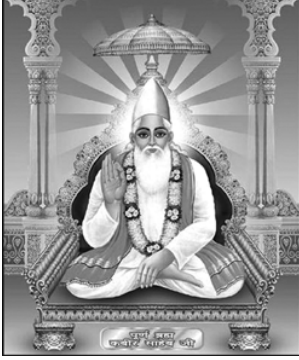


Kabir—A Flower of Compassion and Love

Once, Mata Lakshmi decided to test the profundity of devotion of an ardent devotee of Lord Vishnu. So, when this devotee was unmindfully walking completely immersed in the name of the



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Lord, She created a rose garden in his path. However, as soon as he plucked a rose from the garden attracted by their beauty and sweet-smell, Mata Lakshmi snatched the rose from his hands and taking it straight to Lord Vishnu accused the devotee of theft as he had plucked the flower from Her garden. At this, the Lord smiled at Her and said that His devotee had plucked the rose from Her garden only to offer it to Him and such was the intensity of his devotion that none other than Mata Lakshmi Herself had to travel such a long way to present the flower personally. Moved by the devotee's devotion for the Lord and realizing the Lord's love for him, Mata Lakshmi now requested the Lord to offer him a boon. The Lord explained that this devout follower

was an accomplished saint who had surpassed all attachments and no material offers would be worthy of him. The only desire that remained in his mind was to spread the message of devotion and true Vedic knowledge on earth. To accomplish this mission, he needed a competent disciple so pure and enlightened that his very presence would infuse devotion into mundane, selfish minds and his words would drench their dry and rigid hearts in the stream of eternal love. So saying this, the Lord created a lovely divine baby out of the flower. This devout saint was Swami Ramananda, a renowned philosopher and great devotee of Lord Vishnu who lived during the fourteenth century and the baby was Kabir.

This is one of the legends that surround Kabir's birth. Truly, Kabir's entire life was like a flower of compassion spreading its fragrance on anybody who came near him gasping for the light of knowledge and love in this dark undulating ocean of illusion.

Once, young Kabir was passing across a house when he saw a woman grinding jowar. The tragic fate of the jowar seeds being crushed within the wheels of the grinding stones immediately brought tears in his eyes. It reminded him of the similar fate of man being grinded between the stones of life and death and slowly but surely proceeding towards impending death. This event had such a profound impact over his mind that he composed a beautiful couplet narrating it.

Chalti Chakki Dekh Kar, Diya Kabira Roye *Beholding the grinding stones, Kabir starts*
to weep,
Dui Paatan Ke Beech Mein, Sabit Bacha *As nobody ever survive, within its powerful*
grip.
Na Koye

A passing Ascetic seeing him cry questioned the reason of his grief. Kabir explained his feelings and asked whether there is no escape from death. The Ascetic being touched by Kabir's spiritual awareness explained him a deep philosophical truth through the very same example. He said that although the jowar seeds aptly convey the impermanence of the mortal coil of man, a careful observation would reveal that the seeds that are stuck to the axle rod remain intact and unharmed. Similarly, whoever clings himself to the sceptre of God is never affected by the miseries of worldly existence and finds divine solace even in death.

Kabir believed that every object in the world is a manifestation of God, and hence He resides within each individual self. Therefore, the easiest place to find Him is within the self. He reiterated in numerous of his poems and couplets the futility of religious dogmas and rituals and stressed that God reveals within one-self in the sky of perfected inner purity when one transcends all limits of personality and ego and burns away the last drop of selfishness, envy, self-pity, resentment, etc. through the intensity of his faith, devotion and love. Thus Kabir says,

*Moko Kahan Dhundhere Bande
Mein To Tere Paas Mein
Na Teerath Mein, Na Moorat Mein
Na Ekant Niwas Mein*

*Where do you search me O Seeker,
Beside you is my presence,
Not in pilgrimage, in statues neither,
Nor in lonely existence.*

*Na Mandir Mein, Na Masjid Mein
Na Kabe Kailas Mein
Mein To Tere Paas Mein Bande
Mein To Tere Paas Mein*

*Not in mosques, nor in the temple
In Kaba or Kailash summit
O Seeker, beside you do I dwell
Within you I inhabit.*

*Na Mein Jap Mein, Na Mein Tap Mein
Na Mein Barat Upaas Mein
Na Mein Kiriya Karm Mein Rehta
Nahin Jog Sanyas Mein*

*Not in the prayers, nor in penance,
Or in the denial of food
Neither in rites or ritual performance
Or in renunciation is my abode.*

*Nahin Pran Mein Nahin Pind Mein
Na Brahmand Akas Mein
Na Mein Prakuti Prawar Gufa Mein
Nahin Swasan Ki Swans Mein*

*Nor in the body, the vital force not
Or in the ethereal sky,
In Nature's womb is not your Sought
Or in breath's essence I lie.*

*Khoji Hoye Turat Mil Jaoon
Ik Pal Ki Talas Mein
Kahet Kabir Suno Bhai Sadho
Mein To Hun Viswas Mein*

*Search with earnest and discover
Within a moment's whisker
Says Kabir, Listen O seeker
Only in your faith, am I there.*

Although Kabir fared from a poor weaver's family and was forced by his parents to take up the family profession, he remained ever immersed in the name of Lord Ram even during his work. Sometimes, he would be completely lost in divine ecstasy and even forget to complete his job. It is said that Lord Ram himself would come to his rescue in such situations and finish the job. Ultimately the clothes would be wonderfully woven.

One day, Kabir went to the market to sell a cloth woven by him. He was standing at a corner in the market place when a Brahmin came begging for clothes. He was immediately filled with compassion and pity for the poor Brahmin and completely forgot about the needs in his own poverty-stricken household. He forgot that his family members were starving and the money that would be obtained by selling the cloth was the only means of obtaining some food for them. He gave away the cloth to the Brahmin. After sometime, when Kabir came back to the realities of the mundane world and realized the apparent negligence he had shown towards his duties, he became

very concerned and worried for his family. With a heavy heart, he returned back to his home. However, to his utter astonishment and disbelief, he found huge quantities of food items and other necessities stored in his house. When he questioned his mother about how such abundant quantities of food and other articles had arrived, his mother replied unperturbed, that it was Kabir himself who had left the food items at home a moment ago. As Kabir stood astounded, he slowly realized the divine play behind the turn of events. It was Lord Ram himself who became anxious at his devotee's impending distress and grief. Hence, He had taken Kabir's form and went to his home to hand over the food and other household necessities to his mother. Kabir's joy knew no bounds and he expressed his utmost deference towards his Lord. Then he generously distributed the sacred food items in his neighbourhood. Thus God Himself took the responsibility of Kabir for he had surrendered his all at His feet. Kabir says,

*Deen dayal bharose tere
Sab Parivar chadayo bere.*

*I take Your refuge, O Compassionate
In You I surrender, my family's fate.*

To establish the greatness of devotion in the name of Lord Ram over all other forms of spiritual practice, he said,

*Jhuta jap, jhuta tap, jhuta gyan,
Ram naam bin jhuta dhyan.*

*Deepest prayers and penance the same
Even the Knowledge goes in vain,
Without surrender in Lord Ram's name
Even in meditation there isn't a gain.*

Kabir spread the message of the greatness of God till his old age and stressed the importance of a direct relationship with the divine through the intensity of ones's devotion and love. One day Kabir breathed his last amidst a crowd of devotees while still chanting the name of Lord Ram. There was a confusion over his funeral ceremony. Both the Hindus and Muslims loved him equally. The Hindus wanted to cremate him and the Muslims wanted him to be buried. While they quarreled, it is said that Kabir himself appeared and asked them to raise the cloth which covered his corpse. When this was done, the devotees found that the body had vanished and a heap of fresh roses occupied its place. Thus, the great saint who was moulded by Lord Vishnu's own hands from a divine rose, left for his heavenly abode by melting into roses again.

—Her Blessed Child **Arnab Sarkar**

Language is only a medium for communicating one's thoughts to another. It is called in only after thoughts arise. Other thoughts arise after the 'T'-thought rises and so the 'T'-thought is the root of all conversation. When one remains without thinking, one understands another by means of the universal language of silence. Silence is ever-speaking. It is a perennial flow of language which is interrupted by speaking. These words I am speaking obstruct that mute language. For example, there is electricity flowing in a wire. With resistance to its passage, it glows as a lamp or revolves as a fan. In the wire it remains as electric energy. Similarly so, silence is the eternal flow of language, obstructed by words.

—**Sri Ramana Maharshi**