

Kabir- A Candid Voice of Humanism



* Padmaxi N. Vyas

* Asst. Prof. of English, N.M. Shah Arts & Commerce College, Shankheswar, Patan

ABSTRACT

Kabir is a revolutionary saint poet of medieval India. His ideas are still relevant. He, in his poetry raised his voice against all the unjust social and religious customs. He keenly wanted to change the unhealthy social and religious customs of his time. He was outspoken and quite logical in his attack. He exposed futility of the customs and rituals. Through his poems, Kabir attacked the futility of caste system, irrational rituals and inequality. His poetry becomes a candid voice of egalitarian consciousness.

Introduction

One of the aspects of humanism is to support the cause of human rights. Egalitarianism is one of the chief characteristics of humanism. In stead of any religious scriptures, a humanist would love to practise the ethics of human rights. For a humanist, human rights are his holy books. Welfare of all human beings is the motto of humanism. Kabir never accepted discriminations observed on grounds of caste, creed, religion and gender. No one is inferior or superior. All are equal. Even he puts emphasis on animal rights too. Says Kabir : Brahman is omnipresent and it is one, irrespective of a scholar or a yogi. One must not be called superior by way of his caste, creed, religion and nationality. Kabir strongly opposed violence against animals: A goat eats grass; its skin is removed ferociously. What shall happen to one who eats a goat? In the same vein he says: during the day you fast due to Ramzan, at night you kill a cow. Is this killing of worshipping? How can you please Allah by killing innocent animals?

Kabir's message of human rights is highly relevant to the contemporary scenario of the world. Kabir was in favour of forming a secular and democratic society in which all human beings have equality of opportunity. There is not any caste system in such society. A human being is a human being. He is neither Hindu nor Muslim. He is neither Brahmin nor Shudra. **Nobody is privileged to be superior or inferior. Kabir's argues persuasively:**

It is a great illusion to observe any difference on grounds of caste. Every human body is composed of the same bones, blood, muscles and one anus, the same Brahman (atman or being) is pulsating in each heart, how can you say one is Brahmin (a superior caste in hindu caste system) and the other is shudra (an inferior caste in hindu caste system)

Kabir believed that the deeds done for the progress of society and for the betterment of all human beings are the real deed and real rituals. It has been the tendency of the people to follow the rituals of his religion blindly.

Kabir argues:

O Kabir! Only he is the real saint who is always sensitive to other people's feelings and sufferings. One who is not sensitive to other people's feelings and sufferings is Kafir (one who does not follow the commands of Allah) Kabir strongly criticises the activity of hoarding riches. And this attitude of Kabir shows his humanism. Says he:

O God! Give me only that much which is required to feed my family.

Neither I nor any sadhu (vagrant saint) remain hungry. Your life is very short and you have to live on this earth for four days only.

Enjoy what you have earned and don't expect more as no hoarding of money and riches shall accompany you while dying.

Kabir also advised them not to be very haughty and arrogant. Says Kabir:

O Kabir! Don't take mighty pride for anything you possess, Never laugh at someone.

You yacht is an the middle of an ocean, anything can happen who knows?

Most of our life is spent in earning wealth and fame. But at the end, nothing is achieved. Death takes away everything one has earned. Howsoever young one is, one is not so far from death. This attitude of Kabir is very much humanistic as he urges everyone to love all human beings irrespective of any differences. All human beings are one and all are lovable.

Kabir puts emphasis on simple living and high thinking. Kabir advised everyone to control passions and stop hoarding wealth and undue storage of goods. All the resources should be justly and equally used for all

the human beings. Equitable distribution of wealth and other resources shall help protect the human rights.

Kabir said about the development on the basis of human rights. Says Kabir:

The whole world foolishly pursue bookish knowledge, but none becomes a Pandit (a scholar).

One who pursues the meaning of four letters LOVE is a real Pandit.

Unlike any other saint poet, Kabir did not establish any religious cult. He believed in that God that lives in man and all living creatures. He said what he experienced and saw. During the time of Kabir, even now also, People followed the of rituals and traditions blindly like a rat race. He examined Hindu, Muslim, Vaishnav, etc. philosophies and found them devoid of true guidance. They made people ritualistic and not humanistic He said in one of the earliest dohas:

*If they call me Hindu, I am not,
Nor am a Musalman.*

I am a statue of a metal of this world.

It was difficult to pronounce like this. There was not

freedom of expression. No one till that time had said such a thing. Nobody had opposed religion. Kabir rejected both the major religions.

*In another Doha he says
Only Allah is eternal.*

*I am neither Hindu nor Turk.
I do not observe any rites.*

I neither do any Puja nor do I say Namaz.

God did not dwell in them. Devotion could not be measured by them. He did not believe in "Tirth Kshetra" because, according to him, they only contained water, not God. Does water lead one to God? On the other hand, grinding stone is better because it helps to provide flour. God, ultimately, dwelt in hearts of men, neither in temples, masjids, and sanyas nor in any ritual. It must be remembered that Kabir was not an atheist. He believed in knowledge which would liberate. That is, knowledge would lead to liberation. With this he tried to educate and enlighten the downtrodden.

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