



Research Article

A Rasa-Dhvani Reading of Kabir's Select Verses in Translation

Saumya^{1, *}¹PhD Research Scholar, The English and Foreign Languages University, Lucknow, India

Abstract

This paper attempts to read the select verses from Kabir's *nirguna* poetry in light of the *rasa-dhvani* school of Indian aesthetics and philosophy. In an attempt to critically interpret Kabir's work within the context of contemporary literary scholarship, the researcher has chosen Vinay Dharwadkar's English translation from his work titled *Kabir: The Weaver's Songs* (2003). Rather than framing Kabir's *nirguna bhakti* as a contest of spiritual supremacy, this study emphasizes its inward, participatory nature - an invitation to self-reflection and experiential engagement with the self as approved by Anandavardhana's conception of *Sahrdaya*. The paper, therefore, attempts to explore Kabir both as a poet and as a philosopher, within the larger ambit of the evocation of *rasas* in his select compositions. Drawing on Anandavardhana's *Dhvani* theory, the researcher analyzes how aesthetic suggestion operates in Kabir's verses to articulate the egalitarian ethos. Select extracts by Dharwadkar serve as the textual basis for this inquiry, thereby facilitating a detailed assessment of Kabir's philosophical poetics within the framework of *rasa-dhvani* aesthetics.

Keywords

Indigenous Knowledge System, Kabirdas, Nirguna Bhakti, Indian Literary Theory, Indian Aesthetics, *Anandavardhana*

1. Introduction

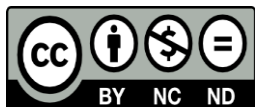
The Bhakti movement has been of integral importance to the researchers of Humanities residing in the South Asian region and beyond since it traces an accurate and realistic representation of the socio-economic occurrences of the time. In the Indian subcontinent, it marks a crucial literary movement that found its roots in Adiguru Shankaracharya's founding philosophy from the Southern section of India in the sixth century. By the beginning of the early fifteenth century, this movement gradually reached zenith in the hands of celebrated saints-cum-philosophers like Kabir, Guru Nanak, Mirabai,

Surdas, Tulsidas, Tukaram and Chaitanya Mahaprabhu to name a few. The term *bhakti* denotes the ultimate adoration and devotion to God through surrendering of the self which is the primary path to attaining *moksha* (salvation). Broadly popular for its anthropocentric approach to God, this movement attempts to bring God closer to the illiterate, marginalised, vulnerable and lower strata of society. The dissemination of knowledge inherent in vedic scriptures to the masses in the vernacular language formed the core of this reformist movement which definitely led to a significant shift in the then

*Corresponding author: saumyaphdlitk22@efluniversity.ac.in

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socio-political scenario of the nation. Meaningless ritualistic practices were no longer followed. The barriers of caste and creed were broken; religious orthodoxy was questioned and the idol worship was vehemently criticised. As opposed to the classical philosophy of Brahmanical intelligentsia, the vernacularization of Bhakti was now happening through *sankirtan* at temples, *qawwali* at dargahs and *gurbani* at gurudwaras emphasising religious toleration and harmony.

Since the movement had its roots in the South, it changed its course of nature as it travelled up to the Northern regions of the nation. Bhakti saints of South India were of two sects: The first sect, the Vaishnava Alvars, includes Nammalvar, Andal, Periyalvar and Thirumangal Alvar. The second sect, the Shaiva Nayanars, flourished through the works of saints like Appar (Tirunavukkarasar), Sambandar, Sundarar, Manikkavachakar. Bhakti movement in the Northern region is understood through twofold division, i.e. *Saguna* bhakti tradition and *Nirguna* bhakti tradition. *Saguna* bhakti practitioners were *prem-ashrayi* and worshipped God with form and attributes. The *saguna* branch of bhakti poets include Jayadeva, Tulsidas, Mirabai, Surdas, Narsi Mehta, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Ramanuja, Sant Eknath, Sant Tukaram and Tyagaraja to name a few. The practitioners of the *Nirguna Brahman*, on the contrary, were *jnana-ashrayi* and their philosophy can be understood through *jnana* (knowledge) and *atma-sakshatkar* (self-realisation). Kabir, Guru Nanak, Dadu Dayal, Ravidas, Namdev and Bulleh Shah were the worshippers of *nirguna* God. The reactionary movement presented through the *nirguna* school of Kabir believed in the impersonalization of God and commented elaborately on the scriptural rigidity.

Kabir occupies a pivotal place in the literatures of India and the World. His poetic precision and spiritual self-affirmation is remarkable. His ancestral occupation as a weaver afforded him ample time for reflection. An authentic account derived from Priyadas's commentary on Nabhadass' *Bhaktamal* reveals that Kabir used to be engrossed in debates about the idea of religion and its narrow repercussions so much so that he could barely earn enough to provide for his small thriving family. While wandering around the countryside, Kabir used to sing his compositions/creations in *panchmel ki khichdi* (a language made from the mix of Awadhi, Rajasthani, Bhojpuri and Punjabi words). Later his disciples compiled his *Saakhis* (couplets) and *Padas* (longer verses) in *Bijak*, the only work attributed to Kabir. However, in the university classroom discussions, his identity is merely relegated to a "member of the so-called Other Backward Classes in the official discourse of 'modern' India, and as a historically neglected and marginalised voice in the discourses of modern and postmodern scholarship" (Aggarwal, 37). He enjoys posthumous fame as someone who is "made to play the role of the spokesperson of Christianity without Christ, or of a Sufi, tactically speaking the language of Hindu Bhakti... he is also assigned the roles of the 'apostle of Hindu-Muslim unity', or the champion of Marxism before

Marx, or of twentieth-century Dalit world view." (ibid, 40)

Purushottam Aggarwal presents Kabir as one of the early exponents of *Deshaj Adhunikta* (vernacular modernity) and asserts that "Kabir was a master of sarcasm, but also of poignant articulation of nostalgia and utopia, love and longing, anguish and bliss. And yet, he has been reduced to a 'reformer', founder of a new religious order." (44) Rev. G.H. Westcott in his book titled *Kabir and the Kabirpantha* (1907) designates Kabir with the label of the Indian counterpart of European Martin Luther. This epithet, along with the others mentioned above, is evident of Kabir's reduced status as a reformist and oversimplifies the reality of Kabir's philosophical depth. Kabir's profoundly progressive philosophy, instead, should be understood beyond the hierarchical disparities of caste, creed, religion and faith. It is solely supported through the idea of love and harmony among individuals across the globe. Often misconstrued as 'Vedanta-inspired bhakti', his philosophy is rather a great admixture of "vedantist and vaishnavite, pantheist and transcendentalist, Brahman and Sufi ideas and beliefs" (Jha, 49). Kabir's philosophical discourse is an extraordinary amalgamation of simplicity and complexity at the same time. His idea of God could be understood through *nirguna* (the one without attributes), *nirankar* (the one who is beyond form and structure), and *niranjan* (the one who is pure and flawless). In his translator's note to *Kabir: The Weaver's Songs*, Vinay Dharwadkar captures the gist of Kabir's famous song titled *jheeni chadariya*. That the physical body is a mere muslin wrapper woven by Mother Nature under which the consciousness resides. The (cosmic) connection of an individual with the universe is reflected through the following lines. In his words: "...the human body is always already a *kosha*, an envelope, woven on the loom of procreation like a sheet of diaphanous muslin, to be wrapped around mind, consciousness and self." (xii) This very comment echoes directly in one of Kabir's verses which is as follows:

You haven't puzzled out any of the Weaver's secrets:

It took Him a mere moment to stretch out the whole universe on His loom.

While you were there, listening to the Vedas and Puranas,

I was here, spreading out the threads of my warp.

He fashioned His loom out of earth and sky:

He plied the sun and moon simultaneously as His twin shuttles.

When He worked the pair of treadles in the pit below in tandem,

I acknowledged Him in my mind as a master weaver.

I found His signs, the signs of a weaver, inside my house:

In a flash I recognised Him as Rama.

Kabir says, "I've smashed my loom: only the Weaver can mesh thread with thread." (111)

To decode the essence of Kabir's compositions, the prerequisite of the process is that "an individual must 'break the circuit of the senses' and 'extinguish' all sensory experience:

there is no need for contact or engagement with anything in the external world, all of which is the antithesis of both the true self within and the God beyond God who is beyond the created universe outside.” (Dharwadkar, 91)

Kabir’s persona along with his philosophy subverts the societal conventions as the philosophy conveyed through his literature transcends beyond the four orientations as given in Vinay Dharwadkar’s book titled *Kabir: The Weaver’s Songs* as ‘non-religious dispositions’, ‘a-religious disposition’, ‘anti-religious disposition’, ‘post-religious disposition’ (93). Kabir’s *bhakti* and thenceforth his canon need not be interpreted in the light of competition as to who’s supreme, it rather demands participation of one’s own self with the self. This paper, therefore, attempts to do a capsule study of Kabir as a poet and as a philosopher. Focusing primarily on the articulation of *rasas* in his creative compositions, the researcher also intends to read Kabir from the vantage point of *Dhvani* theory propounded by Anandavardhana. Therefore, the researcher has chosen a few verses from Vinay Dharwadkar’s translation to facilitate a discussion on Kabir’s philosophy of egalitarianism in the light of *Rasa-Dhvani* phenomenon.

The Framework

The cross-disciplinary nature of the tools provided in Indian aesthetic tradition depicts the rich cultural heritage of India and they provide a fertile ground for the analysis of Indian literary narratives. Indian aesthetic tradition broadly deals with “a philosophy of art, logic, and science of art with all its metaphysical abstractness” (Gupta, 3). With reference to art, aesthetics is understood through its primary concern with three forms i.e. Poetry, Music and Architecture. Poetry, being the ultimate and supreme form of art, is replete with an abundance of meanings. The roots of Indian poetics can be traced from the earliest extant text available titled *Natyashastra*. The evocation of *rasas* in performances forms the core of this classic work by Bharatamuni. Divided into thirty-six chapters, the eight-fold division of *rasas* (*Sringara*, *Hasya*, *Karuna*, *Raudra*, *Veera*, *Bhayanaka*, *Bibhatsa* and *Adbhuta*) along with their corresponding *sthayibhavas*, *vibhavas*, *anubhavas* and *vyabhicharibhavas* is the central feature of this text. Abhinavagupta’s later addition of ninth *rasa* as *Shanta Rasa* completes the list. *Rasa* provides “emotional consciousness, wherein all the disparate elements of the play, language, gesture, imitations, scenery, coincide” (Gerow, 248). Anandavardhana’s ninth century A.D. treatise titled *Dhwanyaloka* relies on *dhvani* as the suggestive element that produces an aesthetic effect in a piece of art. This Kashmiri philosopher borrowed this conception from Bhartrihari’s theory of *Sphota*. Often perceived as “an extension of the elaborate theorising about language that was being pursued in ancient India by the Vedic exegetes, the grammarians, the logicians.” (Chari, 391), the intangibility of human emotions make way to its suggestion through *dhvani*. Associated with *dhvani* is the conception

of *Sadharnikarana* which can be translated as the process of transpersonalization. Aiming at the universalization of emotions, this process can be explained “a process which depersonalises an experience or renders it universally shareable/followable” (Patankar, 299)

In an attempt to do the *rasa-dhvani* analysis, the meanings are decoded initially at the level of *abidha* i.e. the direct or literal meaning. Secondary *lakshana* is unstated and differs from the denotative meaning. Suggestion or *dhvani* lies in the tertiary layer of the meaning and what distinguishes it from the metaphorical meaning is *prayojanam* (ultimate purpose) and suggestion with a purpose makes a literary creation *uttama*. Bharatmuni’s coinage of *rasa* and Anandavardhana’s conceptualization of *dhvani* was integrated by Abhinavagupta as *rasa-dhvani* (*kāvya vyāpāragocara rasa dhvaniriti*) is to be relished by a true *sahrdaya*. The participation of the reader, as elaborated by Abhinavagupta, is of utmost importance to the aesthetes in Indian contexts. A *sahrdaya* should be on the same wavelength as the writer is, therefore, the primacy given to the reader or *sahrdaya* is not to be found elsewhere. The nature of *ananda* experienced by *sahrdaya* is anything but ordinary and this very experience is called *rasanubhuti*. In other words, experiencing art through *rasanubhuti* or *rasa-realization* is “both a visa and a passport for the enjoyer’s adventure for a ‘journey within’...it makes you taste the supreme bliss of Brahman or Divine consciousness and gets the enjoyer wedded with extraordinary joy” (Nandi, 118). It is a “take off from the earth and landing into the Divine; it is a flight from the region of ‘the earth earthy’ to the region of ‘the air airy’; it is a growing of a corporeal ‘I’ into the cosmic consciousness ‘I’”. It is sinking, mixing, melting, merging, and becoming one with the Divine.” (ibid, 119)

To decipher the mystical and socio-spiritual depths of Kabir’s *nirguna* poetry, this paper employs the *Rasa-Dhvani* framework utilising the three-tiered linguistic structure of *abidha* (denotative meaning), *lakshana* (metaphorical meaning), and *vyanjana* (suggestive meaning). This specific framework provides a methodological foundation for Kabir’s verses as they are often replete with *ulatbansis* (paradoxes) and profound spiritual metaphors. The linguistic property of *dhvani* thus becomes crucial to bridge the gap between Kabir’s vernacular simplicity and his complex philosophical depth. The amalgamation of *rasa* and *dhvani*, therefore, provides the researcher with the precise critical tools needed to decipher the *prayojanam* (ultimate purpose) behind his poetry, transitioning from the earthly text to the divine experience. In the course of this analysis, the verses are first read at the level of *abidha* to establish the surface-level imagery or Kabir’s immediate socio-religious critique. Next, *lakshana* is utilized to decode the secondary and unstated implications of his unconventional rhetoric. *Vyanjana* is applied at the end in an attempt to extract the tertiary, suggested meaning (*dhvanyartha*). This three-step unlayering reveals how Kabir’s poetry transcends socio-

political binaries and evokes *shanta rasa* in the kindred heart of a *sahrdaya*, the researcher in this case. This study culminates into a demonstration of how a *sahrdaya* is guided towards a universalized aesthetic experience (*sadharnikarana*), aligning with Kabir's egalitarian and cosmic consciousness.

2. Methods

This study adopts a qualitative, interpretative approach grounded in Indian aesthetic theory to examine select verses from Kabir. Primary texts are drawn from Kabir: The Weaver's Songs (2003), ensuring textual consistency. The analysis applies Anandavardhana's *rasa-dhvani* framework through a three-tiered reading of *abidha*, *lakshana*, and *vyanjana*. Close textual analysis is employed to trace aesthetic suggestion and emotional evocation. Secondary scholarly sources support contextual interpretation. MLA 9th edition guidelines are followed for citation and documentation, maintaining academic rigor and coherence throughout the study.

3. Result and Discussion

Kabir's verses exhibit *santa rasa* in great abundance. The spiritual delight inherently present in *nirguna bhakti* is a must in order to understand his verses. The suggestive philosophy of Kabir's oeuvre makes one transcend into a sublime experience i.e. the heightened delight of *ananda* (bliss). Kabir, very assertively, poses questions to fundamental motifs and beliefs of any religion. According to an anecdotal account, the ones who spend their last years residing in Kashi, would attain *moksha* and the ones who are inhabitants of Maghar, will have to suffer the miseries of hell. Kabir, through the following lines, begins by asking a rhetorical question seeking what future has kept in store for him. Born and brought up in Varanasi, his very conscious decision of spending his last days in the 'cursed' city Maghar is being referred to here. His act of 'squandering' in the sacred city of Kashi for the entirety of his lifetime indicates sarcasm. From the *abidha-mulaka* angle, Kabir seems to give the impression that he is slightly afraid of his retirement move to Maghar. His mockery, however, suggests the shallowness of the orthodox beliefs, rituals and practices prevalent in the society. He uses self-deprecating irony for his act of leaving Varanasi as 'a huge mistake'. The *lakshana* meaning of the 'fish out of water' metaphor reveals the suffering of a common man who is devoid of spiritual bliss. His simultaneous suspension of the theological orthodoxy is noteworthy in the following lines when he utters:

Now tell me, Rama, What's my future trajectory?
I've renounced Banaras: a huge mistake.
Like a fish out of water, stranded on a bank,
I'm left without the austerities of my previous births.
I've squandered my whole life in Shiva's city:

Now that it's time to die, I've risen and come to Maghar.
For so many years, I practised my penances in Kashi:
Now that I'm dying, I'm a resident of Maghar.

Kashi, Maghar: for a thoughtful man, they're one and the same.

My devotion is depleted: how will it land me on the other shore?

I say: Everybody recognizes Ganesha and Shiva,
But, Kabir, though dead, absorbs himself in Lord Rama."
(139)

Through the juxtaposition of Kashi and Maghar in the above-cited lines, the *dhvanyartha* reveals the omnipresence of God. That He is capable and powerful enough to save His true devotees despite the geographical differences. The feigned anxiety shown in the beginning of the verse resolves into producing *shanta rasa* with the *sthayi-bhava* of *nirveda*. The reader feels tranquil at the end of this verse by realising that all the walls of separation are human-created and there is no tangible boundary that distinguishes one place from another. *Moksha* can be attained in the present life also without one's movement from one geographical place to another. In order to connect with God, one must transcend the boundaries within. The absurd and meaningless rituals performed to please God and the human-created geographical boundaries do not really matter at the gates of heaven.

Kabir's *nirguna* philosophy and his understanding of secularism makes God accessible to all irrespective of the society-constructed hierarchy. In an attempt to develop an egalitarian and cosmopolitan society, his subversive ideology treats every being alike - a woman, a muslim, a *shudra* or a *brahmin*. He considers idolatry the sheerest nonsense and is fairly straightforward while denouncing the hypocrite nature of religious orthodoxy, as is clearly evident in these lines:

If you're a Brahmin, from a Brahmin woman born,
why didn't you come out in some special way?
And if you're a Muslim, from a Muslim woman born,
why weren't you circumcised inside?

Says Kabir: No one is lowly born.

The only lowly are those who never talk of Ram. (54)

Beginning on a twisted note, the above-mentioned lines are the perfect example of *ulatbansis* (a particular writing style adapted by Kabir for paradoxical statements) that critique anthropogenic particularities and the constructed identities of 'hindu' or 'muslim'. A brahmin's false claim of nobility and innate superiority is being satirised here leading to a possibility of *hasya rasa*. His mocking of pretentious society through the profane issues reveal the artificial nature of society. The socially fabricated binaries of 'high' and 'low', 'noble' and 'lowborn' lead to no special treatment on the deciding day of judgement. The *dhvanyartha* reveals that there are no physiological differences. In addition, 'the lowly-born' are those who are disconnected from the thread of spirituality. It is

mandatory to clarify Kabir's conception of Rama as one might mistakenly refer Rama to the *saguna* deity, the King of Ayodhya and *Maryadapurushottam* Rama of Goswami Tulsidas. Kabir's *nirguna* Rama, on the contrary, is all-pervasive. His Rama exists within and is accessible through one's looking inside. His Rama dwells in all the beings Brahmins, Shudra and Muslims alike without the mediation of nobler birth or the painful surgical process of circumcision. For Kabir, realisation of Rama is realising the inseparability of the devotee and the lord. It has been clearly emphasized by Vinay Dharwadkar, the translator himself, that "even though 'Rama' is God with specific qualities (a human incarnation of Vishnu), once we attach the epithet 'nirguna' to His name, He insistently becomes His own unimaginable opposite." (79)

Furthermore, Kabir poignantly articulates the deceitful nature of the established religions and the idol worship promoted by the ultraconservatives. He bluntly declares his apprehensions regarding the customary religious practices. His clever retort on shallow rituals and much emphasis on the intrinsic merit is implied in these lines. Kabir, in his peculiar way, attempts to bridge the essential chasm existing betwixt theological differences. In the following verse, the *vachyārtha* is expressed through Kabir's incessant questioning of God's presence only in the sacred spheres and sanctum sanctorum of temples and mosques. Kabir suggests that the divine is omnipresent, transcending designated sacred spaces. The profane materialistic rituals and the practice of idolatry prevalent in Hinduism is being mocked. The dissolution of religion-based boundaries was the need of the hour in the then socio-political scenario. In such a crucial time, Kabir emerges as a *messiah* addressing and uniting the sectarian differences existing within the society. It is, then, not very difficult to decipher the production of *adbhuta rasa* which is greatly illustrated through the following lines:

If the Mosque is the place where God resides,
then who owns the rest of the land?
Ram lives in images and holy locations?
Then why has none ever found him there?
Hindus, Muslims – where did they come from?
Who got them started down this road? (44)

The idea of God, in any civilization, whatsoever, is the primary moving force of life. In this regard, Kabir's idea of God deserves special mention. His conception of God is quite different from what his guru Ramananda adheres to. Deviating from his *Vaishnava* guru's Ram, Kabir's *nirguna* Rama is rather singular or monochromatic in nature, thereby making it more accessible to the masses. It could be largely defined as an entity who is beyond assumption, boundaries, description and nomenclature. To borrow the words of Hawley and Juergensmeyer, "Kabir's idea of God is not the sort of reality that one can speak of and conceptualise, certainly not the sort one can see. God is not an object, but lies closer to us than our acts of language and symbolic organisation permits us to view

and closer to life than the limitations of our own brief and flawed existences allow us to comprehend." (42)

If you love your followers, Rama,
Settle this quarrel, once and for all.
Is Brahma greater, or where He came from?
Is the Veda greater, or its origin?
Is this mind greater, or what it believes in?
Is Rama greater, or the one who knows Him?
Kabir says, I'm in despair. Which is greater?
The pilgrim-station, or Hari's devoted slave? (137)

Kabir is very conscious of social rituals and practices. In this particular verse, he makes scathing statements against the ritualistic customs and practices while mocking the dogmas of institutionalised religion. Kabir emphasises the union of the devotee's self with God. In this respect, Kabir's staunch faith in the power of love is evident here as, per his view, love is exclusively the finest means to bring about unity in a society.

Why go off to Orissa for ritual immersions?
Why bow your head in a mosque?
You're a crook at heart, You pretend to pray:
Why go all the way on a hajj to the Ka'aba?
These men and women, The whole lot of them, are nothing
but Your forms.

I'm a child of Rama and Allah, Everyone's my guru-and-pir.

Kabir says, listen, O men and women:
Seek shelter with the One and Only
Repeat His singular Name, You creatures:
For only then will you be able to cross life's ocean (130)

From the *abidha-mulaka* perspective, Kabir's tone of interrogation is continued in this. The deeper message, however, is conveyed through *dhvanyārtha* i.e. divinity is made distant through hollow practices propagated through established religions and the mandate of pilgrimages in order to attain *moksha* is a religious construct. Kabir denounces it as an utterly useless practice for salvation can not be achieved through mere pilgrimages to Jagannath Puri or Mecca Medina. God's existence is profound. His further elaboration on 'Ram-Allah' divide and the 'Guru-Pir' debate is noteworthy. Kabir, through this verse, attempts to unravel the true meaning of *bhakti*. Most often addressed as Ram, Hari, Karim, Allah, Khuda in his verses here and there, his unchequered philosophy is often associated with the mysterious yet universal presence of Ram. There is often a dichotomy between what Kabir says and what one understands it to be. The renowned philosopher-saint-poet makes an effort to establish not another religion or *panth* altogether, rather his poetic praxis endeavours to encourage the experience of love in pursuit of transcending the self and therefore incorporating the implications of *santa rasa* here.

Through this, one develops a distinct understanding that Kabir neither establishes nor destroys Brahmanical or Islamic practices. According to his opinion, it is not pragmatic to communicate the implications of his mystical experiences so that

people constrained by ignorance and superstition could also experience liberty and tranquillity. Furthermore, the incomparable status of 'Him' piques the curiosity of the reader. Kabir, very carefully churns the imagery of the one who is beyond nourishment and care, whose enigmatic and all-pervading presence, his immeasurable strength, his weight neutrality - is reflective of his supreme status. Through this, one can easily distil the manifestation of *santa rasa* that is being signalled by the refined sensibility of one's clear conscience. As Kabir advises

Recollect Him, first, in your mind: No one else compares with Him.

Nobody can measure His full extent: He knows no beginning and no end.

Impossible to tell if He has a form or not: His lightness or heaviness can't be weighed.

Neither hunger nor thirst, neither sun nor shade:

He exists in everything without sorrow, without happiness.

He's Brahman: unmanifest, unlimited. He permeates everything as absolute knowledge.

I've contemplated Him at length: There's no one else like Rama. (148)

Kabir's Ram remains resistant towards being an enigmatic figure as he emphasises on the profoundly autonomous non-sectarian journey within the self. His verses can be considered as a vocal protest against the injustices happening in contemporary society. Another noteworthy aspect of this verse is its indication to fledgling attempts at attaining spiritual awareness.

I don't know what sort of Master you have.

Is He deaf that the mullah must screech from the mosque?

Surely He can hear even the anklets that tinkle on an ant's feet!

You count your beads, you smear your brow with marks, you grow long matted locks.

But deep inside yourself, you carry the vicious dagger of apostasy –

This isn't the way to attain the Master! (202)

Kabir, through the above-mentioned verse, broods over the right way to unite with the divine is the ultimate surrender and humble submission. The *dhvanyartha* defies the pretentious use of loudspeaker for delivering azaan or the recital of prayer using sacred beads or painting one's forehead with vermilion. The overuse of certain rituals tend to deteriorate the charming innocence of the essence of religion. The social norms promote and perpetuate excessive outward display resulting in the development of the shallow psyche of the being. In other words, his emphasis on one's spiritual expansion and his uniform disdain for Hinduism and Islam is reflected here. Indubitably, his cogent claim to iconoclasm led him to the dignity of a professed reformer. By promoting a not-so-fixated *dharma* and avoiding the indulgence into rigid hierarchical structures, he brings forth a kernel of hope in foreseeing the

joyous reunion of the being within. Kabir, through the following lines, is very careful to show the social conditioning of an individual that is immensely consuming in nature. He, rather, urges us all to look beyond the sacrifices at the cost of personal gains and material possessions. Sparing no room for the customary religious practices such as idolatry, he presents an alternative of transcending the self through detachment of individuality.

Don't stay – the land's a wilderness.

This world's a paltry paper packet – a spot of rain will wash it away.

This world's a garden of thorns – snarled and snared, we'll perish in pain.

This world's all tree and tinder – kindled, it will roast us like sacrificial victims.

Kabir says, listen, my good men, the True Master's name is our lasting abode – our station, our destination. (208)

4. Conclusion

Kabir's scholarship and its indigenous modernity manages to establish the supremacy of love in all spheres of life. His creative oeuvre, therefore, must be studied beyond the boundaries and constraints of religion and politics. In addition to establishing a harmonious balance between *dharma*, *artha*, *kama* and *moksha*, Kabir's axiomatic philosophy urges us all to a profoundly independent and non-religious journey within.

From an academic point of view, it becomes inherently necessary to divest Kabir of his grandeur as an exceptional saint-poet and look upon him just as a commoner, the norm instead. Kabir's engagement in literary curricula is a subject of study beyond political caricatures. Kabir's centrality within the modernist canon must be studied on a more intrapersonal level. Kabir, through his sustainable philosophy, attempts to articulate *atmasakshatkar* (self-realization) with a distinct identity and thereby providing a detour to the existing stringent philosophy, and making it more humane, more approachable and more accessible to a commoner. A detailed examination of Kabir's fierce preference for solitude and the deeply individualistic journey towards the divine is clearly explicated in toto. A close reading of his eclectic religious allusions and his unidirectional approach towards God proves to be an antidote to the hate and violence prevalent in the world. His convenient standpoint and realistic exactitude make the *sahrdaya* slightly more aware of the world inside out.

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