



Subaltern Perspective Over Religion In Indian Context And Kabir

1. Sambhrant Shukla, Assistant Professor, Government Degree College Rey, Kangra
2. Prof. Alok Prasad, Medieval & Modern History Department, University of Allahabad
3. Anjul Kumar, Research Scholar, Medieval & Modern History Department, University of Allahabad

Subaltern scholarship, which strives to provide voice to the masses has revolutionized the academic discussions, especially the way in which we look at power relations of the society. World over, scholars have increasingly engaged themselves in a subaltern enquiry of various topics and fields transcending various humanity disciplines. Naturally, religion being one of the most foundational aspects of the life of a larger section of human population, a subaltern enquiry in this regard becomes all the more important. Moving along this discussion, we have tried to understand Kabir in this light. Coming from a family of weavers, he gave voice to the common masses, their sense, beliefs and aspirations regarding varied aspects of life, something which we often find missing in the nuanced compositions of other intellectual writings. This can be very well ascertained from the fact that his following cut across religions and classes. A nirguna social reformer and a poet par excellence, he is not one of those who write just for preaching good values; but also, to expose the hypocrisies engrained in our societies, attack our dominant belief systems and challenge the status quo. Kabir's ideas on religion was thus quite peculiar. This paper is an attempt to explore this peculiarity in all its manifestations.

Keywords: Kabir, Subaltern, Religion, Dogmas, Untouchability

Introduction

Details regarding Kabir's birth are not very clear. We don't have a definite date of his birth; scholars generally believe it to be sometime between the late 14th to mid-15th century. We also do know it for a fact that he was born in Varanasi and was raised up by a weaver Muslim couple- Niru and Nima, whose family had been recently converted to Islam¹. Another story associated with his birth recounts that he was born to a brahmin widow, who disband him to escape dishonor². He is also widely believed to have been under the tutelage of the famous Saint Ramanand and to be among twelve of his disciples, all belonging to various castes and religions. True representator of his age and times, unlike the expected ideals of austerity, aloofness and detachment from worldly affairs that saints are expected to maintain, he remained a household throughout his life and was always very much part of the society, observing it closely and learning from it.

He wrote in his couplets whatever he learnt from his guru, the preexisting secular tradition and his own observations of the society. His writings are catchy and yet many a times inconvenient. He forces us to face the reality. It is probably because of these reasons that his teachings have not remained confined to some bulky compositions which needs special training and skills to understand. He was highly popular among the masses during his lifetime and still is, but so were the other religious leaders of that period. The path shown by Guru Nanak Dev developed into a religion of Sikhism and his teachings though true for the sake of the humanity at large, is mostly revered by followers of his own religion. Similar is the case with other social

reformers and bhakti saints of the time, be it Meera, Tulsi and others. They all spoke about many such moralistic things which can largely be followed by all, however majority of such teachers also remained wedded to particular religions, doctrines and partial viewpoints at the same time, which limited their acceptivity to say people of other religions³. Now, when we compare them to Kabir, we find that he has remained much more popular and acceptive among followers of such different groups. Coming from a low caste of 'julahas' - a weaving community, he was able to connect with the downtrodden concerns much more in comparison to his other peers because he himself was one amongst them⁴. He wrote his poems in the local vernacular language of 'hindavi' and dressed them with common sayings and metaphors which resonated with the people. Apart from the religious aspects, he also spoke about their worldly concerns. His messages and teachings were not riddled by any dogmas and biases. In this way Kabir gave voice to the true subaltern concerns. However, before moving on to a detailed discussion about how Kabir - a subaltern leader - viewed religion, let's first try to understand that how the subaltern scholarship has perceived the idea of religion over the years.

Subaltern perspective over religion

Before beginning with our discussion, it is important to understand what 'Religion' means. Though no universal definition of the term exists, we may try to understand it by associating it to some commonly understood characters of it. 'Religion' is generally colligated with specific behavioral, social and doctrinal patterns, with a firm belief in some supernatural agency or transcendental being as the ultimate reality and with following a specific set of formal doctrines⁵.

Subaltern perspective unlike the Marxian view understands religion not as a fiduciary aspect of life which will just wither away with time. Talking about the relation between common sense, religion and philosophy, Antonio Gramsci has described religion as 'unity of faith between a conception of the world and a corresponding norm of conduct'⁶. He describes it as a kind of philosophical system which has produced some form of practical activity or will. He identifies the main strength of religions as their insistence on 'doctrinal unity' of the whole mass of their faithful and that they always try to ensure that there is no or least separation between the higher intellectual section and the lower stratum⁷. Historically, religion has emerged as a necessity of the larger masses, especially so in countries like India. Partha Chatterjee points out to two different ways in which religion is perceived by the society at large. For the dominant groups, it provides a justification regarding the social divisions which exists in the society and helps in binding the larger elements of the society together by providing a cohesive force and acting as a cushion against the public outrage which may question such disparities and lopsided power divisions. On the other hand, for the plebian masses it serves a totally different purpose. It enters the common sense of the subordinate masses as an element which provides them an easy access to a more powerful cultural order. Religion in this way provides a negotiated space to these two mutually antagonistic tendencies to co-exist together⁸. Talking specifically about the Indian context, he sees it as an attempt on part of the subaltern classes to overthrow the universalist codes of dharma which perpetuated the caste system - rigidly fixing the roles of individuals in the society and differentiating between people on the basis of their birth, by constructing an alternate dharma⁹. The most dominant way in which it got manifested was in the idea of bhakti - which seeks to establish a deep association between the 'bhakt' (devotee) and 'bhagwan' (diety) as opposed to 'gyan margi' of becoming one with the atman. The subaltern classes attempt here to reclaim the public space. Religion in this way becomes for them an act of self-assertion against the dominant moralistic codes imposed upon the common masses by the clergy and intellectual sections, what Wakankar calls as having found God but not theology per se and as an ethical stance which fills them with a form of primordial generosity and is a prelude for them into being more vocal their politically empowered¹⁰. Yet, as has been mentioned by even later subaltern scholars themselves, Subaltern studies' engagement with religion in its formative years was much less than what should have been the case. This is generally because of the perception amidst these early scholars that religion was just a medium used by people of ancient times to lay claim to higher status alone, while religion in itself was never a reality in itself. However, this way of thinking has now changed. New subaltern studies pay a much greater attention to understanding religion and the role it has played in forming the societies in the way which we know them. Some important names include those of Satish Sabherwal, Manu Bhagwan, Gail Omvedt, Milind Wakankar etcetera. The general approach now is to treat religion as a reality in itself, with which people latch their

aspirations. Warning against the simplistic ways in which scholars before him approached religion Wakankar claims that we have paucity of material in the role played by religion in transforming the lives of the subaltern classes by empowering them because we try to find for alternative historical sources in sync with our modern sense of understanding to reconstruct the subaltern past. He insists that rather than trying to search for alternative historical accounts of past with pre-existing methods, we must emphasize on constructing new tools which would help us in gaining a better understanding of many abstract aspects of the past¹¹.

Kabir's understanding of religion

Kabir the person and his works have remained a subject matter of intense debates and discussions throughout the Medieval period of Indian History. However, they were much more concerned with the theological facet of his teachings while neglecting other aspects of it. A scholarly reading of Kabir's works is much more recent. He became a loveable subject matter of literary and academic circles, especially from the 20th century. One of the earliest intervention of merit in this regard is that of the Bengali scholar Kshitimohan Sen who in 1910 brought about a four volume edition of Kabir's songs as popular in the Bengali oral tradition. The great literary poet Ravindranath Tagore translated into English selections from these volumes in his widely popular work One Hundred Poems of Kabir (1914). Kabir in Kshitimohan and Tagore's works is a representative of love, peace, wisdom and rational thinking¹². In Hindi literature, Kabir became a subject of discussion from around the 1930s. One of the most celebrated Hindi critic- Acharya Ramchandra Shukla believed that modernity of bhakti tradition i.e. its participation in the National arising lay not in the radical upheavels it caused in the society, but its claim to tradition¹³. Hence while writing about the bhakti tradition in his famous work Hindi Sahitya ka Itihas (1929) he is all praises for religious preachers such as Tulsidas and Meera who are representative of such a culture, while Kabir with his 'crude' verses and his disbelief in a formal god (being a follower of the 'nirgun' tradition) does not excites him much. He is of the opinion that Kabir did not gave much contribution in the nationalistic endeavaour¹⁴. Then there are scholars like Hazariprasad Dwivedi who in his monumental work Kabir (1942) is praised for having resurrected Kabir in the academic echleons (although the work came into discussion much later in 1979 due to efforts of another Hindi great Namwar Singh). He chalked Kabir's persona as a romantic rebel. One who questions the dominant order, strives to rid the society of the ill-practices that have got engrained in its fabric over the years. A firm believer of the secular Naehruvian idea of Nation, where Hinu-Muslim conflicts were to be substantiated with peace and amity between both the communities, he believed that Kabir's teachings sought to provide the best path in this regard. Kabir for Dwivedi also becomes a representative of the large hearted Hindu religion, which is able to assimilate within itself, voices of dissent and comes out more refined by assimilating such challenges¹⁵. However these toned down versions of Kabir were later challenged by other scholars. The most important name in this regard is that of Dr. Dharmvir, who disputes this common sense understanding of Kabir in his many works. He reclaims Kabir from the brahmnical readings and understanding for the dalits. For Dharmvir Kabir is not a bhakti poet nor a saint but a God himself, who founded a new religion for the marginalised Dalit sections¹⁶. Questioning the brahmnical origins of Kabir and his association with Ramanand and Ram as had been pointed by many early scholars, he insists that Kabir has been appropriated by the brahmnical tradition and that there is no authentic source confirming these stories. He also points out that how Ram for Kabir is both worldly (laukik) and material (bhautik) instead of just a diety. He is not a representator of love and devotion nor a mendicant of HJindu-Muslim unity, but a rebel against the dominant exploitative order, a voice against the tyrannies casted upon the common folk¹⁷.

It is with this prior foundation that we must begin to enquire about Kabir's association and his conception about religion. Kabir always emphasized upon the bhakti medium of approaching religious ideas. Understandably, we find him standing far away from following any specific religion with all its gamut of rituals and ideas. Kabir's position in this matter has been summed up quite clearly by an important saint and follower of Kabir's teachings- Nabhaji. He states:

Kabir refused to recognize caste rules (varnashrama) and the six (brahmnical) schools. He held that without devotion (bhakti) religion (dharma) would be irreligion (adharm). Asceticism (jog), fasting and charity are useless without adoration (bhajan). By means of ramainis, shabdis and sakhis, he preached to both Hindus and Muslims (Turaks). He showed no partiality to anyone, but spoke for the benefit of all. He spoke boldly and never tried to say what would please the world¹⁸

Kabir talks about 'Maya' in a different manner than how it has been perceived by the brahmnical understanding. While, the latter talks about a pre-existing notion of maya as being fiduciary, something which holds us back and the learned according to them are those who from the very beginning are able to understand its true nature and are able to distance themselves away from it. Maya seen from this perspective is an untouchable entity. On the other hand, Kabir also points to the strangling effect of maya in one's venture towards spiritual perfection, but for him Maya is both metaphysical as well as substantive and real¹⁹. Its intervention in the process of refinement is something with which one has to deal with, labour through. Though reprehensible, it is something which remains alluring and infatuating. In the following doha, he specifies how even after making all efforts, one is not able to totally overcome it:

“Maya's the super swindler.

Trailing the noose of three qualities,

she wanders, whispering

honeyed words.

For Vishnu she's Lakshmi,

for Shiva she's Shakti,

for priests an idol,

for pilgrims a river.

To a monk she's a nun,

to a king she's a queen,

in one house a jewel,

in one a shell.

For devotees she's a pious lady,

for Brahma, Mrs. Brahma.

Kabir says, seekers,

listen well:

this is a story

no one can tell.”²⁰

It maybe contended here that Kabir was able to understand this innate need of people (especially the downtrodden sections) to associate themselves with religions. He himself drew inspiration from the pool of ideas from religious philosophies. So instead of challenging the dominant order head on, he tried to perfect the art of bhakti tradition by engaging with the religious ideas themselves and tried to bring about a change for the better, while being part of the religious dialogue.

Against religious dogmas

Even if he never outrightly rejected the concept of religion, then at the same time, he was not someone who blindly followed everything associated with it. He tried to weed out the regressive elements out of them. In his couplets, he not only invokes 'Ram' and 'Khuda', but also pays reverence to his guru by whose blessings he was able to learn everything that he said or practiced. As Linda Hess points out, such an invocation of 'Ram' is more in the sense of a mantra or chant rather than the deity Ram²¹. This maybe be better understood from the following couplets:

“The pandits' pedantries are lies.
If saying Ram gave liberation
saying candy made your mouth sweet
saying fire burned your feet,
saying water quenched your thirst,
saying food banished hunger,
the whole world would be free...”²²

While he respected both Islam and Hinduism, pointed out the good things that they taught, but was also equally critical of the regressive and dogmatic ideas of both. As Hazariprasad Dwivedi notes:

Why should people want to think of Kabir as a syncretist of the Hindu and Muslim unity is hard to fathom. Kabir's own path was quite clear. He wasn't one to merely bring together these faiths by paying each a token tribute. He was more like the revolutionary who tore through the web of ritualized conduct and custom. Compromise was by no means his path.²³

He was especially miffed of the priestly classes and the clutch in which they had grabbed the ordinary lives of the citizens. He exclaims:

“Sadhu bhaya to kya bhaya, jo nahi bol bichhaar.

Hatai parai aatma, jeebh liye tarbaar”

(trans. What if one is a learned saint, his tongue is sans control. Wielding the sword of vile words, he can still harm another's soul)²⁴

If he questioned the Brahmins for their ill speak and double standards, then he was equally harsh upon the Mullas and Qazis as well.

“...Now you, Mr. Qazi
what kind of work is that,
going from house to house
chopping heads?
Who gave the order for chickens and goats?
Who told you to swing the knife?
Aren't you afraid to be called a sage
as you read your verses
and dupe the world?
Kabir says, this high-class Muslim

wants to force his way on the world.

Fast all day,

kill cows at night,

here prayers, there blood—

does this please God?”²⁵

He was critical also of the infighting and differences among followers of both religions and the way priestly classes became the stakeholders of their respective religions, playing an active role in perpetuating these differences further. A firm believer in monotheism, he insisted that all religions are similar in their essence and are there for improving people’s lives and never to promote fighting. He believed that if all of them revered to a single god, then there would be no need of fighting. Even more, a single God would help in uniting the people as well. They would be able to comprehend that how artificial differences such as caste divisions, untouchability and quarrelling over religious differences is of no use, because it is not going to solve people’s actual problems²⁶. In order to enhance the quality of their life and tackle the real issues, people needed to move away from all of this. He wanted to find a peaceful settlement to the religious problem. In one of his couplets, he states:

“...For conversation we make two—

this namaz, that puja,

this Mahadev, that Muhammed,

this Brahma, that Adam,

this a Hindu, that a Turk,

but all belong to earth.

Vedas, Korans, all those books,

those Mullas and those Brahmins—

so many names, so many names,

but the pots are all one clay.

Kabir says, nobody can find Ram,

both sides are lost in schisms.

One slaughters goats, one slaughters cows,

they squander their birth in isms.”²⁷

Kabir never intended to remain a preacher alone nor was he just looking to amass a following for himself. He not only preaches but also questions the readers conscience, forces one to think and to find answers. His messages are very direct and personal. So, instead of mincing or sugar coating his words, he would categorically call out those he wants to address (Suno bhai sadhu, Suno bhai pandit etcetra). He was interested in bringing about real change in the society²⁸. Another very peculiar feature of Kabir’s poems and couplets was the use of the ulatbasi style of speaking, where the speaker intends to say much more than just the literal meaning of the words. He wants us to think and understand what is between the lines. Even the name of his collection has been called Bijak, which in Medieval times was used to signify a guide to hidden treasure²⁹. In this process of discovery, one would come to understand the real meaning of life and form a much more practical approach towards actual worldly problems. He remarks:

“Use the strength of your own arm,
 stop putting hope in others.
 When the river flows through your own yard,
 how can you die of thirst?”³⁰

Against caste division and untouchability

Caste system has been a typical feature of the Indian society right from the Vedic ages. It is largely responsible for the large-scale social, political and economic inequalities prevalent in our society over the ages. At the fundamental of it lies the belief that birth of a person into a certain household belonging to a certain caste would determine his social standing and moreover would become a source of differentiation from those belonging to other castes. It further stresses that those born in a particular caste are expected to follow certain prescribed professions, marry within their castes alone, not inter-dine with those belonging to other castes and those placed higher as per the societal ladder exploit the lower castes going as far as practicing untouchability with them. However, it is also not as if there was no revulsion against this unjust system as many western scholars have tried to portray, such as sociologist Louis Dumont’s concept of ‘Homo Hierarchius’ i.e., ‘purity’ and ‘pollution’ as being the only defining character of this hierarchy and politics, wealth etcetera just playing the role of fillers³¹. As Andre Beteille suggests, that though the ‘Homo Hierarchius’ societies like India are different from the ‘Homo Equalis’ (stressing on equality) kind of societies generally found in west, it does not mean that there never had been attempts made towards seeking equality in the past of such societies. This she, highlights is due to a flawed understanding of earlier scholars, while in actual we need to take into account the idea of ‘dispersed inequalities’ of such societies³². It is now widely accepted that this template of hierarchy was questioned time and again over the History of India through political, social and economic mobilizations.

It is in this context that we must evaluate Kabir as a social reformer who made tiresome efforts in order to bring about a positive change in the society by arguing against the artificial caste system. His ‘julaha’ (weaver caste) identity would be our first point of enquiry. Although julaha is a Persian word, but we do find its mention in Hindu scriptures as well. According to them julaha were those who were born of a Muslim father and a Kuvind (a low Hindu caste) mother³³. Although they are Muslims but have certain basic differences with other Muslims. They are generally concentrated into such region of Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Bengal, where Nath Panthi yogi tradition held sway. The julaha community had deep association with the Nath panthi tradition, which itself seeks a reformative path, much different from the Brahmanical Hindu tradition. It has been estimated that the julahas may have converted in masse to Islam from some low Hindu caste in hope of a better place in a new religion. That is why unlike other Muslim communities like Sayyids and Pathans they are not found throughout the country, but remained limited to their original place of residence³⁴. From Kabir’s ‘Bani’ we come to know that the julaha community had neither been able to shed off its earlier Hindu traditions and customs completely, nor had they been able to attain any large-scale upliftment in their social standing³⁵. It is also to be noted that not only the julahas but there were many other such castes which did not associated themselves with the strict codes and morals of the Brahmanical Hindu tradition, Nath Panthis being also one among them. In order to claim a higher status, they showed their rebellion in many ways such as claiming higher status (sanskritization), relying on bhakti instead of strict brahmanical codes of yajnas and the gyan margi tradition. Having been brought up in such an environment, Kabir naturally inherited many such ideas and one can find its imprint in his poems. He questions the very basis of caste differentiation and the brahmanical codes determining them. In one of his verses, he challenges the brahmanical logic in the following words:

“Pandit, look in your heart for knowledge.
 Tell me where untouchability
 came from, since you believe in it.
 Mix red juice, white juice and air—
 a body bakes in a body.

As soon as the eight lotuses
 are ready, it comes
 into the world. Then what's
 untouchable?
 Eighty-four hundred thousand vessels
 decay into dust, while the potter
 keeps slapping clay
 on the wheel, and with a touch
 cuts each one off.
 We eat by touching, we wash
 by touching, from a touch
 the world was born.
 So who's untouched? asks Kabir.
 Only she
 who's free from delusion."³⁶

In the above sabda, by questioning the brahmins that where did untouchability came from and later by juxtaposing it with the idea of all having the same blood and touch being the essence of all creation, he objectively highlights that how this artificial division fails to stand any test of reason. If everyone is made of the same blood and juices, then how can they be differentiated. In the same vein one can discern that he seeks to upturn and demolish the basis of varna system which tends to create hierarchies. It is also notable that he was not just questioning hegemonical position of the brahmins and upper classes alone; but also the sources from which such a system derives its authenticity such as the Vedas, Puranas etcetera. He continued this rebellion not only during his life; but also, when he was to die. It was popularly believed during his time that Kashi (Varanasi) was the purest place on the Earth and so it was considered very auspicious if one died there, while on the other hand another town close by- Magahar (a town in modern day Uttar Pradesh) was considered to be very inauspicious. As the story goes, he deliberately chose to die in Magahar. In one his sabdas he had also explained his stand:

“You simple-minded people!
 As water enters water, so Kabir
 will meet with dust.
 That Maithili pandit said
 you'd die near Magahar.
 What a terrible place to be dead!
 If you want Ram to take you away,
 die somewhere else instead.
 Besides, they say
 whoever dies at Magahar
 comes back a donkey.”

So much for your faith in Ram.

What's Kashi? Magahar? Barren ground,
when Ram rules in your heart.

If you give up the ghost in Kashi

is there some debt

on the Lord's part?"³⁷

Kabir was not alone in this endeavor of rebelling against the Brahminical codes and ideology. Many other poets and reformers, some even his contemporaries made similar such attempts. They hoped to create a utopian casteless society where there would be no segregation on the basis of birth. These utopian worlds were to be radically different than what the elite Brahminical conceptions of purity would like to envision. So, be it saint Ravidas' 'Begumpura', where there would be no taxes or toil and everyone was allowed to wander freely without any restrictions or Tukaram's Pandharpur, where time and death had no entry or Kabir's Premnagar and Amarlok- a land of immortality³⁸. This in a way shows that robbed of the possibilities to express themselves freely within the Brahminical codes, these leaders of common men expressed themselves in such ways. These however were not dreams, but a guiding light for generations to come, an inspiration for them to continue their struggle against the hegemonical order.

Conclusion

Kabir Das has been one of the most celebrated personalities of Indian history and a true leader of the people. He influenced not only the bhakti movement but continues to have a profound effect on the whole cultural ethos and public consciousness of the Indian society. In the above paper we tried to understand that how he engaged with the idea of religion and how it is line with the way subaltern scholars have viewed religion as a reclaimed space for the downtrodden masses of the society, especially so within the Indian context.

References

1. Lorenzon, D. N. (1991). Kabir Legends and Anant Das's Kabir Parchai. New York: State University of New York Press Lorenzon, 1991, p. 7
2. The Life of Saint Kabir Das. (n.d.). Retrieved from Indian Culture: <https://indianculture.gov.in/stories/life-saint-kabir-das>
3. Wakankar, M. (2010). Subalternity and Religion: The prehistory of Dalit empowerment in Soth Asia. New York: Routledge. pp. 42-43
4. Ibid., p. 44
5. Huguelet, P., & Koenig, H. G. (2009). Introduction; Key Concepts. In P. Huguelet, & H. G. Koenig (Eds.), Religion & Spirituality in Psychiatry. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 1
6. Gramsci, A. (1971). Selections from the Prison Notebooks. (Q. Hoare, & G. N. Smith, Eds.) New York: International Publishers. p. 326
7. Ibid., p. 328
8. Chatterjee, P. (1989). Caste and Subaltern Consciousness. In R. Guha (Ed.), Subaltern Studies VI: Writings on South Asian History and Society. New Delhi: Oxford University Press. p. 172
9. Ibid., pp. 180-181
10. Wakankar, op. cit., pp. 3-4
11. Ibid., p.8
12. Ibid., p. 47
13. Ibid., p. 42
14. Ibid., pp. 43-44

15. Ibid., pp. 46-47
16. Ibid., p. 83
17. Ibid., pp. 84-85
18. Nabhaji as cited in Habib, I. (1993). *Medieval Popular Monotheism and Its Humanism: The Historical Setting*. *Social Scientist*, 21(3/4 (Ma. -Apr., 1993)), 78-88. doi:<https://doi.org/10.2307/3517632>
19. Mishra, V. (1998). *Devotional Poetics and the Indian Sublime*. New York: State University of New York Press. p. 174
20. Kabir, shabd 59, as cited in Hess, L., & Singh, S. (2002). *The Bijak of Kabir*. New York: Oxford University Press. pp. 60-61
21. Ibid., p. 4
22. Kabir, shabd 40, as cited in Hess & Singh, 2002, p. 54
23. Hazariprasad Dwivedi, as cited in Wakankar, 2010, p. 46
24. Kabir, & Das, G. (1991). *Couplets from Kabir*. New Delhi : Motilal Banarsidass Publishers. p. 121
25. Kabir, Ramaini 40, as cited in Hess & Singh, 2002, pp. 87-88
26. Habib, op. cit., p. 86
27. Kabir, shabd 30, as cited in Hess & Singh, 2002, p. 51
28. Ibid., p. 7
29. Ibid., p. 27
30. Kabir shabd 103, as cited in Hess & Singh, p. 32
31. Dumont, L. (1999). *Homo Hierarchicus: The Caste System and its Implications*. (M. Sainsbury, L. Dumont, & B. Gulati, Trans.) New Delhi: Oxford University Press. pp. 60-75
32. Beteille, A. (1979). *Homo hierarchicus, homo equalis*. *Modern Asian Studies*, 13(4), 529.
33. Dwivedi, H. (2008). *Kabir* (9th ed.). New Delhi: Rajkamal Prakashan Private Ltd. pp. 15-16
34. H.H. Rizley, as cited in Dwivedi, 2008, pp. 16-17
35. Ibid., p. 18
36. Kabir shabd 41, as cited in Hess & Singh, 2002, p. 55
37. Kabir shabd 103, Ibid., pp.75-76
38. Omvedt, G. (2008). *Seeking begumpura*. New Delhi: Navyana Pub. p. 18