

# CLASS NOTES

Class: XII

Subject: HISTORY

Topic: CH-6. **BHAKTI-SUFI TRADITIONS: CHANGES IN RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND DEVOTIONAL TEXT (C. EIGHT TO EIGHTEENTH CENTURY)**

Q.1. Describe the origin of Bhakti Movement.

ANS: Causes of the Origin of the Bhakti movement -

- ✚ Evil practices of the Hindus.
- ✚ Fear of spread of Islam
- ✚ Influence of Sufi Sects.
- ✚ Influence of Vaishnavism
- ✚ Emergence of great reformers - e.g. Namdeva, Ravidas, Ramanand, Surdas, Tulsidas, Mirabai, Kabir etc.

## 8. New Devotional Paths Dialogue and Dissent in Northern India:

Many poet-saints engaged in explicit and implicit dialogue with these new social situations, ideas and Institutions.

### 8.1 WEAVING A DIVINE FABRIC: KABIR (For reading only)

- ✚ Kabir (fourteenth-fifteenth centuries) is one of the most outstanding examples of a poet saint in this context.
- ✚ Kabirdas (Kabir itself is an Arabic word meaning “great”), was raised by a poor Muslim family belonging to the community of weavers or *julahas*, who were relatively recent converts to Islam.
- ✚ Verses ascribed to Kabir have been compiled in three distinct but overlapping traditions.

### Life and teachings of Kabir (For reading only)

- ✚ Kabir was born in a **Hindu family** (Kabirdas) but was raised by a poor Muslim family belonging to the community of weavers or *julahas*, who were relatively recent converts to Islam. They also suggested that he was initiated into bhakti by a guru, perhaps Ramanand.
- ✚ Kabir was one of the most outstanding examples of a **poet-saint who emerged in North India**. Verses ascribed to Kabir have been compiled in three distinct but overlapping traditions. The ***Kabir Bijak*** is preserved by the Kabirpanth in Varanasi and in Uttar Pradesh; the ***Kabir Granthavali*** is associated with the Dadupanth in Rajasthan, and many of his compositions are found in the ***Adi Granth Sahib***.
- ✚ Kabir’s poems have survived in several languages and dialects; and some are composed in the special language of ***nirguna*** poets, the ***sant bhasha***. Others, known as ***ulatbansi*** (upside-down sayings), are

written in a form in which everyday meanings are inverted.

- ✚ Kabir's mystical experiences are many to describe the Ultimate Reality. These include **Islam**: he described the Ultimate Reality as Allah, Khuda, Hazrat and Pir.
- ✚ He also used terms drawn from **Vedantic traditions**, *alakh* (the unseen), *nirankar* formless), Brahman, Atman, etc. Other terms with mystical connotations such as *shabda* (sound) or *shunya* (emptiness) were drawn from **yogic traditions**.
- ✚ Diverse and sometimes conflicting ideas are expressed in these poems. Some poems draw on Islamic ideas and **use monotheism and iconoclasm** to attack Hindu polytheism and idol worship; others use the Sufi concept of love to express the Hindu practice of *Nam-simaran* (remembrance of God's name).
- ✚ Scholars have tried to analyze the language, style and content to establish which verses could be in Kabir's. What this rich corpus of verses also signifies is that Kabir was and is to the present a source of inspiration for those who questioned entrenched religious and social institutions, ideas and practices their **search for the Divine**.
- ✚ However, the verses attributed to Kabir use the words ***guru and sat guru***, but do not mention the name of any specific preceptor. Historians have pointed out that it is very difficult to establish and Kabir were contemporaries, without assigning improbably long lives to either or both

**Q.2. Describe the teaching of Kabir? How does he describe the ultimate reality through the poems?**

ANS

1. Kabir (fourteenth-fifteenth centuries) is perhaps one of the most outstanding examples of a poet-saint who emerged within this context. Historians have painstakingly tried to reconstruct his life and times through study of compositions attributed to him as well as later hagiographies.
2. Verses ascribed to Kabir have been compiled in three distinct but overlapping traditions.
3. The **Kabir Bijak** is preserved by the Kabirpanth (the path or sect of Kabir) in Varanasi and elsewhere in Uttar Pradesh; the **Kabir Granthavali** is associated with the Dadupanth in Rajasthan, and many of his compositions are found in the **Adi Granth Sahib**.
4. Kabir's poems have survived in several languages and dialects; and some are composed in the special language of nirguna poets, the sant bhasha. Others, known as **ulatbansi** (upside-down sayings), are written in a form in which everyday meanings are inverted.
5. The range of traditions Kabir drew on to describe the **Ultimate Reality** include Allah, Khuda, Hazrat and Pir. He also used terms drawn from Vedantic traditions, *alakh* (the unseen), *nirakar* (formless), Brahman, Atman, etc.

6. Diverse and sometimes conflicting ideas are expressed in these poems. Some poems draw on Islamic ideas and use monotheism and iconoclasm to attack Hindu polytheism and idol worship; others use the sufi concept of zikr and ishq (love) to express the Hindu practice of nam-simaran (remembrance of God's name).
7. His valuable legacy, which is relevant for later generations, was claimed by several groups which is most evident in later debates about whether he was a Hindu or a Muslim by birth.

**The teaching of Kabir: (Important points)**

- (a) To achieve inward spiritual bliss
- (b) Condemnation of empty ritual
- (c) To foster harmony between Hinduism & Islam
- (d) He believed in one formless God
- (e) Rejected both Vedas & Kuran & the supremacy of the Brahmins & Mulas
- (f) He opposed the caste system & image worship
- (g) He taught the unity of god & the path of love & devotion
- (h) He emphasized on bhakti to achieve salvation or Moksha.

Kabir gave different names of ultimate reality. In Islam these include Allah Hazrat, Khuda and Pir. He also used terms taken from Vedantic traditions like alakh, nirankar, Brahman and atman.