That Lord which even the great Brahma, holy men, and gods could not find, though they got exhausted in the search - that Lord is found by ordinary mortals, through the grace of a Master. Therefore, O brother seeker, do the devotion of a Master, who is the Lord Incarnate.

(Kabir)
Biography of Kabir

Kabir is not easily categorized as a Sufi or a Yogi -- he is all of these. He is revered by Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs. He stands as a unique, saintly, yet very human, bridge between the great traditions that live in India. Kabir says of himself that he is, "at once the child of Allah and Ram."

He was born in Benares, India, probably around the year 1440 to Muslim parents. But early in his life Kabir became a disciple of the Hindu bhakti saint Ramananda.

Kabir did not become a sadhu or rununciate. He never abandoned worldly life, choosing instead to live the balanced life of a householder and mystic, tradesman and contemplative. Kabir was married, had children, and lived the simple life of a weaver.

Although Kabir labored to bring the often clashing religious cultures of Islam and Hinduism together, he was equally disdainful of professional piety in any form. This earned him the hatred and persecution of the religious authorities in Varanasi. Nearing age 60, he was denounced before the king but, because of his Muslim birth, he was spared execution and, instead, banished from the region.

He subsequently lived a life of exile, traveling through northern India with a group of disciples. In 1518, he died at Maghar near Gorakhpur.

Kabir’s teachings can be summarized as follows: The only purpose of our being born as human beings is to go to the feet of a Guru, get from Him the grace of Naam or the Word, and then worship the Lord by attaching ourselves to the Word - the inner Light and Sound of God.

One of the most loved legends associated with Kabir is told of his funeral. Kabir's disciples disputed over his body, the Muslims wanting to claim the body for burial, the Hindus wanting to cremate the body. Kabir appeared to the arguing disciples and told them to lift the burial shroud. When they did so, they found fragrant flowers where the body had rested. The flowers were divided, and the Muslims buried the flowers while the Hindus reverently committed them to fire. (http://www.poetry-chaikhana.com/K/Kabir/)
Contents

The Master = 1 - 18
The Value of Every Breath = 19
Remember the Name of the Lord = 20 - 21
A Good Disciple = 22 - 30
The Living Corpse = 31 - 42
Death = 43
The Master and Death = 44 - 48
Sleep = 49
Love Divine = 50 - 59
The Separated Lover = 60 - 73
The World of Darkness = 74
Kabir’s Satsang = 75, 76
Know ye, O seekers, one are both the Lord and Perfect Master; All else is outward forms, creations of illusion. Give up the ego, worship the Master with your heart, And meet the Lord. A simple task it is, or so it seems.
Quite blind are those who see the Perfect Master
As only an earthly being like unto ourselves.
Their fate is to be drowned in hapless sorrow,
And to be captured in the net of Kal.
The Lord is manifested in the Master.
How else, pray, can you really worship Him?
Bend low thy stiff neck at His holy feet,
Become His slave, and not that of the mind,
And every moment contemplate His form,
Be merged in the Eternal Sound and meet the Lord.
The Master is the washerman, His devotee the cloth,
The Word is the strong soap that cleans the mind.
If mind and soul are made clean by the Word,
The cloth will shine with luster indescribable.
The Master is the potter, and His devotee the clay;  
He kneads the clay, removing its impurities,  
Then shapes the pot, supporting it within  
With His own hands, unfailing, strong,  
Beating the clay from the outside alone.
Should the Lord and Perfect Master both appear together,
At whose feet should I then prostrate myself?
‘Twould be my Master’s feet, of that be sure,
For He it was who showed the Invisible Lord to me.
That servant has not anything to fear
In all of the three worlds, declares Kabir,
Who sees his Master as above all else,
And stays at all times under His command.
Well have you done if unto Him your mind’s surrendered.
Thus you’ve removed the burden from your head.
But punishment you’ll suffer, to be sure,
If ever you should say, “I gave it.”
Note well, the Lord alone gets you to do devotion.
When you’ve surrendered both the mind and body,
There’s nothing more that you can then surrender.
How very sad it makes me feel to think
There’s nothing more I now can give my Master.
Surrender mind and body to that Master only,
Who is beyond all passions and desires,
Who has destroyed His ego altogether,
And now has merged Himself in the Perfect Lord.
Is it so great to surrender mind and body?
If you cannot surrender the inner mind (sub-conscious),
How can the mind be satisfied? Asks Kabir.
It stays forever sad because it could
Do nothing more for the Beloved Master.
Only the Perfect Master makes the secret known,  
That he who surrenders both his mind and body,  
And then his inner-consciousness as well,  
Becomes entirely fearless.  
‘Tis truly only rarely this is done, declares Kabir.
Another secret of great import I reveal:  
When you surrender all your inner consciousness,  
All outer forms will vanish from your sight,  
And you’ll see nothing but the Master everywhere!
Such is the greatness of a Perfect Master,
That if the world were turned to paper,
And all the forests into writing pens,
And all the seven oceans into ink,
They could not possibly describe His glory.
In the three worlds and the nine continents,
No one is greater than the Master, none.
Even Kal, the world’s Creator, can do nothing without His power.
Whatever the Master wants, that thing is done.
Kabir says they are blind, indeed,
Who think the Master to be just a human being.
Know well this truth: If you the Lord remember,
    You do not get salvation, it is far away.
But love the Master and remember Him,
    And in a moment you will be transported
Across the three worlds to the higher regions.
There is no greater giver than the Master;
   No greater beggar than the devotee.
The Master freely gives to His disciples
The wealth of the three worlds; none else can give it;
   Nor will the beggar ever with less be satisfied.
Kabir reveals what mankind does not know:
The Messenger of Death roars like a raging tiger,
When to your death-bed, filling you with fear, he comes.
But for the Grace of the Beloved Master,
To pieces he would tear you and devour you.
The Value of Every Breath

I declare to the loud beat of the drum,
    That with every breath that passes
Without remembering the Name of the Lord,
You are losing the chance to conquer the three worlds,
    The chance to reach those spiritual heights.

If you lose a single one of these invaluable breaths,
Your loss is greater than the loss of fourteen spiritual worlds.
Why do you throw away such precious breaths?

What guarantee have you of life?
Your body may be destroyed in a single moment.
Therefore, with every breath remember the Name of the Lord,
    And discard every other thought.

Even a short life is most valuable,
If spent in remembering the True Name of the Lord.
But useless is the life of a hundred thousand years,
In which the Lord’s True Name is quite forgotten.

Remember, only that breath is truly valuable,
Which is spent in remembering the True Name of the Lord;
All other breaths you breathe
Spent in some other schemes and plans are useless.

Kabir, as long as there is life,
Continue fearlessly repeating the One Lord’s True Name.
When the oil of life is exhausted,
And the wick of the lamp extinguished,
There then will be quite time enough to sleep both day and night.
Remembering the Name of the Lord

All happiness rests in oft-repeated Simran;  
All sorrow and suffering is removed by Simran;  
Practice this Simran and be one with the Lord.  
Declares Kabir with utmost force and clarity.

Whether a prince or a pauper, only he is great  
Who ever remembers the holy Name of the Lord;  
But greatest among the great is that devoted one  
Who does his Simran free of all desires.

I tell you outright, all will go to hell  
Who are attached to the body and the world.  
And only he will go to the Lord, declares Kabir,  
Who does his Simran free of all desires.

Every disciple does his Simran when in trouble;  
Few do it in the days of their prosperity.  
But if they were to do it in their days of happiness,  
They never then would days of sorrow see.  
For the devotee by pleasure or pain is unaffected.

Watch carefully the village maidens carrying water vessels.  
They fill their vessels by the riverside,  
Then place them on their heads one on the other,  
And walk back laughing and chatting to their homes.  
But the vessels always stay in perfect balance,  
Because the maidens keep their attention ever on them.

So let your mind be ever fixed in Simran,  
While carrying on the duties of your day.
Watch too the cow that grazes in the meadow.
She wanders to and fro across the pastures,
But ever is her mind fixed on her calf in the stable.
Kabir says, in the same way do your worldly work,
But let your mind be ever fixed in Simran,
While carrying on the duties of the day.

Watch too the deer, how it is drawn to music.
Kabir says, it stays listening to the strains,
Even though it knows the hunter will shoot it down.
In the same manner fix your mind in Simran,
Regardless even of difficulties and of death.

Watch too the moth, how, fascinated by the light,
It hurls itself against the lamp to meet with death.
In the same manner fix your mind in Simran,
Heedless of any kind of bodily suffering.

Watch too the fish, how when removed from water,
It pants for breath and then gives up its life.
Likewise, be restless if deprived of Simran;
And rather prefer your death to forgetting Simran.

Keep ever your mind engrossed in the Name of the Lord,
As the lover’s mind is ever engrossed in his beloved,
He never forgets her, not for a single moment,
But day and night he ever remembers her.
In the same manner keep your mind engrossed in the Name.
A Good Disciple

A disciple’s mind is always in his Master,
As a cobra’s is always in his diamond;
He forgets not his Master for a single moment.
That is the sign of a good disciple, says Kabir.
A good disciple thinks of his Master
As a rich man thinks of his riches.
He sees no other thing and thinks of nothing else;
So must a good disciple think at all times of his Master, says Kabir.
A good disciple ever obeys his Master,
And brushes aside all other work in order to obey Him.
He holds his Master as the only true authority, declares Kabir.
Only he is a truly good disciple, says Kabir,
Who never is upset by any order of his Master,
However it is contrary and unpalatable.
If the servant is unhappy,
The Lord becomes unhappy;
And this is ever true and at all times.
If the servant suffers from the pangs of separation,
The Lord reveals Himself in a single moment;
In a moment He showers His blessed radiant grace.
The servant is his Master’s dog.
Love is the leash that binds them both together,
And faithfully the dog will follow wherever the Master leads him.
When the Master tells him to remove himself,
   He does so questionless at once;
If the Master calls him, he runs to Him gladly
   With all his swiftest speed.
He is happy in all circumstances,
   And enjoys whatever food is given him,
Whatever lot is meted out to him.
He prays not for his happiness here nor for salvation;
He begs for time for his devotion only;
He asks for nothing but for Him.
The earth and sky will perish,
The heavens will dissolve,
But no harm can ever come to the Master’s servant.
The two will be one;
Where then, I ask you is the servant?
Go about this world, O brother, like a living corpse. Give up all hope of people and attachment to them. Why bother, when the true all-powerful Master Is every moment, all the time protecting you?
Kabir, the human body is a mighty ocean;
But only a living corpse can dive and bring out pearls.
I am a diver of the ocean;
And in a single dive I bring to the surface
Such pearls of Knowledge as are unknown to the world.
The Master is a vast deep Ocean of Light;  
He lights the dark depths leading to salvation.  
But only a truly living corpse,  
Putting on the diver’s skin-bag of Forgiveness,  
Can dive and come to the surface with the wealth of Wisdom.
You can not be a living corpse
While attachment to the body is still intact.
Tear asunder, brother, all attachment,
And you will rise up like a soaring rocket.
The Lord Himself will then run after you,  
Calling, “Kabir, I whom you seek am here”.  
But this will happen only when the mind becomes dead  
To the attachments of this world.
The mind, it is certain, is not easily controlled.
    I once thought that the mind I’d mastered,
But then, like a ghost, it returned to haunt me,
    I, who already am a living corpse.
That is my darling son, my mind!
Before your eyes the whole world is dying by slow stages,
But few die at the right and proper time.
Kabir died such a death,
That he will never have to die again;
And that is the right death at the right time.
Death is far better than life,
When the right way of dying is known.
Die while still alive,
And go beyond old age and death.
Attain by this eternal youth and immortality.
Death, I can see, strikes terror in all others,  
But gives me joy that is immeasurable.  
   I am impatient to die,  
That I may get the Truth Eternal.
Why shed your tears over the death of a devotee?
For he is homeward bound and in safe hands.
Lament the death of the wretched worldly-minded,
For they are hawked from shop to shop,
In the marketplace of death.
What can Kal do to that one whose abode
Is on the sharp edge of a gleaming sword,
Who at all times is ever ready to die,
Who makes a meal of the poisons of the passions,
Who is wide awake through all the twenty-four hours,
And ever keeps his mind under strict control?
Burn down your house,  
(Sacrifice your body to the Lord),  
And the house is saved;  
Keep the house safe, look after its comfort,  
And it is destroyed.  
This miracle I have witnessed -  
Of the corpse devouring Death.
Death

Of but a short span, O Kabir, is this life here,
But how elaborate is your preparation for it!

    All, whether they be prince or pauper,
Are filled with anxiousness about their worldly future.
    How strange it is that no one seems to care
About their future, which is Everlasting Life.

Remember, one day you’ll be parted from all worldly things,
    However high your state and fame may be.
    Why not awaken to this fact,
And start remembering the Lord, the ever Merciful?

    Fragile is this frail body, frail indeed,
    Fragile it is, just like an earthen vessel;
    And nothing of it then is left behind.
Remember, you will leave here empty-handed,
    For you can carry nothing with you to the worlds beyond.

    All who are born must die,
    Whether a prince, a pauper or a true holy man;
But some among them all will rise to the Divine Throne,
    While others will be fettered,
    And imprisoned like vile criminals.
The Master and Death

Listen to this one thought about the value
Of the initiation by a Perfect Master;
You would be dragged to the door of the angel of death,
Were you without a Master.
At the door of the angel of death,
His minions would tear you to pieces.
From them, indeed, you never would be freed;
And you’d be hurled again into the wheel of transmigration.
Without a Master you would wander aimlessly
Within the cruel wheel of transmigration,
And never from it would you find escape.
But through the grace of an Almighty Master,
You have been rescued from that dreadful wheel.
Kabir, I pray, come unto that country,
Where neither death nor old age can distress you;
Where none has heard of any being dead, and where the Master is
the attentive doctor,
Who keeps you safe from death and all disease.
Because of initiation by a Perfect Master,
You go across, placing your foot on the head of Kal,
And the Lord Himself will stretch out both His hands,
And take you safe to His own realm on high.
Sleep

Kabir, why do you slumber such long hours?
   Why do you not see wisdom and arise?
O, pray, attach yourself to Him from whom
   You have been separated for long unknown ages.

Kabir, why do you slumber such long hours?
Arise and remember the Name of the All-Merciful.
The day is not far off when you will sleep
The long sleep with your limbs stretched out in death.

Kabir, why do you slumber such long hours?
   Sleeping is doing you incalculable harm.
Even the throne of Brahma was dashed to pieces,
   And Brahma died, on hearing the roaring call of Kal.
   Can your own death be very far away?
Remember the True Name of the Lord,
   While you are still alive.

Slumber not at the hour of duty to the Lord;
   Wake up and keep your vigil;
You know not if the cold hand of death
   Will grasp you the next moment.

Your days are spent in the company of the world;
   But this world goes not with you to the next.
   There you will have to travel all alone.
With your own hands you have ruined yourself entirely
   Because you did not make the spiritual journey here.
The mystic path is the path of Love supreme;
But following it is no cheap or easy task.
Cut off your head and place it before the Master,
If you truly seek admission to the House of Love.
Cut off your head and place it on the ground,
And trample on it long and mercilessly.
Only if you can do this, says Kabir,
Venture ahead upon the Homeward Journey.
Love is not grown in green plantations;
Nor can it in the marketplace be bought.
Whether you are a sovereign ruler or a subject,
Remember this, that only he who gives his head
Can buy it.
Do you want to drink the cup of Love?
Then surrender your head to the Master as a freely-given offering.
The greedy are not capable of doing this.  
How then, pray, can they purchase the True Love?
All talk of Love, but few know what it means.
For only that is Love which keeps you in blissful ecstasy
   For all the twenty-four hours.
Narrow indeed is the path of that True Love;
   For it can hold but one alone, not two;
When “I” was, Ah, the Master then was not,
   But now the Master is, and “I” am not.
A veritable graveyard is the body
In which the Love Divine has never entered.
It is like the blacksmith’s bellow,
Which breaths in, then breaths out the air,
But has no life of its own.
I will take you into my confidence:
Love can be purchased directly across the counter,
But the price is your very head. Still it is quite cheap.
Waste not a single moment in the buying of it.
Without True Love there is no peace of mind;
Without the pangs of separation no detachment;
Without the Master, all the blots and blisters of the mind
Cannot be washed away.
Where there is Love, there is no law,
There is no logic and no reasoning.
You do not care if it is an auspicious or an inauspicious day,
Or even whether it is day or whether it is night,
When you are deeply intoxicated with the Love Divine.
Kabir reveals this secret,
That if you love the Lord
As you love your own family,
You will reach a spiritual height
That none can fathom. Nothing more is needed.
The separated lover sends this message to the Lord:
O Lord, can a fish live out of water?
How then can I live without Thee?
My eyes have become sore,
By gazing at the path by which You come;
My tongue has been worn away in calling Thy Name.
My eyes shed tears like ceaseless rain;
The whole night I spend weeping for Thee.
The cobra of Separation has stung me, causing me great pain;
No incantations now have any use.
Thus separated from the Beloved I cannot live.
If I must continue to live, I will go mad.
O my Beloved, either kill me, kill me outright,
Or else reveal Thyself, for I cannot endure
Twenty-four hours of the pangs and fire of Separation.
Make your body the lamp,
Your life the wick,
Your blood the oil for lighting the lamp.
That is the way to meet the Lord.
Kabir, abandon laughter and learn to weep.
How can you get, without weeping for separation,
Your friend, to whom the True Love is so dear?
None sees the wood-worm eating away the wood;
But when the bark it removed,
Nothing but wood-dust is then found within.
So is the human body consumed by Separation.
No one has gained the Lord the laughing way; 
All who have done so have gotten Him through weeping, 
For if by laughter you could reach the Lord, 
No one would stay apart from Him.
My flesh is withered away by the pain of Separation,
Now only the bare skeleton of bones remains.
I must be most unfortunate, indeed,
That even now the Lord has not yet come to me.
I have reduced my body to ashes,
I have burned my youth and mind to ash and cinders;
But even that is not enough to meet the Lord.
Kabir still stays far, far apart from Him,
And finds the flames of Love still covered over with ashes.
Those who are separated from their Master
Are day and night unhappy, day and night;
Not even in their dreams do they enjoy true happiness.
They are indifferent to the heat of the sun,
And the cool of the leafy shady grove as well;
Indifferent to both happiness and sorrow.
The separated disciple keeps awake in expectation of the Lord; And frail and weak he is, and faints and falls upon the ground, All for a single glimpse of his Beloved Lord. He cries: “If you reveal Yourself after my death, Of what use, pray, will it be at that time?”
Kabir says to the Lord: Meet me not after I am dead.
Of what use, pray, is the Philosopher’s Stone,
When iron is mixed and hidden in with earth?
What use, pray, is the True Name of the Lord
When the body is buried deep beneath the earth?
The World of Darkness

This world is blind, engulfed in utter darkness; but to whom can I explain this?

If there were only one or two, I could explain to them; but how can you carry conviction when all are misled by worldly desires, and engrossed in sheer maintenance of the body?

This life is a horse made of water, for the human body is mostly water. Air is the rider, for breaths keep that body alive. What a frail structure! Or it is like a drop of dew that vanishes in the twinkling of an eye.

Deep is the River of Transmigration, and unceasing is its flow. What can be done? The river has become a trap.

The secret of escape from this plight is within your body. But you do not find it because with lamp in hand you search for it outside.

The whole creation is engulfed in the fire of passion and sorrows and consumed by worldly desires and ambitions.

Without the knowledge imparted by the Master, Man, the bond-slave, will keep on wandering aimlessly.

Kabir says, Listen, dear seeker, a day will come when you will have to pass from here, leaving behind even the lion-cloth covering your nakedness. Of what value are all your worldly desires?
Kabir’s Satsang

On obtaining this beautiful human body, worship the Supreme Lord before doing anything else. Why do you remain unconcerned with this fact?

When will you again get such a lucky chance? Remember, you will not get such a body again for ages; incomparable is the human life.

Whether you are a king or a beggar, wake up to this one duty. Remain not unconcerned, I warn you.

When you were in the hell-fire of the womb you promised to remember the Lord, and recite His Name day and night if only you were rescued from the agony of the womb. You promised to attach all your attention to His Feet, and fix your mind on His Name (Naam).

You promised that whether happy or miserable, whether you lived or died, not for a moment would you forget Him.

After you made that vow the Master brought you out. But you forgot the promise and became a captive prisoner of Maya. You forgot the promise given in the womb the moment you became conscious of the world outside.

Twelve years thus passed away in childish playfulness and ignorance.

Then came youth and hounded by ambition and intoxicated with vanity you walked the walk of the arrogant and talked the language of the proud. You applied scents and sandal-paste to your body and putting on bright-colored garments, you loafed in the by-lanes of ill-repute, casting glad eyes at cheap beauties and beckoning them with smiles.

Thus passed away the prime of youth, and then arrived doddering old age. For lack of strength your hand began trembling, and walking soon tried your feet. Your eyes became watery and your mouth gave out foul smell. Your throat was choked with phlegm and bile and at last all hope of the world was gone.
Beware my friend! Mother, father, son, or wife - none will accompany you on the journey beyond. You will have to abandon everything - this body, wealth, home, worldly hope, and in the end Death will pounce on you, and then you will fall into the trap of the Eagle of Death.

O you dull-headed one, just know this, that without the help of the Master you will not be saved from this tragedy.

If only you would make friends with the Master, learn from Him the path of salvation and attach your mind to the Master’s feet and catch hold of the Name of the Lord (Naam) you would be fearless and would not undergo the least suffering.

This is the game - go to the Master, get the Word, and worship the Lord. This leads to salvation, declares Kabir most emphatically.

Kabir: 1440-1518
May your soul be happy; journey joyfully.
(Rumi)

Home: http://kirpalsingh.org/Booklets.html

Kirpalet@yahoo.com