kaum muralî s'abd s'un ânand bhayo*

Kaun murlî shabd sun ânand bhayo

Jot jar bin bātī

Binā mūl ke kamal pargaṭ bhayo

Phulvā phūlay bhāñti bhāñtī

Jaise chakor chandarmā chitvai

Jaise chātrk savāñtī

Taise sant surat ke ho ke

Ho gaye janam sañghātī

What is that flute whose music thrills me with joy?

The flame burns without a lamp;

The lotus blossoms without a root;

Flowers bloom in clusters;

The moon-bird is devoted to the moon;

With all its heart the rain-bird longs for the shower of rain;

But upon whose love does the Lover concentrate His entire life?

LIV. I.112. *S'untā nahî dhun kî khabar*

Suntā nahīñ dhun kī k̄habar anhad kā bājā bājtā
Ras mañd mandir bājtā bāhar sune to kyā huā
Ik prem-ras chākhā nahīñ amalī huā to kyā huā
Kājī kitābe khojtā kartā nasīhat aurā ko
Marham nahīñ us hāl se kājī huā to kyā huā
Jogī digambar sevḍā kapḍā rañge rañg lāl se
Vāqif nahīñ us rañg se kapḍā rañg se kyā huā
Mandir jharokhā rāvaṭī gul chaman meñ rahte sadā
Kahte Kabīr 'Haiñ sahī har-dam meñ sāhab ram rahā' 773

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

LV. 1.73. *Bhakti kâ mârag jhînâ re*

Bhakti kâ mârag jhîna re

Nahîñ achâh nahîñ châhnâ charnan lau lînâ re

Sâdhan ke ras dhâr meñ rahe nis-din bhînâ re

Râg meñ surat aise base jaise jal mînâ re

Sāñī sevan meñ det sir kuchh bilam nā kīnā re

Kahaiñ Kabīr: 'Mat bhakti kâ pargaṭ kar dinā re'

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Subtle is the path of love!

Therein there is no asking and no not-asking,

There one loses one's self at His Feet,

There one is immersed in the joy of the seeking:

Plunged in the deeps of love as the fish in the water.

The lover is never slow in offering his head for his Lord's service.

Kabīr declares the secret of this love.

Bhāi koî satgurū sant kahāvai
Nainan alakh lakhāvai
Parān pūje kiriyā te nyārā sahj samā.ai sikhāy
Dvār na rūñdhe pavan na roke nahīñ bhau khanḍ tajāvai
Yah man jāi jahāñ lag jab hī parmātamā darsāvai
Karam karai nīh-karam rahai jo aisī jugat lakhāvai
Sadā vilās trās nahīñ tan meñ bhog meñ jog jagāvai
Dhartī pānī ākāsh pavan meñ adhar maḍayyā chhavai
Sunn sikhār ke sār silā par āsan achal jamāvai
Bhītar rahā so bāhar dekhe dūjā drisṭi na āvai 773

He is the real Sadhu,
Who can reveal the form of the Formless to the vision of these eyes:
Who teaches the simple way of attaining Him,
That is other than rites or ceremonies:
Who does not make you close the doors,
And hold the breath, and renounce the world:
Who makes you perceive the Supreme Spirit
Wherever the mind attaches itself:
Who teaches you to be still in the midst of all your activities.
Ever immersed in bliss, having no fear in his mind,
He keeps the spirit of union in the midst of all enjoyments.
The infinite dwelling of the Infinite Being is everywhere:
In earth, water, sky, and air: Firm as the thunderbolt,
The seat of the seeker is established above the void.
He who is within is without: I see Him and none else.

LVII. I.66. *Sādho, s'abd sādhnā kījai*

Sādho shabd sādhnā kījai

Jo hī shabdte pargaṭ bhaye sab soī shabd gahī lījai

Shabd gurū shabd sun sikh bhaye shabd so birlā būjhai

Soī shishy soī gurū mahātam jehi antar gati sūjhai

Shabdai ved-purān kahat hai shabd shabdai sab ṭhahrāvai

Shabdai sur muni sant kahat hai shabd bhed nahīñ pāvai

Shabdai sun sun bhes dharat hai shabdai kahai anurāgī

Shaṭ-darshan sab shabd kahat hai shabd kahe bairāgī

Shabdai kāyā jag utpātī shabdai keri pasārā

Kahaiñ Kabīr: 'Jahñ shabd hot hai bhavan bhed hai nyārā' 774

Receive that Word from which the Universe springeth!

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

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

O Sadhu! Practise that Word!

The Vedas and the Puranas proclaim it,

The world is established in it,

The Rishis and devotees speak of it:

But none knows the mystery of the Word.

The householder leaves his house when he hears it,

The ascetic comes back to love when he hears it,

The Six Philosophies expound it,

The Spirit of Renunciation points to that Word,

From that Word the world-form has sprung,

That Word reveals all.

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

LVIII. I.63. *Pīle pyâlâ, ho matwâlâ*

Pī le pyārā ho matvālā
Pyālā nām amīras kā re
Kahe Kabīr 'Suno sādho
Nakh sikh pūr rahā vish kā re'

Empty the Cup! O be drunken!
Drink the Divine Nectar of His Name!
Kabīr says: "Listen to me, dear Sadhu!
From the sole of the foot to the crown of the head
This mind is filled with poison."

LIX I.52. *Khasm na cînhai bâwari*

Khasam na chīnghe bāvri kā karat baḍāī
Bātan lagan na hoyāñge chhoḍau chaturāī
Sākhī shabd sandeh padhi mat bhulo bhāī
Sār-prem kachhu aur hai khojo so pāī

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

LX. I..56. *Sukh sindh kî sair kâ*

Sukh-sidh kî sair kâ svād tab pāi hai
Chāh kâ chaurā bhūl jāvai
Bīj ke māñhī jayo bīj vistār yoñ
Chāh ke māhi sab rog āvai

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

LXI. I.48. *Sukh sâgar meñ âîke*

Sukh sâgar meñ ây ke mat jā re pyāsā
Ajhuñ samajh nar bābre jam karat nirāsā
Nirmal nīr bhare tere āge pī le svāñso svāñsā
Marg-trashnā jal chhāñḍ bāvre kāro sudhāras āsā
Dhurv parhalād shuk-dev piyā aur piyā raidāsā
Premhi sant sadā matvālā ek prem kā āsā
Kahaiñ Kabīr: 'Suno bhāī sādho miṭ ga.ī bhay kī bāsā'

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

LXII. I.35. *Satī ko kaun s'ikhāwtā hai*

Satī ko kaun sikhāvatā hai
Sañg svāmī ke tan jāranā jī
Prem ko kaun sikhāvatā hai
Tyāg māñ hī bhog kā pāvanā jī

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

I.39. *Are man, dhīraj kâhe na dharai*

are man dhīraj kâhe na dharai
pasu-panchhī jīv kīṭ-patañgā sab kī sudh karai
Garbh.bās meñ khabar letu hai bāhar kyūñ bisrai
man tū hasan se sāheb ke bhaṭkat kâhe phirai
pirītam chhāñḍ aur ko dhārai kāraj ik na sarai

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

LXIII. I.117. *Sâñ se lagan kathin hai, bhâi*

Sâñ se lagan kaṭhin hai bhâi
Jaise papīhā pyāsā būñd kā piyā piyā raṭ lāi
Pyāse parān laḍaphai din-rāt aur nīr nā bhâi
Jaise mirgā shabd-sanehī shabd sunan ko jāi
Shabd sunai aur prān-dān de taniko nāhi ḍarāi
Jaise satī chaḍhī sat ūpar piyā kī rāh man bhâi
Pāchak dekh ḍare vah nāhī hañste baiṭe sadā māi
Chhoḍo tan apne kī āsā nirbhā ke gun gāi
Kahat Kabīr ‘Sunō bhâi sādho nāhiñ to janam nasāi’

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

LXIV. 1.22. *Jab main bhûlâ, re bhâi*

Jab main bhûlâ re bhâi
Mere satgurû jugat lakhâi
Kiriya-karam adhâr meñ châḍâ châḍâ tîrath kâ nahânâ
Sagarî duniyâ bha.î sayânî main hî ik baurânâ
Nâ main jânûñ sevâ-bandagî nâ main ghañṭ bajâi
Nâ main mûrat gharî singhâsan nâ main puhup chaḍhâi
Nâ hari rîjhai japtap kîn.he nâ kâyâ ke jâre
Nâ hari rîjhai dhotî chhâñḍe nâ pânchau ke mâre
Dayâ râkhi dharam ko pâlai jag so rahe udâsî
Apnâ sâ jib sabko jânai tâhi milai anivâsî
Sahai kûshabd bād.ko gayâgai chhâñḍai garv gumânâ
'Satt nâm tâhî ko milihai' kahaiñ Kabîr sujânâ

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O Brother! When I was forgetful, my true Guru showed me the Way.
Then I left off all rites and ceremonies, I bathed no more in the holy water:
Then I learned that it was I alone who was mad,
And the whole world beside me was sane;
And I had disturbed these wise people.
From that time forth I knew not how to roll in the dust in obeisance:
I do not ring the temple bell:
I do not set the idol on its throne:
I do not worship the image with flowers.

It is not the austerities that mortify the flesh
Which are pleasing to the Lord,
When you leave off your clothes and kill your senses,
You do not please the Lord:
The man who is kind and who practises righteousness,
Who remains passive amidst the affairs of the world,
Who considers all creatures on Earth as his own self,
He attains the Immortal Being, the True God is ever with him.
Kabīr says: "He attains the True Name whose words are pure,
And who is free from pride and conceit."

LXV. 1.20. *Man na rangāye*

Man nā rañgāye rañgāya jogī kapḍā
Āsan māri mañdir me baithe Brahm-chhāḍi pūjan lāge pyarā
Kanayā phaḍy jogī jaṭvā gaḍhaule dadhī badhāy jogī hoī gaule bakrā
Jañgal jāy jogī dhuniyā ramaule, kām jarāy jogī hoy gaile hijrā
Madhvā muñḍāy jogī kapḍā rañgaule, gītā gāñchke hoy gaile labrā
Kahahiñ Kabīr suno bhāi sādho, jam daravajavā bāñdhal jaibe makḍā

The Yogi dyes his garments,
Instead of dyeing his mind in the colours of love:
He sits within the temple of the Lord,
Forsaking Brahman to worship a stone.
He pierces holes in his ears, has a great beard and matted locks,
He looks like a goat:

He goes forth into the wilderness, killing all his desires,
And turns himself into an eunuch:
He shaves his head and dyes his garments;
He reads the Gîta and becomes a mighty talker.
Kabîr says: "You are going to the doors of death, bound hand and
foot!"

LXVI. 1.9. *Nâ jâne sâhab kaisâ hai*

Nâ jâne sâhab kaisâ hai,
Mullâ hokar jo debai, kya terâ sâhab bahrâ hai,
Kîḍî ke pag neur bāje, so bhî sâhab suntâ hai
Mālâ pherî tikal lagāyā, lañbā jaṭā baḍhātâ hai
Antar tere kuphar-kaṭārî, yo nahîñ sâhab miltâ hai

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

LXVIII. III.102. *Ham se rahâ na jây*

Ham-soñ rahâ na jâi murlī kai dhun sun ke
Binā basant phūl ik phūlai bhañvar sadā bolāy
Gagan garjai bijulī chamkai uṭhtī hiye hilau
Bigsat kāñval megh barsāne chitvat parbhu kī or
Tārī lāgī tahāñ man pahuñchā gaib dhujā phahrāy
Kahaiñ Kabīr: 'āj parān hamārā jīvat hī mar jāi 777

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

LXIX. III.2. *Jo khodâ masjid vasat hai*

Jo khodāy masjid basatū hai aur muluk kehi kerā
Tīrath-mūrat rām-nivāsī bāhar kare ko herā
Pūrāb disā harī kau bāsā pachchhim alah mukāmā
Dil meñ khoj dil hi meñ khojau ihaiañ karīmā-rāmā
Jete aurat-marad upānī so sab rūp tumhārā
Kabīr pog.ḍā alah-rām kā so gurū pīr hamārā

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

LXX. III.9. *S'īl santosh sadā samadrishti*

Sīl santosh sadā sam-dṛiṣṭhī rahni gahnī meñ pūrā
Tāke daras-parash bhay bhājai hoi klesh sab dūrā
Nisi-bāsar charachā chit-chandr ān kathā na sohabai
Karnī dharnī sañgīt gāvai prem rañg uḍāvai
Rāg-sarūp akhandit avichal nirbhar be-paravāī
Kahaiñ Kabīr: 'tāhi pag paraso ghaṭ ghaṭ sab sukhdāī

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

LXXI. III.13. *Sādh sangat pītam*

Sādh sañgat pītam uhām chal jāhaye,
Bhāv.bhakti-upadeśh-tahāñte pāḍaye
Sañgat hī jari jāv na charathā nāmki,
Dūlah dinā barāt kaho kis kām.kī
dūyiyā ko kar dūr pītam ko dhyāhaye,
Ān dev.kī sev na dhitt lagād.ye
Ān dev.kī sev bhalī nahīñ jīy.ko,
Kahaiñ Kabīr: chidhār na pāvaiñ pīv.ko

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

LXXII. III.26. *Tor hîrâ hirâilwâ kîcad men*

ṭor hîrâ hîrâil vâ kichade meñ,
Koī ḍhūñḍhe pūrad koī koī ḍhūñḍhe paśhthim
Koī ḍhūñḍhe pānī-pachare meñ
Dās Kabîr ye hîrâko parakheñ
Bañdh Lih.Lai Jîy.Râke Añdh.Reme

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The jewel is lost in the mud, and all are seeking for it;
Some look for it in the east, and some in the west;
Some in the water and some amongst stones.
But the servant Kabîr has appraised it at its true value,
And has wrapped it with care
In the corner of the mantle of his heart.

LXXIII. III.26. *Āyau din gaune kâ ho*

Āyau Din Gaune Kau Ho, Man Hot Hulās
Doliyā uṭhāve bījā banavāñ ho, jahñ koī na hamār
Pa.iyāñ torī lāgau karvā ho, ḍolī dhar chhin bār
Mil levai sakhiyā salehar ho, milauñ kul parivār
Dās Kabīr 'gāvai nirgun ho, sādho kari le vichār
Naram-garam saudā kari le ho, āge hāṭ nā bājār

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

LXXIV. III.30. *Are dil, prem nagar kã ant na pâyã*

Are dil, prem-nagar kã ant na pâyã jayo ãpã tayo jãvegã
Sun mere sãjan sun mere mĩtã yã jĩvan meñ kyã kyã bĩtã
Sir pãhan ko bojhã lĩtã ãge kaun chhudãvaigã
Paralĩ pãr merã mĩtã khaḍiyã us milne kã dhyãn na dhariyã
ṭũṭĩ nãv upar jo baiṭhã gãphil gotã khãvaigã
Dãs-Kabĩr kahai samujhãĩ antkãl terã kaun sahãĩ
Chalã akelã sañg na koĩ kiyã apnã pãvaigã

O my heart! You have not known all the secrets of this city of love:
In ignorance you came, and in ignorance you return.
O my friend, what have you done with this life?
You have taken on your head the burden heavy with stones,
And who is to lighten it for you?
Your Friend stands on the other shore,
But you never think in your mind how you may meet with Him:
The boat is broken, and yet you sit ever upon the bank;

And thus you are beaten to no purpose by the waves.
The servant Kabĩr asks you to consider;
Who is there that shall befriend you at the last?
You are alone, you have no companion:
You will suffer the consequences of your own deeds.

LXXV. III.55. *Ved kahe sargun ke âge*

Bed kahe sargun ke âge nirgun kâ bisrām
Sargun-niragun tajhu suhāgin dekh sabhi nij dhām
Sukh-dukh vahāñ kachhu nahīñ vyāpe darsan āṭhoñ jām
Nūrai oḍhan nūrai ḍāsan nūrai kâ sirhān
Kahaiñ Kabīr: 'Suno bhāī sādho satgurū nūr tamām' 779

The Vedas say that the Formless stands beyond the world of Forms.
O woman, what use to dispute whether He is beyond all or in all?
See thou everything as thine own dwelling place:
The mist of pleasure and pain can never spread there.
There Brahman is revealed day and night:
There light is His garment, light is His seat, light rests on thy head.
Kabīr says: "The Master, who is true, He is all light."

LXXVI. III.48. *Tû surat nain nihâr*

Tû sūrat nain nihâr vah añḍ.meñ sārā hai

Tû hir.de soth vichâr yah des hamārā hai

Sat.guru daras hoy jab bhāī, vah deñ tum.ko prem dhitāī

Surat-nirat ke bhed batāī, tab dekhe añḍ.kai pārā hai (1)

Sakal jagat meñ sat.kī nag.rī, dhitt bhulāvai bān.kī ḍag.rī

So mahuñdhe dhāle min pag.rī, aisā khel apārā hai (2)

Līlā suk.kh anant vahāñ.kī, jahāñ rās-vilās apārā hai

Jahan-tajan chhūḍai yah pāī, phir nahīñ pānā satānā hai (3)

Pad nirvān hai anant apārā, sur.ti mūr.ti lok pasārā

Satt.puruṣh nūtan tan dhārā, sāhib sakal rūp sārā hai (4)

Bāg-bagīdhe khilī phul.yārī, amṛut-laharai ho rahi jāri

Hañsā kel kar.t tahañ bhārī, jahañ an.had dhūrai apārā hai (5)

Tāmadh adhar sihāsan gajai, puruṣh mahā tahañ adhik birajai

Koṭin sūr rom ik lajai, aisā puruṣh dīdārā hai (6)

Manth binā sat.rāg udh.riñ, jo bethat hiye mañjhārā hai

Janm. Janm.kā amṛut dhārā, jahañ adhar.amṛut phuhārā hai (7)

Sat.se satt. sunn. kah.lāī, satt. bhañḍār yāhīke māñhī,

Niḥtat rathñā tāhi rathāī, jo sab.hin.te nyārā hai (8)

Ahad lok yahāñ hai bhāī, puruṣh anāmī akah kahāī

jo pahūñthe jānege vāhī, kahan sunñate nyārā hai (9)

Rūp-sarūp kachhu vahañ nāhīñ, ṭhōra-ṭhāñv kachhu dīsai nāhīñ

Ajar-tūl kachhu dṛiṣṭṭ na āyī, kaise kahuñ sumārā hai (10)

Jāpar kir.pā karihaiñ sāyī, an.had mārg gāvai tāhī

Udbhav par.lay pāchat nāhīñ, jab pāvai dīdārā ho (11)

Kahai Kabīr: 'Much kahā na jāyī, nā kāg.dapar añk dhadāyī
Māno gūñge-sam guḍ khāyī, kaise badhan uthārā ho' (12)

Open your eyes of love, and see Him who pervades this world.
Consider it well, and know that this is your own country.

When you meet the True Guru, He will awaken your heart;
He will tell you the secret of love and detachment,
And then you will know indeed that He transcends this universe. (1)

This world is the City of Truth, its maze of paths enchants the heart:
We can reach the goal without crossing the road. (2)
Such is the sport unending.

Where the ring of manifold joys ever dances about Him,
There is the sport of Eternal Bliss.
When we know this, then all our receiving and renouncing is over;
Thenceforth the heat of having shall never scorch us more. (3)

He is the Ultimate Rest unbounded:
He has spread His form of love throughout all the world.
From that Ray which is Truth,
Streams of new forms are perpetually springing:
And He pervades those forms. (4)

All the gardens and groves and bowers are abounding with blossom;
And the air breaks forth into ripples of joy.
There the swan plays a wonderful game,
There the Unstruck Music eddies around the Infinite One; (5)

There in the midst the Throne of the Unsupported is shining,
Whereon the great Being sits -
Millions of suns are shamed by the radiance of a single hair of His body. (6)

On the harp of the path what true melodies are being sounded!
And its notes pierce the heart:
There the Eternal Fountain is playing
Its endless life-streams of birth and death. (7)

They call Him Emptiness who is the Truth of truths,
In Whom all truths are stored!
There within Him creation goes forward,
Which is beyond all philosophy;
For philosophy cannot attain to Him: (8)

There is an endless world, O my Brother!
And there is the Nameless Being,
Of whom naught can be said. (9)

Only he knows it who has reached that region:
It is other than all that is heard and said.
No form, no body, no length, no breadth is seen there:
How can I tell you that which it is? (10)

He comes to the Path of the Infinite
On whom the grace of the Lord descends:
He is freed from births and deaths who attains to Him. (11)

Kabīr says: "It cannot be told by the words of the mouth,
It cannot be written on paper:
It is like a dumb person who tastes a sweet thing –
How shall it be explained?" (12)

LXXVII. III.60. *Cal hamsâ wâ des' jahân*

Chalā hamsā vā des jahñ piyā basai chitchor
Surat suhāgin hai panihārin bharai ṭhaḍh bin ḍor
Bahi desvāñ bādar nā umḍai rim-jhim barsai meh
Chaubāre meñ baiṭh raho nā jā bhījahu nirdeh
Bahi desavā nitt purnimā kabhuñ na hoai añdher
Ek suraj kai kaban batāvai koṭin sūraj uñjer

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O my heart! let us go to that country where dwells the Beloved,
The Ravisher of my heart!
There Love is filling her pitcher from the well,
Yet she has no rope wherewith to draw water;
There the clouds do not cover the sky,
Yet the rain falls down in gentle showers:
O bodiless one! Do not sit on your doorstep;
Go forth and bathe yourself in that rain!
There it is ever moonlight and never dark;
And who speaks of one sun only?
That land is illuminated with the rays of a million suns.

LXXVIII. III.63. *Kahaiñ Kabīr, s'uno ho sādho*

Kahaiñ Kabīr: 'Suno ho sādho amrit-bachan hamār
Jo bhal chāho āpnauñ parkho kāro bichār
Je karatā taiñ ūpajai tāsoñ pari gāyo bīch
Apnī buddhi vivek bin sahj bisāhī mīch

Yahi mete sab mat chalai yahī chalyau up.des
Nishchai gahī nirbhā raho sun param tat sandes
Kohi gāvau kohi dhāvahū chhoḍo sakal dhamār
Yah hirde sab ko base kyūñ sevo sunn-ujāḍ

Dūr hi kartā thāpi kai karī dūr kī ās
Jo kartā thāpi kai kari dūr kī ās
Jo kartā dūrai hute to ko jag sirjai ān
Jo jāno yañh hai nahīñ to tum dhovo dūr
Dūr se dūr bharmi bharmi nis-phal maro bisūr

Durlabh darsan dūr ke nīyar sadā sukh-bās
Kahaiñ Kabīr: 'mohiñ vyāpiyā mat dukh pāvai dās
Āp apanpau chīnhahū nakh-sikh sahit 'Kabīr'
Ānand-mañgal gāvahū hohī apanpau vīr

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Kabīr says: "O Sadhu! hear my deathless words.
If you want your own good, examine and consider them well.
You have estranged yourself from the Creator,
Of whom you have sprung:
You have lost your reason, you have bought death.

All doctrines and all teachings are sprung from Him, from Him they
grow: Know this for certain, and have no fear.
Hear from me the tidings of this great truth!
Whose name do you sing, and on whom do you meditate?

O, come forth from this entanglement!
He dwells at the heart of all things,
So why take refuge in empty desolation?
If you place the Guru at a distance from you,
Then it is but the distance that you honour:
If indeed the Master be far away,
Then who is it else that is creating this world?
When you think that He is not here,
Then you wander further and further away,
And seek Him in vain with tears.

Where He is far off, there He is unattainable:
Where He is near, He is very bliss.
Kabīr says: "Lest His servant should suffer pain
He pervades him through and through."
Know yourself then, O Kabīr; for He is in you from head to foot.
Sing with gladness, and keep your seat unmoved within your heart.

LXXIX. III.66. *Nā maiṅ dharmī nahīṅ adharmī*

Nā maiṅ dharmī nahīṅ adharmī nā maiṅ jatī na kāmī ho
Nā maiṅ kahtā nā maiṅ suntā nā maiṅ sevak-svāmī ho
Nā maiṅ bandhā nā maiṅ muktā nā maiṅ birat na raṅgī ho
Nā kāhū se nyārā huā nā kāhū ke saṅgī ho
Nā ham narak-lok ko jāte nā ham surg sidhāre ho
Sab hī karm hamārā kiyā ham karvan teṅ nyāre ho
Yā mat ko koī birlai būjhai soī aṭar ho baiṭhe ho
Mat Kabīr 'kāhū ko thāpai mat kāhū ko meṭe ho

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

LXXX. III.69. *Satta nām hai sab teñ nyârâ*

Satt nām hai sab teñ nyārā
Nirgun sargun shabd pasārā
Nirgun bīj sargun phal-phūlā
Sākhā gñyān nām hai mūlā
Mūl gahe teñ sab sukh pāvai
Dāl-pāt meñ mūl gañvāyai
Sāññ milānī sukh dilānī
Nirgun-sargun bheṭ miṭānī

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The True Name is like none other name!

The distinction of the Conditioned from the Attribute-less
Is but a word:

The Attribute-less is the seed,

The Conditioned is the flower and the fruit.

Knowledge is the branch, and the Name is the root.

Look, and see where the root is:

Happiness shall be yours when you come to the root.

The root will lead you to the branch, the leaf, the flower, and the fruit:

It is the encounter with the Lord, it is the attainment of bliss,

It is the reconciliation of the Conditioned and the Attribute-less.

LXXXI. III.74. *Pratham ek jo âpai âp*

Pratham ek jo âpe âp nirākār nirgun nirjāp
Nahīñ tav ādi ant madh-tārā nahīñ tav añdh dhuñdh ujjārā
Nahīñ tab bhūmi-pavan ākāsā nahīñ tav pāvak nīr-nīvāsā
Nahīñ tav sarsutī jamunā gañgā hi tav sāgar samud tarañgā
Nahīñ tav pāp-putr nahīñ bed-purānā nahī tab bhaye kateb-kurānā
Kahaiñ Kabīr: 'vichārī kai tab kachhu kirpā nāhiñ
Param purush tahñ âp hī agam-agochar māhiñ
Karatā kachhu khāvai nahīñ pīvai karatā kabhuñ marai na jīvai
Karatā ke kachhu rūp na rekhā karatā ke kachhu baran na bhekhā
Jā ke jot-got kachhu nāhi mahimā varnī na jāi mo-pāhiñ
Rūp-arūp nahī terā nāñv barn-abarn nahī tehī ṭhāñv

In the beginning was He alone, sufficient unto Himself:
The Formless, Colourless, and Unconditioned Being.
Then was there neither beginning, middle, nor end;
Then were no eyes, no darkness, no light;
Then were no ground, air, nor sky; no fire, water, nor earth;
No rivers like the Ganges and the Jumna, no seas, oceans, and waves.
Then was neither vice nor virtue;
Scriptures there were not, as the Vedas and Puranas, nor as the Koran.
Kabīr ponders in his mind and says,
"Then was there no activity: the Supreme Being remained merged
in the unknown depths of His Own Self."
The Guru neither eats nor drinks, neither lives nor dies:
Neither has He form, line, colour, nor vesture.
He who has neither caste nor clan nor anything else –

How may I describe His glory?

He has neither form nor formlessness, He has no name,

He has neither colour nor colourlessness,

He has no dwelling-place.

LXXXII. III.76. *Kahaiñ Kabīr vicār ke*

Kahaiñ Kabīr: 'Vichārikai, jākai barn. na gāñv,

Nirākār aur nirgunā, hai pūran sab thāñv'

Kar.tā ānand khel lāī, omkār.te sṛiṣṭi pāī

Ānand dhar.tī ānand ākāsā, ānand chad-sūr par.kāsā

Ānand ādi ant.madhy.tārā, ānand añdhakūp ujjiyārā

Ānand sāgar sumudr. ṭarañgā ānand sara sutij.munā-gagā

Kar.tā ek aur sab khel., maran-janam birah mel

Khel jal-thal-sakal jahānā, khel jānauñ jamī as.mānā

Khel kā yah sakal pasārā, khel māñhi rahai saṁsārā

Kahaiñ Kabīr: 'Sab khelan.māhī, khelan.hār ko dhīnhai nahīñ'

Kabīr ponders and says: "He who has neither caste nor country,

Who is formless and without quality, fills all space."

The Creator brought into being the Game of Joy:

And from the word Om the Creation sprang.

The Earth is His Joy; His Joy is the Sky;

His Joy is the flashing of the Sun and the Moon;

His Joy is the beginning, the middle, and the end;

His Joy is eyes, darkness, and light.

Oceans and waves are His Joy:

His Joy the Sarasvati, Jumna and Ganga.

The Guru is One:

And life and death, union and separation, are all His plays of Joy!

His play the land and water, the Whole Universe!

His play the Earth and the Sky!

In play is the Creation spread out, in play it is established.

The whole world, says Kabīr, rests in His play,

Yet still the Player remains unknown.

LXXXIII. III.84. *Jhī jhī jantar bājai*

Jhī jhī jantar gājai, kar charan bihunā nāchai

Kar binu bājai sunai shravan binu, shravan shrotā loī

Pāṭ na subās sabā binu avsar, muni jan soī

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The harp gives forth murmurous music;

And the dance goes on without hands and feet.

It is played without fingers, it is heard without ears:

For He is the ear, and He is the listener.

The gate is locked, but within there is fragrance:

And there the meeting is seen of none.

The wise shall understand it.

LXXXIV. III.89. *Mor phakîrwâ mângi jây*

Mor phakirvā māñgi jāi
Maiñ to dekhahu nā paulyau
Mañgan se kyā māñgiye
Bin māñge jo dey
Kahaiñ Kabîr: 'Maiñ hau vāhī ko
Honī hoai so hoai'

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

Naihar se jiyarâ phât re
Naihar nagrī jis ke bigḍī uskā kyā ghar-bāṭ re
Tanik jiyarvā mor na lāgai tan-man bahut uchāt re
Yā nagrī meñ lakh darvājā beach samundar ghāt re
Kaise ke pār utarihai sajnī āgam panth kā pāṭ re
Ajab tarah kā banā tambūra tār lagai man māt re
Khūñṭī ṭūṭī tār bilagānā ko.ū na pūchhat bāt re
Hañs-hañs pūchhai mātu-pitā soñ bhoreñ sāsūr jāb re
Jo chāhaiñ so vo hī karihaiñ pat bāhī ke hāth re
Nahāy bhoy dulahin hoai baiṭhī jo hai piya kī ghāt re
Tanik ghūñghaṭvā dikhāv sakhī rī āj suhāg kī rāt re
Kahaiñ Kabīr: ‘Suno bhāī sādho piyā milan kī ās re
Gor hot vande yād karoge nīñd na āvai khāt re’

My heart cries aloud for the house of my lover;
The open road and the shelter of a roof are all one to her
Who has lost the city of her husband.
My heart finds no joy in anything:
My mind and my body are distraught.
His palace has a million gates,
But there is a vast ocean between it and me:
How shall I cross it, O friend?
For endless is the outstretching of the path.
How wondrously this lyre is wrought!
When its strings are rightly strung, it maddens the heart:
But when the keys are broken and the strings are loosened,

None regard it more.

I tell my parents with laughter

That I must go to my Lord in the morning;

They are angry, for they do not want me to go,

And they say: "She thinks she has gained such dominion over her husband

That she can have whatsoever she wishes;

And therefore she is impatient to go to him."

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

Kabīr says: "Listen to me! My heart is eager to meet my lover:

I lie sleepless upon my bed.

Remember me early in the morning!"

LXXXVI. III.96. *Jīv mahal meñ S'iv pahunwâ*

Jīv mahal meñ siv pahunvāñ kahāñ karat unamād re

Pahuñchā devā karilai sevā rain chalī āvat re

Jugn jugn karai patichhan sāhab kā dil lāg re

Sujhat nāhi param-sukh-sāgar binā prem bairāg re

Sarvan sur bujhī sāheb se pūran pargaṭ bhāg re

Kahaiñ Kabīr: 'Suno bhāg hamārā pāyā athal sohāg re'

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

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

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

Yet I did not know the bliss that was so near to me,

For my love was not yet awake.

But now, my Lover has made known to me

The meaning of the note that struck my ear:
Now, my good fortune is come.
Kabīr says: "Behold! how great is my good fortune!
I have received the unending caress of my Beloved!"

LXXXVII. III.71. *Gagan ghatā ghaharâni, sādho*

Gagan ghaṭā ghahrānī sādho gagan ghaṭā ghahrānī
Pūrāb dis se uṭhī hai badriyā rim-jhim barsat pānī
Āpan āpan bheñḍ samhāre bahayo jāt hai pānī
Surat-nirat kā bel nahāyan karai khet nirvānī
Dhān kāṭ mār ghar āvai soī kusal kisānī
Donoñ thār barābar parsai jevai muni aur gñyānī

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

LXXXVIII. III.118. *Āj din ke main jaun balihârî*

Āj din maiñ jã.ũñ balihârî
Pītam sãheb āy mere pahunã, ghar-ãñgan lage suhaunã
Sab pyãlã lage mañgal gãyan, ye gagan lakhi chhabi man-bhãvan
Charan pakhãrũñ nihãrũñ, tan-man-dhan sab sãññ par vãrũñ
'Jã din pãye piyã dhan soī, hot anand param sukh hoī
Surat lagī satt-nãm kī ãsã', kahaiñ Kabīr dãsan ke dãsã

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

LXXXIX. I.100. *Kôî s'untâ hai jñânî râg gagan meñ*

Koî suntâ hai gñyānī rāg gagan meñ avāj hotī pīnī
Sab ghaṭ pūran pūr rahā hai sab surn ke khānī
Jo tan pāyā khand dekhāyā trsnā nahīñ bujhānī
Amrit chhoḍ khand-ras chākhā trsnā tāp tapānī
O añg so añg bājā bāje surat-nirat samānī
Kahaiñ Kabīr: 'Suno bhāī sādho yahīñ ād kī bānī'

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

XC. I.108. *Main kâ se bûjhaun*

Main kâsoñ kahoñ āp.na piyakī bāt rī,

Kahai Kabīr: 'Bichhuḍ nahīñ milihai, jyoñ tar.var chhoḍ ban.dhām rī'

To whom shall I go to learn about my Beloved?

Kabīr says: "As you never may find the forest if you ignore the tree,
So He may never be found in abstractions."

XCI. III.12. *Samskirit bhâshâ padhi lînhâ*

Sanskirat bhâshâ padhi lînhâ gñyānī lok kaho rahī

Āsā-tirisnā meñ bahi gayo sajnī kām ke tāp saho rahī

Mān manī kī maṭukī sir par nāhak bojh maro rahī

Maṭukī paṭak milo pītam se sāheb Kabīr kaho rī

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

But where is the use of this, when I am floating adrift,

And parched with thirst, and burning with the heat of desire?

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

Kabīr says: "Lay it down in the dust, and go forth to meet the Beloved.

Address Him as your Lord."

XCII. III.110. *Carkhâ calai surat virahin kâ*

Char.khâ chalai surat birahin kâ
Kâyâ nagrī banī ati-sundar mahal banā chetan kâ
Surat bhāñvrī hot gagan meñ pīḍhā gñyān-ratan kâ
Mihīn sūt birahin kātaiñ māñjhā parem-bhagati kâ
Kahaiñ Kabīr: 'Suno bhāī sādho mālā guñtho din rain kâ
Piyā mor aihaiñ pagā rakhihaiñ āñsu bheṭ dehauñ nain kâ'

The woman who is parted from her lover spins at the spinning wheel.
The city of the body arises in its beauty;
And within it the palace of the mind has been built.
The wheel of love revolves in the sky,
And the seat is made of the jewels of knowledge:
What subtle threads the woman weaves,
And makes them fine with love and reverence!
Kabīr says: "I am weaving the garland of day and night.
When my Lover comes and touches me with His Feet,
I shall offer Him my tears."

XCIII. III.111. *Koṭin bhānu candra târâgan*

Koṭin bhānu chandr-tārā gan chhatr kī chhāñhar high
Man meñ man nainan meñ nainā man nainā ik ho jāī
Surat suhāgin milan piyā ko tan kai tapan bujhāī
Kahaiñ Kabīr: 'milai prem pūrā piyā meñ surat milāī'

Beneath the great umbrella of my King
Millions of suns and moons and stars are shining!
He is the Mind within my mind: He is the Eye within mine eye.
Ah, could my mind and eyes be one!
Could my love but reach to my Lover!
Could but the fiery heat of my heart be cooled!
Kabīr says: "When you unite love with the Lover,
Then you have love's perfection."

XCIV. 1.92. *Avadhû begam des' hamârâ*

Avadhû begam des hamārā
Rājā rañk phikīr bādsā sab se kahauñ pukārā
Jo tum chāho parampad ko basihau des hamārā
Jo tum āy jhīne ho ke tajo manā kī bhārā
Aisī rahan raho re pyāre sahjai utar jīvo pārā
Dharan-akās gagan kachhu nahīñ chand nahīñ tārā
Satt dharm kī hai mahtābeñ sāheb ke darbārā
Kahaiñ Kabīr: 'Suno ho pyāre satt-dharm hai sārā'

O Sadhu! my land is a sorrow-less land.

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

Whosoever seeks for shelter in the Highest,

Let all come and settle in my land!

Let the weary come and lay his burdens here!

So live here, my brother, that you may cross with ease

To that other shore.

It is a land without earth or sky, without moon or stars;

For only the radiance of Truth shines in my Lord's Durbar.

Kabīr says: "O beloved brother! Naught is essential save Truth."

XCV. I.109. *Sâin ke sangat sâsur âi*

Sâin ke sañg sâsur âi

Sañg nâ rahî svād nâ jānyau gayo joban sup nekî nâi

Sakhî-sahelî mañgal gāve sukh-dukḥ māthe hardî chaḍhāi

Bhayau vivāh chalî bin dulhan bāṭ jāt samdhi samjhāi

Kahaiñ Kabîr: 'ham gaune jaibe tarat kant lai tûr bajāi

I came with my Lord to my Lord's home:

But I lived not with Him and I tasted Him not,

And my youth passed away like a dream.

On my wedding night my women-friends sang in chorus,

And I was anointed with the unguents of pleasure and pain:

But when the ceremony was over, I left my Lord and came away,

And my kinsman tried to console me upon the road.

Kabîr says, "I shall go to my Lord's house with my love at my side;

Then shall I sound the trumpet of triumph!"

XCVI. 1.75. *Samajh dekh man mît piyarwâ*

Samujh dekh man mîtā piyarvā
Āsik ho kar sonā kyā re
Pāyā ho to de le pyāre
Pāy pāy phir khonā kyā re
Jab añkhiyan meñ nīñd ghanerī
Takiya aur bichhaunā kyā re
Kahaiñ Kabīr: 'prem kā mārāg
Sir denā to ronā kyā rā

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

XCVII. II.90. *Sâhab ham meṇ, sâhab tum meṇ*

Sâheb ham meñ sâheb tum meñ, jaise parānā bīj meñ
Mat kar bandā gumān dil meñ, khoj dekh le tan meñ
Koṭi sūr jahñ karte jhilmil nīl sidh sohai gagan meñ
Sab tāp miṭ jāyeñ dehī kai nirmal hoai baiṭhī jagā meñ
Anhad ghaṇṭa bajai mridiṅgā tan sukh lehi piyār meñ

Bin pānī lāgī jahñ varshā motī dekh nadīn meñ
Ek prem brahmāñḍ chhāy raho hai samajh birle pūrā
Añdh bhedī kahā samjhaige gñyān ke ghartaiñ dūrā
Baḍe bhāg almast rañg meñ 'Kabīrā' bolai ghaṭ meñ
Hans ubāran dukh nivāran vāvā gaman na miṭai chhan meñ

The Lord is in me, the Lord is in you, as life is in every seed.
O servant! put false pride away, and seek for Him within you.
A million suns are ablaze with light, the sea of blue spreads in the sky,
The fever of life is stilled, and all stains are washed away;
When I sit in the midst of that world.
Hark to the unstruck bells and drums!
Take your delight in love!

Rains pour down without water, and the rivers are streams of light.
One Love it is that pervades the whole world,
Few there are who know it fully:
They are blind who hope to see it by the light of reason,
That reason which is the cause of separation -
The House of Reason is very far away!

How blessed is Kabīr, that amidst this great joy
He sings within his own vessel.
It is the music of the meeting of soul with soul;
It is the music of the forgetting of sorrows;
It is the music that transcends all coming in and all going forth.

XCVIII. II.98. *Ritu phāgun niyarānī*

Ṛitu phāgun niyarānī koī piyā se milāve
Piyā ko rūp kahāñ lagā barnūñ rūp hiñ māñ hiñ samānī
Jo rañg rañge sakal chhabi chhāke tan-man sabhī mulānī
Yoñ mat jāne yahi re phāg hai yah kuchh akah kahānī
Kahaiñ Kabīr: 'Suno bhāī sādho yah gat birle jānī

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

XCIX. II.111. *Nârad, pyâr so antar nâhî*

Nârad pyâr so antar nahîñ
Pyâr jâgai tauhî jâgûñ pyâr sovai tab so.ũñ
Jo koî mere pyârâ dukhâvai jaḍâ mûl soñ kho.ũñ
Jahâñ merâ pyâr jas gâvai tahâñ kârau meñ bāsâ
Pyâr chale âge uṭh dhâ.ũñ mohi pyâr kî âsâ
Behad tîrath pyâr ke charnani koṭ bhakt samây
Kahaiñ Kabîr: 'prem kî mahimâ pyâr det bujhây

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

C. II.122. *Kôî prem kî peng jhulâo re*

Koî prem kî peñg jhulāvai
Bhuj ke khambh aur prem ke ras se
Tan-man āju jhulāv re
Nainan bādar kî jhar lāo
Shyām ghaṭā ur chhāv re
Āvat āchat shrut kî rāh par
Phikar piyā ko sunāv re
Kahat Kabīr ‘Suno bhāī sādho
Piyā ko dhyān chit lāv re

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

Here ends the ‘Hundred poems of Kabir’ by Rabindranath Tagore.

Three Poems Quoted by Shri Mataji

Shri Mataji quoted the following three poems several times in Her talks. Her comments are given on pages 3-13.

Nirbhay nirguṇ guṇ re gāūngā

Nirbhay nirguṇ guṇ re gāūngā

Mūl kamal dṛidh āsan bāndhū-jī ulṭī pavan chaḍāūngā

Man mamtā ko thir kar lāūn-jī pāncho tatt milāūngā

Ingalā Piñgalā Sukhman nāḍī-jī tirvenī pe haun nahāūngā

Pānch pachhīsoñ pakad mangāūn-jī ek hi ḍor lagāūngā

Śhūnya shikhar par anhad bāje-jī rāg chhattīs sunāūngā

Kahat Kabīr suno bhāī sādho-jī jīt niśhān ghurāūngā

Fearlessly I will sing the attributes of the one without attributes,

Using the root lotus as a steady seat, I will make the wind rise in reverse,

Steadying the mind's attachments, I will unify the five elements,

Ingalā, Pingalā and Sukhman are the channels,

I will bathe at the confluence of the three rivers,

The five and twenty five I will master by my wish,

And string them together on one common thread,

At the summit of emptiness the un-struck Anahad sound reverberates,

I will play the thirty-six rāgas,

Says Kabīr: 'Listen, O brother seekers, I will wave the flag of victory.'

Fakhar bakre ne kiya

Fakhar bakre ne kiya mere sivā koyi nahiñ
Maiñ hī maiñ hūm is jahāñ mein, dūsarā koyi nahiñ
*In life the goat does nothing but think of himself
'Me, Me' his whole life, not thinking of others.*

Maiñ maiñ jab na tark kī us mahave-asbāb ne
Pher dī chal kar chhuri gardan pe tab kassāb ne
*'Me, me', always self-absorbed
Then, when the butcher swings the knife*

Khūn, gosht, haddiyān jo kuchh tha jisme sār meiñ
Lut gaya kuchh pis gaya kuchh bik gaya bazār meiñ
*Reducing his essence to flesh, blood and bones
Taken out, chopped up, and sold in the market*

Reh gayiñ ānteñ faqat main, maiñ sunāne ke liye
Le gayā naddāf use dhunki banāne ke liye
*Only the remaining intestines can be heard
Cleaned up and stretched on the cotton-carder*

Zarb ke jhonkoñ se jab vo ānt ghabrāne lagī
Maiñ ke badle Tu hi Tu hi ki sadā āne lagī
*By strokes and blows, when his suffering has come to an end
Instead of 'Me', he always sings 'You are, you are'.*

Jhini jhini bini chadariya

Jhīnī jhīnī bīnī chadariyā

This is a very, very fine shawl (the human being with body, mind, etc.)

Kāh ke tānā, kāh ke bharnī, kaun tār se bīnī chadariyā

So many warp threads, so many weft threads, who can count the threads?

Īnglā Piṅglā tānā bharnī, Suṣhumna tār se bīnī chadariyā

With Left and Right as warp and weft, embroidered with the Central Channel

Ashta kamal dal charkhā dole, pāñch tatva, gun tīnī chadariyā

From eight lotus-chakras, five elements and three attributes, it is made

Sāññ ko siyat mas dus lage, thonk-thonk ke bīnī chadariyā

The Lord takes ten moons to weave this shawl, without any beating

So chādar sur nar muni oḍhī, oḍhī ke mailī kīnī chadariyā

This shawl is worn by Gods, men and saints, but they all made it dirty!

Dās Kabīr jatan kari oḍhī, jyoñ kī tyoñ dhar dīnī chadariyā

Your servant Kabīr has worn it carefully,

and is returning it to You unblemished, O Lord!

Note: Kabīr was a weaver, hence all the weaving technical terms!

48 Dohas - 'couplets' of Kabir

Kabir probably did not write all of the material attributed to him (*scholars estimate less than ten percent!*). There are websites with names like '899 famous couplets of Kabir'! This is a selection of some of the most popular (*though not necessarily the most authentic!*) Dohas, which are not included in Tagore's book.

Sahaj sahaj sabko kahe, sahaj na chīnhe koyi,
Jinha sahajai viṣhiyā tajī, sahaj kahī jai soyi.
(Pānchu rākhai parasatī, sahaj kahī jai soyi) (1)
*Everybody says Sahaj Sahaj, but they are not.
Only one who has renounced sensual desires can be called Sahaj.
(Only one beyond the five senses can be called Sahaj)*

Burā jo dekhan mai chalā, burā na miliyā koy
Jo dil khoja āp.nā, mujh.se burā na koy (2)
*I searched for evil in this world, I found none bad.
Looking into my own heart, I found no one worse than myself.*

Chintā esi ḍākinī, kāt kalejā khāe
Vaid bechārā kyā kare, kahā tak davā lagāe (3)
*Worry is a thief, that eats one's heart.
What can a doctor do? How far will his medicine reach?*

Duḥkh. meñ sumiran sab kare, sukh. meñ kare na koī
Jo sukh. meñ sumiran kare, to duḥkh. kāhe ko hoy. (4)
*In bad times all remember God, in good times none at all.
But if, in good times, you remember Him, then no bad times will come.*

Kabīr garv na kījīy, ūñchā dekhi āvās
Kāl paroñ bhūiñ leṭ.nā, ūpar jam.sī ghās (5)

*O Kabīr, don't be so proud of your achievements and fame.
Some tomorrow you will die and grass will grow on top.*

Jyoñ nainoñ meñ putalī, jyoñ mālik ghaṭ māhiñ
Mūrakh log na jān.hiñ, bāhir ḍhūḍhan jāhiñ (6)

*God lies within you just as the pupil lies within your eyes.
But ignorant people don't know this, and keep on searching outside.*

Jab tū āyā jagat meñ, log hañse tū roy
Esī kar.nī nā karī, pachhe hañse sab koy (7)

*When we are born, everyone laughs but we cry.
Do good deeds in your lifetime,
So they won't laugh behind you when you are gone.*

Chal.tī chakkī dekh kar, diyā Kabīrā roye
Do pāṭ.na ke bīj meñ, sābut bajā nā koye (8)

*Watching the grind-stones crush the grain, Kabīr wept,
Everything is crushed and nothing remains in its original form.*

Aisī vāñī boliye, man kā āpā khoy
Auran ko śhītal kare, āp.hu śhītal hoy (9)

*Speak such words, that you lose your pride,
In soothing others, you will be soothed.*

Kāl kare so āj kar, āj kare so ab

Pal meñ par.lay hoy.gī, baturī karegā kab (10)

Whatever you need to do tomorrow, do it now.

The time is lost in moments and you will not recover it.

If the moment is gone, the work will remain undone forever.

Yahī kāraṇ tū jan meñ āyā, vo nahī tūne karm kamāyā

Man mailā thā mailā terā, kāyā mal mal dhoy (11)

The reason you came into this world

Was not that you earned your karma,

Your mind was dirty, your body was full of mire.

Yah tan viṣh kī belarī, guru amṛut kī khān

Śhīśh kate jo guru mile, to bhī sastā jān (12)

This body is a vat of poison; the Guru is the mine of nectar,

Even if you have to cut off your head to get a Guru, this is a good deal.

Yah māyā kī chuhḍī, aur chūhḍā kī jo

Bāp-pūt ur.bhāy ke, sang nā kāho kahe (13)

It is Maya (illusion) which talks, and the rat (lower nature)

They are father and son of the future, do not sing their tune.

Yah man tāko dījiye, sañchā sevak hoy

Sir ūpar ārā sahe, tau na dūjā hoy (14)

Have a look inside the mind, be the servant of the truth.

With your head held high, don't give in to worry

Ye duniyā hai ek tamāśhā, kar nahī bande kisī kī āśhā
Kahe Kabīr: 'Sunoñ bhāī sādhoñ, sāī bhaje sukh hoy' (15)

*This world is a theatre, don't try to fulfil anyone's expectations,
Says Kabīr, listen brother seekers, finding oneself gives happiness*

Pothī paḍhī paḍhī jag muā, pandit bhayā na koy,
Dhāī ākhar prem kā, paḍhe se pandit hoy. (16)

*Everyone died after reading books, none became learned,
Reading two words of love one becomes wise.*

Sādhu aisā chāhiye, jaisā sūp subhāya,
Sār-sār ko gahi rahai, thothā deī uḍāya. (17)

*Such good people are needed, like a winnowing fan which cleanses,
Saving the essence and blowing away the chaff.*

Tin.kā kab.hū nā nindiye, jo pāvan tar hoy,
Kab.huñ uḍī āñkhin paḍe, to pīr ghanerī hoya (18)

*Do not condemn a small straw, when you find it,
If it falls in your eye, then you will be in great pain.
(Do not condemn a lowly person as their curse can hurt you greatly)*

Dhire-dhire re manā, dhire sab kuchh hoy
Mālī sīñche sau ghaḍā, ṛitū āye phal hoy (19)

*Slowly, slowly, let everything happen slowly,
The gardener may water the pots a hundred times,
But the fruits still come in their season.*

Mālā pherat jug bhayā, phirā na man kā pher
Kar kā man.kā ḍār de, man kā man.kā pher (20)

*Turning the beads of a rosary, does not change the mind,
Turn the beads of the mind, and change the mind.*

Jāti na pūchho sādḥ kī, pūchh lījiye gñyān
Mol karo tar.vār kā paḍī, rahan do myān (21)

*Don't ask a saint for his caste, ask for knowledge,
The price is for the sword, not the sheath covering it.*

Dos parae dekh karī. Chalā hasant hasant
Ap.ne yād na āvaī, jin.kā ādī na ant (22)

*Seeing (the faults of) others, we go about laughing,
Not remembering ourselves, whose (faults) have no beginning nor end.*

Jin khojā tin pāiyā, gah.re pānī paiṭḥ
Mai bāpurā būḍan ḍarā, rahā kināre baiṭḥ (23)

*The diver searched and found a pearl, by going in deep water,
Those scared of death, kept sitting on the shore.*

Boli ek an.mol hai, jo koī bole jāni
Hiye tarājū taulī ke, tab mukh bāhar ānī (24)

*Speech is a precious one, whoever would speak well
Should weigh (the words) on the scales (of the mind),
Before coming out of the mouth.*

Ati bhalā na bol.nā, ati kī bhali na chup
Ati kā bhalā na bar.sanā, ati ki bhali na chhūp (25)

*Too much talking is not good, nor too much keeping silent,
Too much rain is never good, nor too much sunshine.*

Nindak niyare rākhiye, āngan kuti chhavāy
Bin pānī sābun binā, nirmal kare subhāy (26)

*Keep the one who criticises you near, give him your courtyard hut,
Without water without soap, he will make your nature pure*

Durlabh mānuṣh janm. hai, deh na bārambār
Taruvar jyoñ patā jhaḍe, bahuri na lāge ḍār (27)

*Hard to achieve is the human birth, to get a body is rare,
When the leaf falls from the tree, it cannot be reattached.*

Kabīrā khaḍā bājār meñ, mange sab.kī khair
Nā kāhū se dostī, nā kāhū se bair (28)

*Kabīr stands in the market, desiring the well-being of all
With neither friendship with anyone, nor hatred for any*

Hindū kahe mohe Rām pyārā, Turk kahe Rahmānā,
Āp.sa meñ donoñ laḍī-laḍī mue, mar.m na kou jānā (29)

*Hindus say 'we love Rāma', Turks (Muslims) say Rahman –'The Merciful'
Both fight among themselves, and do not get to Heaven.*

Kahat sunat sab din gaye, ur.jhī na sur.jhyā man
Kahī kabīr chetyā nahī, aj.hūñ so pah.lā din (30)

*Saying Sunnat – ‘muslim prayers’ all day long, no-one’s mind changed
Says Kabīr: ‘There is no awareness, today is still like the first day’*

Kabīr lahari samad kī, motī bikh.re āī
Bagulā bhed na jānāī, haṁsā chunī chunī khāī (31)

*O Kabīr, when, in the wavy lake, pearls are scattered
The heron cannot tell the difference
But the swan can choose which to eat*

Jab guṇ ko grāhak mile, tab guṇ kī lākh bikāī
Jab guṇ ko grāhak nahī, tab kaidī ke bad.le jāī (32)

*When a connoisseur finds real quality
Then that quality is sold for thousands
If no connoisseur is found for that quality, then it goes for pennies.*

Kabīr kahā gar.biyo, kāl gahe par kes,
Na jāne kahāñ mārisī, kai ghar kai par.deśh (33)

*O Kabīr, why so proud? Your life is in the grip of time
You never know when death will come
What of your house or your people?’*

Pānī kerā bud.budā, as manuṣh kī jāt
Ek din chhip jāegā , jyo tārā prabhāt (34)

*Like a bubble in water, is this human life,
One day it will disappear, like stars at dawn.*

Musk lies in the musk deer's own navel,
But he roams in the forest to seek it;
Alike, God pervades every heart,
But men of the world don't grasp this. (35)

In man himself the Master dwells,
But man, deluded, knows not this,
So similar to the musk deer who,
Again and again the grass sniffs. (36)

The seeker of Rām, says Kabīr, to Sri Lanka marched;
When in himself he found the truth,
He found that Rām pervades his heart. (37)

God exists in every place,
So don't think He's less here and more there,
Those who say He's far – He is far,
Those who know Him near – He's near. (38)

It drizzled in graceful drizzles,
On the stone fell showers of rain,
Soil melted when it got watered,
But the stone showed no mark of change. (39)

Who utters as wells forth the tongue,
Without thinking what he says,
Holds the sword of his tongue in hand,
And the souls of others slays. (40)

Cow-rich, elephant-rich, horse-rich,
And rich treasures of precious stones,
All those riches are like the dust,
Until to man contentment comes. (41)

Pardon suits the great of soul,
But mischief one who's low befits;
Say! In what way did Vishnu lose,
When Bhrigu's foot* gave Him a hit? (42)

* Sage Bhrigu was angered by Śhrī Viṣṇu sleeping when he came to visit and gave Him a kick to wake Him. Viṣṇu massaged Bhrigu's foot in case he had hurt it by the kick; removing his ignorance so he could see his arrogance and pride.

If I say I'm Hindu, I'm not, neither a Muslim I am,
An effigy of five elements, in me plays the spark Divine. (43)

Where there's mercy there's religion;
Where there's avarice there's sin;
Where there's anger there is death,
Where there's pardon God dwells in. (44)

Guru Govind donoñ khade, kake lagũñ pañy
Balihārī guru āp.no, Govind diyo milāy (45)

*The Guru and God, both are standing, whose feet should I touch first?
But my teacher is the one who taught me that God is greater.*

Hīrā – ‘diamonds’ (*Kabir often refers to Self-realization as a diamond*)

Hīrā soi srāhiye sahai ghanan kī choṭ
Kapaṭ kurangī mānavā parakhat nikrā khot (46)

*Admire the diamond that can bear the hits of a hammer.
Many fraudulent men do not pass the test.*

Hīrā tahañ na kholiye, jahañ kunjroñ kī hāṭ
Sahajai gañthī bāñdhike, lagiye apni bāṭ (47)

*Don't open your diamonds in a vegetable market.
Tie them in bundle and keep them in your heart, and go your own way.
[Don't throw you pearls before swine!]*

Hīrā parā bajār main, rahā chhār lapaṭāy
Ketihe murakh pachi mūye, koi pārakhi liyā uṭhāy (48)

*A diamond was laying in the market-place, covered with dirt.
Many fools passed it by, but a connoisseur picked it up.*

Guru Granth Sahib

*The **Guru Granth Sahib**, the sacred book of the Sikhs, contains 237 poems by Kabir which were collected by Guru Nānak on His travels. Below is a small selection.*

Charan kamal kī mauj ko kahi kaise unmān.
How to describe the joy of the Lord's Lotus Feet? p.1370

Kabīr ṭūñ ṭūñ kartā ṭū hūā mujh mēh rahā na hūñ.
Kabīr, repeating ‘You, You’, has become You; nothing of ‘me’ remains in myself. p.1375

Kaho Kabīr sukh sahaj samāvao.
Says Kabīr, I am immersed in Sahaj bliss. p.327

Gagan rasāl chuai merī bhāṭhī, Uā kao kahī ai sahaj maṭvārā.

Sanch mahā ras ṭan bhaiā kāṭhī. //1//

*From the sky, the nectar trickles down, distilled from my furnace,
intoxicated with natural bliss, gathering the most sublime essence,
making my body into firewood.*

Pīvaṭ rām ras giān bīchārā, Ānanḍ māṭe anḍin jāī.

Sahaj kalālan jao mil āī. //2//

*Drinking the true knowledge and wisdom of the Lord's essence,
I pass my nights and days in ecstasy.
Natural joy is the bar-maid who serves it.*

Chīnaṭ chīṭ niranjan lāīā. Kaho Kabīr ṭou anbhao pāīā. //3//27//

*In meditation, I dissolved my consciousness in the Immaculate.
Says Kabir, then I obtained the Fearless Lord. GGS -p.328*

Many thanks to the translators of these couplets who,
being variously sourced, cannot be credited individually.

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for coming on this Earth and trying to enlighten
that most difficult of species - the human being!

Jay Shri Mataji!
