

## THE BIJAK OF GURU KABIR

### RAMAINIS

रमैनी-१

अन्तर ज्योति शब्द एक नारी, हरि ब्रह्मा ताके त्रिपुरारी.  
ते तिरिये भग लिङ्ग अनन्ता, तेउ न जानै आदिउ अन्ता.  
बाखरि एक बिधाते कीन्हा, चौदह ठहर पाट सो लीन्हा.  
हरिहर ब्रह्मा महन्तो नाऊँ, तिन्ह पुनि तीन बसावल गाऊँ.  
तिन्ह पुनि रचल खण्ड ब्रह्मण्डा, छौ दर्शन छानबे पाखण्डा.  
पेटे काहु न वेद पढाया, सुनति कराय तुरूक नहिं आया.  
नारी मो चित गर्भ प्रसूती, स्वांग धरे बहुतै करतूती.  
तहिया हम तुम एकै लोहू, एकै प्राण बियापै मोहू.  
एकै जनी जना संसारा, कौन ज्ञान ते भयो निनारा.  
भौ बालक भगद्वारे आया, भग भोगी के पुरुष कहाया.  
अविगतिकी गति काहु न जानी, एक जीभ कित कहौं बखानी.  
जो मुख होय जीभ दस लाखा, तो कोइ आय महन्तो भाखा.

साखी-कहँहि कबीर पुकारि के, ई ले ऊ व्यवहार.

राम नाम जाने बिना, भौ बूडि मुवा संसार.

*ramaini 1*

*antar jyoti shabd ek nārī, hari, brahmā tāke tripurarī.  
te tiriye bhag linga anantā, teu na jāne ādi au antā.  
bākhari ek vidhāte kīnhā, chowda thahar pāt so līnhā.  
hari har brahmā mahanto nāwu, tinh puni tīn basāwal gāwun.  
tinh puni rachal khand brahmandā, chhow darshan chhānabe  
pakhandā.  
pete kāhu na ved padhāyā, sunati karāi turuk nahi āyā.  
nārī mo chit garbh prasūtī, swānga dhare bahutai kartūtī.  
tahiyā ham tum ekai lohū, ekai prān biyāpai mohū.  
ekai janī janā sansārā, kown gyān te bhayo ninara.  
bhow balak bhag dwāre āya, bhag bhogī ke purush kahāyā.  
avigati kī gati kāhu na jānī, ek jībh kit kahown bakhānī.  
jo mukh hoi jībh das lākhā, to koi āi mahanto bhākhā.*

*sākhī: kahahin kabīr pukāri ke, ī leu vyowhār.*

*rām nām jāne binā, bhow būdi muwā sansār.*

Meaning:

In the beginning there was God. He was the Word and Light, and He was with the Creative Power. From that Creative Power, Hari, Brahma and Shiva came. These three in turn produced countless creative organs of women and men (created women and men). None of them knew their beginning or end. Brahma created a house (universe) that was divided into fourteen parts.

Names of Hari (Vishnu), Har (Shiva), Brahma are great. They then established three settlements or Lokas - Earth, Heaven and Hell. They created many parts in the universe and later on their followers created six schools of philosophy and ninety-six hypocrisies (false religions).

No Hindu came out of the womb with knowledge of the Vedas, and no Muslim came out of the womb being circumcised. All people are born from the womb, and coming out from the womb of the mother, people accepted many pretended forms and actions. Then we and you are of the same blood, and the same breath sustains us. One mother (Maya - Creative Power) created the world. Then with what knowledge you became different from one another (i.e. Hindus and Muslims). Being a baby, you came out through the mother's genital organ, and being grown up you enjoyed the genital organ and was called a man. No one knows the state of the indescribable God. With one tongue how can I explain it? If someone has one million tongues, then he can speak of the greatness of God.

Sakhi: Kabir says shouting that all the affairs in the world are not real. They are all illusory and perishable. Without knowing Ram Nam this world drowns and dies.

Commentary:

In this *ramaini* Guru Kabir talks of the mythological concept of creation as prevalent in India. The three 'gods', Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva came from God and represent the functions of God as creator (Brahma), sustainer (Vishnu), and destroyer (Shiva). These are thought to be responsible for the universe with all beings in it. Brahma created this universe which he divided into fourteen parts--seven heavens and seven hells. The seven heavens are -- 1. Bhur Lok, 2. Bhuvar Lok, 3. Svar Lok, 4. Tap Lok, 5. Jan Lok, 6. Mahar Lok, 7. Sat Lok. The seven hells are -- 1. Atal, 2. Vital, 3. Satal, 4. Rasatal, 5. Talatal, 6. Mahatal, and 7. Patal. The six schools of philosophy are: 1. Sankhya, 2. Yoga, 3. Nyaya, 4. Mimansa, 5. Vaisheshika, 6. Vedanta. The ninety-six hypocrisies are the ninety-six forms of religious sects prevalent in India at that time.

Because of the caste system in India, it is held that one is born into a caste, no matter if he lives up to the prescribed rules or not. Guru Kabir pointed out the fallacy of that system by saying that no Brahmin was born with the knowledge of the Vedas (scriptures); that he was born as anyone else was, so how can he be said to be a Brahmin by birth. Similarly, Muslims circumcise the males, and Guru Kabir points out that Muslims are not born circumcised. Was God not able to make him be born circumcised if it were necessary? Elsewhere he points out that the Muslim women are not circumcised, so they must then

remain Hindus. Similarly, elsewhere he states that Brahmins wear the janeo (sacred thread), but their women do not, so they remain non-Brahmins.

The gist of this *ramaini* is that all people are manifestations of God and are born in the same way, with the same organs and tissues, so with what kind of intellect do people create all the differences and the divisions which lead to disharmony, intolerance, bigotry, and foolishness? All people are equal at birth, but as they grow up they are taught, and quickly learn, to create differences in ideology, morals, value systems, class divisions, religious beliefs, etc. They adhere to these distinctions as if they were ordained by God. These are all 'pretended' forms since, basically, all people are equal and the same to God. So people continue to fool themselves and each other. All of these are the traps of Maya (illusion), and will prevent us from obtaining salvation. He tells us that God's greatness is indescribable. We should give up all the mythological and false teachings and practices that are prevalent in the world, and try to know God. Without the knowledge of God the whole world will drown in ignorance and not obtain the sought-after goal of salvation.

रमैनी-२

जीव रूप एक अन्तर बासा, अन्तर ज्योति कीन्ह परकासा.  
इच्छा रूप नारि अवतरी, तासु नाम गायत्री धरी.  
तेहि नारी के पुत्र तीनि भयऊ, ब्रह्मा विष्णु महेश्वर नाऊँ.  
फिर ब्रह्मा पूछल महतारी, को तोर पुरुष केकरि तुम नारी.  
तुम हम हम तुम और न कोई, तुमहिंसो पुरुष हमें तोरिजोई.

साखी-बाप पूत की एकै नारी, एकै माय बियाय .  
ऐसा पूत सपूत न देखा, बापहिं चीन्है धाय.

*ramaini 2*

*jīv rūp ek antar bāsā, antar jyoti kīnh parkāsā,  
ichchā rup nārī awtarī, tāsū nām gāyatrī dharī.  
tehi nārī ke putra tīn bhayawū, brahmā, vishnu, maheshwar nāwūn.  
phir brahmā pūchhal mahatārī, ko tor purush, ke kari tum nārī.  
tum ham ham tum ovr na koī, tumahi so purush, hamen tori joī.*

*sakhi: bāp pūt kī ekai nārī, ekai māi biyāi.  
aisā pūt sapūt na dekhā, jo bāpahi chīnhai dhāi.*

Meaning:

One soul is living in the heart of living beings, and that Soul manifests Consciousness (Inner Light). And a female (desire) came from the Soul, and her name was Gayatri. She produced three sons - Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh being their names. Then Brahma asked his mother who is your purush (husband) and whose wife are you? She replied that you and I, and I and You, and no one else is there. You are my husband and I am your wife.

Sakhi: Father (God) and son (soul) have one wife (Maya). One Maya produced them both. I have not seen such a worthy son who runs and recognizes his father - God.

Commentary:

It is important to realize that there is only one Soul in the universe and that Soul is God. That Soul manifests in all living beings. But for the Soul to be manifested as living beings 'It' produced from 'Itself' Consciousness. The Soul and Consciousness are thus intimately inter-related. However, before any creation could take place, there had to be desire to create in that Primal Soul. That desire manifested as Gayatri which is another name for Maya. Maya in turn produced Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva (Mahesh) as explained in *ramaini* #1. Brahma, not seeing any father figure (as God the Father was indwelling as the Soul), asked his mother who was her husband and whose wife she was? She told him, quite logically and correctly, that he was her husband and she was his wife. This relationship existed because God, the Father, who was the male principle of creation, resided within Brahma, and so he was the husband of the female principle of creation called Gayatri.

In the Sakhi Guru Kabir points out that God and the Soul have one wife whose name was Maya. As stated above, the same Soul is God and the same Soul resides in all beings. From a human stand-point this is incest and quite unacceptable. However, Guru Kabir points out that man is the Soul and the Father is God, and that they were both the product of Maya. If Maya did not exist, then living beings would not exist, and it follows naturally then, that God would not exist. Thus one can see the logical conclusion that the father and the son have the same wife. Again referring to the human situation, Guru Kabir points out that he has not seen such a worthy son who hastens to recognize his Father. In this world not many people make a real effort to know God. They are satisfied with reading the scriptures, attending church, singing prayers and hymns, and doing other ceremonial and ritual types of worship. These activities do not give God realization, unless the heart is purified by giving up all passions, greed, ego, violence in thought, word and deed, and practicing love for all of God's creation. Guru Kabir points out that as long as one is preoccupied with all of these in a materialistic life, and does not realize that God is dwelling in all beings, he will not obtain salvation.

रमैनी-३

प्रथम अरम्भ कौन को भयऊ, दूसर प्रगट कीन्ह सो ठयऊ.

प्रगटे ब्रह्मा विष्णु शिव शक्ति, प्रथमे भक्ति कीन्ह जीवउक्ती.

प्रगटे पवन पानी औ छाया, बहू बिस्तार के प्रगटी माया.  
प्रगटे अण्ड पिण्ड ब्रह्मण्डा, पृथ्वी प्रगट कीन्ह नौखण्डा.  
प्रगटे सिद्ध साधक संन्यासी, ई सब लागि रहे अविनाशी.  
प्रगटे सुर नर मुनि सब झारी, तेहिके खोज परे सब हारी.

साखी- जीव शीव सब प्रगटे, वे ठाकुर सब दास.  
कबीर और जाने नहीं, राम नाम की आस.

*ramaini 3*

*pratham arambh kown ko bhiyau, dūsar pragat kīnh so thiyau.  
pragate brahmā, vishnu, shiv, shaktī; prathame bhakti kīnh jiw uktī.  
pragate pawan, pānī ow chhāyā, bahu bistār ke pragati māyā.  
pragate and, pind, brahmandā, prithvī pragat kīnh now khandā.  
pragate sidh, sādhak, sanyāsī, ī sab lāgi rahe avināshī.  
pragate sur, nar muni sab jhārī, tehi ke khoj pare sab hārī.*

*sakhi: jīv shīv sab pragate, we thākur sab dās.  
kabīr ovr jāne nahī, rām nām kī ās.*

Meaning:

Who existed in the very beginning? Who was the next who existed?  
In the beginning Brahma, Vishnu, Shiv and Shakti appeared. They did devotion to God.  
Then wind, water and fire (which produce shadow) appeared. And Maya appeared and manifested as many forms of life.  
Then appeared egg-laying and viviparous animals, and the universe. The earth appeared and was divided into nine parts.  
Then appeared siddhas (adepts) sadhaks (devotees) and sanyasis (renunciates), and they were devoted to the Eternal.  
Then appeared gods, men and munis (philosophers) and they all searched for God, but they were unsuccessful.

Sakhi: All the jiwās (slaves) and shivas (masters) appeared.  
They are the masters (shivas) and slaves (jiwas)  
(i.e. of high and low castes).

Kabir says: ' I do not recognize any of these. I have only one hope - the Name of God.

Commentary:

In this third *ramaini* Guru Kabir expands further on the mythological concept of creation. He first asks the question: "Who existed in the beginning and who existed next? He then

becomes more specific than previously and lists, in no particular order, the various gods, other beings and elements in the universe. From God and his creative power, Maya, came the three 'god sons' Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. Shakti is energy and is also used for Maya or the female principle of creation.

Creation is the process that starts from the subtle and progresses to the gross aspect of manifestation. Thus ether is the most refined natural element in creation and it progressively manifested as air (wind), fire, water and earth. Then appeared all the various forms of life. All the various physical forms of manifestation are due to the power of Maya. There appeared the various species of living things such as egg-laying and viviparous (live born) animals, along with those microscopic beings that divide by cell division and budding. Plant life is also one among these four categories.

Once humans arrived in the world they took on various forms such as ordinary people, sidhas or those who have perfected themselves with austerity, devotees, renunciates, and philosophers. Man then created the various gods and goddess such as Indra, Varuna, Surya, Durga, etc. just as the Greeks developed their various gods and goddesses. Hinduism is also full of gods and goddesses. Guru Kabir is saying that all these various categories of man and gods did devotion to the Supreme God but they all failed to achieve salvation because they were all full of human frailties of passions, ego, anger, etc., just as the Greek mythological gods were.

In this *ramaini* Guru Kabir talks essentially of creation on the one hand, and the various class systems or divisions in society on the other. In the *sakhi* he points out that among all the people, some were of low caste such as slaves, and others were of higher caste and were thought of as masters. At the end he summarizes his own position by saying that he does not recognize any of the mythology or the class distinctions created in the world. Just as he emphasized the importance of God at the end of the first two *ramainis*, he again states that there is only one hope for liberation, and that lies in the Name of God (realization of God as the Indwelling Self).

रमैनी-४

प्रथम चरण गुरु कीन्ह विचारा, कर्ता गावै सिरजनहारा.  
कर्महि कै कै जग बौराया, सक्ति भक्ति लै बाँधिनि माया.  
अद्बुद रूप जाति की बानी, उपजी प्रीति रमैनी ठानी.  
गुनीअनगुनी अर्थ नहि आया, बहुतक जने चीन्हि नहिं पाया.  
जो चीन्हें ताको निर्मल अंगा, अनचीन्हें नर भये पतंगा.

साखी-चीन्हि चीन्हि का गावहु बौरै, बानी परी न चीन्ह .  
आदि अन्त उत्पति परलय, आपूहि कहि दीन्ह.

*ramaini 4*

*pratham charan guru kīnhh bichārā, kartā gāwai sirjanhārā.  
karam kai kai jag bowrāyā, sakti bhakti lai bāndhini māyā.  
adbud rūp jāti kī bānī, upjī prīti ramaini thānī.  
gunī angunī arth nahi āyā, bahutak jane chīnhhi nahin pāyā.  
jo chīhhai tāko nirmal angā, anchīnhhe nar bhaye patangā.*

*sakhi: chīnhh chīnhh kā gāwahu bowre, bānī parī na chīnhh.  
ādi ant utpati parlai, āpūhi kahi dīnhh.*

Meaning:

In the beginning guru ( Brahma) began to think that he should sing the glory of God the Creator.

To obtain God he created many actions (rituals) with desires, and because of them the people became foolish. Due to their devotion with desire, Maya placed them in bondage. Brahma created languages in wondrous form and variety. When love came up in him, he created the ramainis (prayers).

Scholars and non-scholars alike could not understand them and many could not realize their value.

Whoever could understand them became purified, and who could not understand them became insects (subject to birth and death).

Sakhi: O foolish people, you think that you know the language, but not knowing it, what are you saying?

The language itself explained that there is beginning and end, creation and destruction.

Commentary:

In this *ramaini* Guru Kabir deals with scriptures that resulted from language and with religious actions that are motivated by desire to obtain certain benefits. Brahma is supposed to be the originator of the Vedas that are the holy scriptures of India. Brahma, however, was not the Almighty God, and he felt the need for doing devotion to God. He thus created the various scriptures and religious duties, rites and ceremonies. People of the world have started to follow these scriptures and to carry out the prescribed rituals always having in their mind certain hopes of reward, thus making their devotion selfish. Meaningful devotion must have no selfish desire attached to it, and must be done purely for the glorification of God. Guru Kabir points out that following the prescribed practices, the people have become foolish and bound up by Maya. They are foolish in the sense that they are not progressing spiritually to knowledge of the Soul and knowledge of God dwelling within.

Those who could understand the secret of devotion became enlightened, but those who could not, failed to obtain salvation. They were attracted to the illusion of Maya, just as a moth is attracted to a flame and sacrifices its life.

In the sakhi Guru Kabir is trying to arouse the people by asking what are they saying? They say the words most certainly, but does it create the dawning of Self knowledge in their heart? He tells them that the same language they are using has explained to them that there is a beginning, an end, and creation and destruction, but that they do not know the secret of any of these by merely following the scriptures and practicing the rites and rituals.

रमैनी-५

कहलौं कहौं युगनकी बाता, भूले ब्रह्म न चीन्हैं बाटा.  
हरि हर ब्रह्मा के मन भाई, बिबि अक्षर लै युक्ति बनाई.  
बिबि अक्षर का कीन्ह बंधाना, अनहदशब्द ज्योति परमाना.  
अक्षर पढि गुनी राह चलाई, सनक सनन्दन के मन भाई.  
वेद कितेब कीन्ह बिस्तारा, फ़ैल गैल मन अगम अपारा  
चहुँ युग भक्तन बाँधल बाटी, समुझि न परलि मोटरीफाटी.  
भय भय पृथ्वी दहुँ दिश धावै, अस्थिर होय न औषध पावै.  
होय बिहिस्त जो चितन डोलावै, खसमहि छाँडि दोजक को धावै.  
पूरब दिशा हंस गति होई, है समीप सन्धि बूझै कोई.  
भक्ता भक्तिक कीन्ह सिंगारा, बूडि गयल सब माँझल धारा.

साखी-बिनु गुरु ज्ञाने दुन्द भई, खसम कही मिलि बात .

युग युग सो कहवैया, काहु न मानी बात.

*ramaini 5*

*kahalown kahow yugan ki bātā, bhule brahma na chīnhe bātā.*

*hari har brahmā ke man bhāī, bibi akshar lai yukti banāī.*

*bibi akshar kā kīnh bandhānā, anahad shabd joti parmānā.*

*akshar padhi guni rāha chalāī, sanak sanandan ke man*

*bhāī.*

*ved kiteb kīnh bistārā, phyle gyle man agam apārā.*

*chahu yug bhaktan bāndhal bātī, samujhi na parli motarī phātī.*

*bhy bhy prīthavī dahu disī dhāwai, asthīr hoi na owshad pāwai.*

*hoi bihist jo chīt na dolāwai, khasamahi chhār dojakh ko dhāwai.*

*pūrab dishā hans gati hoī, hai samip sandhi būjhai koī.*

*bhaktā bhaktik kīnh singārā, būdi gayal sab mānjhal dhārā.*

*sakhi: bin guru gyāne dund bhaī, khasam kahī mili bāt.*

*yug yug so kahawaiyā, kāhu na mānī bāt.*

Meaning:

For how long can I talk of the Yugas (ages)? Brahma himself got lost and could not understand the right path.

Vishnu, Shiva, and Brahma thought of a method for man to get salvation. They made a plan by using two letters (ra and ma).

They made a bond of these letters. If one practiced them he would hear the anahad shabd (divine melody) and see the Light.

The scholars study the scriptures and established a path. Sanak Sanandan (sons of Brahma) liked the path.

The Vedas and Koran explained the way of salvation in detail, but the people's mind formed countless numbers of creeds.

In the four yugas the devotees formed many creeds, but they could not understand that their bundle of creeds were defective.

Being in fear man runs all over the world seeking salvation but, being unsteady in mind, they do not take the proper medicine (prescribed by God).

He, whose mind does not waver, can obtain heaven. Leaving God, he can only go to hell.

When one follows the Eastern direction for realization, one becomes a hansa (liberated soul). Liberation is near at hand if one realizes the union with God.

Devotees decorated their devotion with rituals, but they all drown in the middle of the stream of this material life.

Sakhi: Without knowledge given by the Guru, man is subject to repeated birth and death. People say that they have joined with God, but that is false.

Satguru Kabir taught in every yuga to join with God but nobody obeys his word.

Commentary:

Here Guru Kabir is explaining the plight of the people who are preoccupied with their scriptures but do not find the real path to salvation. This has been the condition of the people from age after age and he asks himself the question: "For how long can I talk of the yugas?." People seem not to understand what a true spiritual life is, and they become entangled with their rituals and external forms of worship and pilgrimages, etc. They are seeking salvation by going from one place to another either to temples, to various gurus, to holy places, to places of austerity, to monasteries, to retreats and many other places. They, however, keep on running from place to place and do not find the path to salvation. Guru Kabir states that Vishnu, Shiva and Brahma formed a method for God realization using two letters 'ra' and 'ma' which spelled the name of God - Ram. This method of obtaining God has been explained in the Vedas and the Koran by attaching oneself to God, but what do people do? They form various creeds and sects and thus become lost. If one follows the practice of uniting one's self with God through meditation, then he will hear the Divine Melody and see the Light of spiritual enlightenment. If he, however, remains occupied with creeds, rituals and dogmas and does not follow the instructions of a true spiritual teacher, then, instead of obtaining liberation, he will be subject to birth and death in repeated cycles i.e. to be in 'hell'. He states that following the Eastern direction (symbolizing Light or the instruction of a Guru) people would realize that God

is quite close at hand, but if their minds remain unsteady, and if they keep on running from here to there, then they will all drown in the middle of the stream of this material world. In the sakhi Guru Kabir laments that although he has been giving the true instruction to people in age after age, people do not obey his words and thus do not obtain liberation.

रमैनी-६

वर्णहु कौन रूप औ रेखा, दूसर कौन आहि जो देखा.  
वो ॐकार आदि नहिं वेदा, ताकर कहहु कौन कुल भेदा.  
नहिं तारागण नहिं रविचन्दा, नहिं कछु होत पिताके बिंदा.  
नहिं जल नहिं थल नहिं थिरपवना, को धरे नाम हुकुमको बरना.  
नहिं कछु होत दिवस निजुराती, ताकर कहँहु कौन कुल जाति.

साखी-शून्य सहज मन सुमिरते, प्रगट भई एक ज्योत .  
ताहि पुरुषकी मैं बलिहारी, निरालम्ब जो होत. ६

*ramaini 6*

*varnahu kown rūp ow rekhā, dūsar kown āhi jo dekhā.  
wo onkār ādi nahi vedā, tākar kahahu kown kul bheda.  
nahi tārāgan nahi ravi chandā, nahi kichhu hot pitā ke bindā.  
nahi jal nahi thal nahi thir powana, ko dhare nam hukum ko varna.  
nahi kichhu hot diwas niyu rātī, tākar kahahu kown kul jāti.*

*sakhi: sunya sahaj man sumirte, pragat bhaī ek jyot.  
tāhi purush kī main balihārī, nirāambh jo hot.*

Meaning:

Who can explain the form and outline of God? Who else was there who saw Him?  
Neither Onkar nor the Vedas were there. Who can explain His clan and secret?  
In that state there are neither groups of stars, nor sun, nor moon. There, none is born by the father's semen.

There is neither water, nor land, nor air. Who can name that state? There is no one there to give orders.

In that state there is neither day, nor night. Tell me then what clan and caste has He?

Sakhi: If one meditates with an empty and relaxed mind, a light manifests in him.  
That Purush is great who is without support. I adore Him.

Commentary:

In this *ramaini* Guru Kabir is explaining the experience a devotee obtains when he meditates earnestly and obtains God realization. God has no form, and is not limited by space and time. He has neither clan nor caste, nor relations. God is a Universal Being, and thus cannot be reduced to any physical form, or limited by any clan, or caste, or religious denomination. He states that when one realizes God, then it is knowledge beyond the existence of Onkar, who is responsible for the creation of the world through Brahma, his Son. There were no Vedas; there were no stars, sun or moon, and there was no birth of anyone; there was no water, land or air; there was no day or night, and no division of people in various castes and clans.

This *ramaini* points out a very important feature of spiritual life, in that when one attains God realization through meditation, then he becomes free of the various divisions of class, religion, sects, etc. When he is in tune with the Divine there is no question of any material manifestation, because his consciousness rises above all the material manifestations of the world, or of the universe, and is concentrated, or is centered, in God alone.

In the *sakhi* he states that in meditation there manifests a Light. That Light is Sat Purush, or the Supreme Lord, who is Self-existent and is not dependent on anyone or anything for His existence. That Supreme Lord who manifests in all of us deserves our adoration.

रमैनी-७

तहिया होते पवन नहिं पानी, तहिया सृष्टि कौन उत्पाती.  
तहिया होते कली नहिं फूला, तहिया होते गर्भ नहिं मूला.  
तहिया होते विद्या नहिं वेदा, तहिया होते शब्द नहिं स्वादा.  
तहिया होते पिण्ड नहिं बासु, नहिं धर धरणि न पवनआकासु.  
तहिया होते गुरु नहिं चेला, गम्य अगम्य न पन्थ दुहेला.

साखी-अविगति की गति का कहीं, जाके गाँव न ठाँव .  
गुण बिहूना पेखना, का कहि लीजै नाँव.

*ramaini 7*

*tahiyā hote pown nahi pānī, tahiyā srishti kown utpāti.  
tahiyā hote kalī nahi phūlā, tahiyā hote garbh nahi mūlā.  
tahiyā hote vidyā nahi vedā, tahiyā hote shabd nahi swādā.  
tahiyā hote pind nahi bāsu, nahi dhar dharni na pavan akāsū.  
tahiyā hote guru nahi chelā, gamya agamya na panth duhelā.*

*sakhi: avigati kī gati ka kahown, jāke gāwn na thāwn.  
gun bihūnā pekhanā, kā kahi lījai nawn.*

Meaning:

In that state there is no air or water, and no creation or creator;  
There is no bud or flower, and no fetus or semen;  
There is no education or Vedas, and no word or taste;  
There is no body or settlement, and no earth, air or space;  
There is no guru or disciple, and no easy or difficult path.

Sakhi: That state is very strange. I cannot explain it. It has no village or resting place.

That state is without gunas (qualities). What name can one give it?

Commentary:

In this *ramaini* Guru Kabir is speaking of the state of God realization, or a state of consciousness, in which the individual Self or Soul, realizes its unity with the Universal Self or God. Since this is a state of consciousness, it is beyond all physical things, and so Guru Kabir lists the various things that the state is not, such as, a state where there is no air or water, creation or creator, bud or flower, fetus or semen, etc. This state of consciousness is often called the Super-conscious state, to distinguish it from our ordinary everyday consciousness. To attain this Super-conscious state, one has to withdraw the mind from all the external physical manifestations and concentrate on the Soul within, and through meditation, arrive at a realization that the Soul within and God are the same in Spirit. This state lies beyond the functionings of the mind, the body, the emotions and above all types of knowledge and scriptures. It is an intuitive experience that cannot be explained to anyone else. This is why Guru Kabir lists what it is not, and said that he cannot explain it to others. One has to purify oneself in thought, word and deed, and practice meditation in order to realize that state which leads to salvation.

रमैनी-८

तत्त्वमसी इनके उपदेशा, ई उपनिषद कहैं सन्देशा.  
ई निश्चय इनके बडभारी, वाहिक वर्णन करैं अधिकारी.  
परमतत्त्वका निज परमाना, सनकादिक नारद शुक माना.  
याज्ञवल्क्य औ जनक सम्वादा, दत्तात्रेय वोहि रस स्वादा.  
वही राम वसिष्ठ मिलि गाई, वही कृष्ण उद्धव समुझाई.  
वही बात जो जनक दृढाई, देह धरे विदेह कहाई.  
साखी- कुल मर्यादा खोय के, जीयत मुवा ना होय .  
देखत जो नहिं देखिया, अदृष्ट कहावै सोय.

*ramaini 8*

*tattvamasi inke upadeshā, ī upanishad kahai sandeshā.  
ī nischai inke bar bhārī, vāhik varnan karai adhikārī.*

*param tattwa kā nij parwānā, sankādik nārad shuk mānā.  
yāgyavalkya ow janak samvādā, dattatreya wohi ras swādā.  
wahi rām vashisht mili gāī, wahi krishna udhow samujhāī.  
wahi bāt jo janak dridhāī, deha dhare videha kahāī.*

*sakhi: kul maryādā khoi ke, jiyat muwā na hoi.  
dekhāt jo nahi dekhiya, adrisht kahāwai soi.*

Meaning:

‘That Thou Art’ is the instruction of the non-dualist. This is the message of the upanishads.

This is the great faith of the non-dualist. Scholars explained the same thing.

The Supreme Truth is its own proof. This was accepted by the sons of Brahma, Narad and Suka. Dialogues of Yajñvalik and Janak explained the same Truth. Dattatreya also tasted the same essence of Truth.

The same subject was sung by Ram and Vashisht. The same subject was explained by Krishna to Udhov.

When Janak strengthened this philosophy in his life, he, though in body, rose above body consciousness.

Sakhi: Nobody will attain salvation in his life, without leaving the ego of clan and tradition.

Whatever we cannot see even with effort, we say is unseen (the state of self-realization).

Commentary:

‘tat tvam asi’ is one of the four Mahavakyas (supreme statement) contained in the Vedas. This one is found in the Chhandogya Upanishad of the Sama Veda, and it means: ‘That Thou Art.’ It states unequivocally that Thou (the soul) Art That (Brahman). It states that the divine soul within is the same as the formless God. That is why it can be stated that the soul is divine, that God dwells in us, that we are created in the 'image' of God. It means that God consciousness and our consciousness are inseparable, and that we can realize this unity through purity of life and control of all desires, and practicing meditation. God is then realized inwardly. This is the philosophy of non-dualism or the Advait Vedanta School of Philosophy. Guru Kabir lists a number of great personalities mentioned in various scriptures, who had realized the supreme identity between the soul and God. The same can be realized today, in what is called Self-Realization or God-Realization. But there is a pre-condition as mentioned in his sakhi. That pre-condition is that one must have to give up ego of clan and tradition, which means identification with any clan or tradition, or a religious order or philosophical system, etc. By accepting any of these systems one confines the soul which is by nature eternal and free. Any

confinement thus, into a system of dogmas, creeds, and beliefs is done by one's own spiritual short-sightedness. The mind must be ever free from all limitations, dogmas, creeds, rituals and philosophies before it can realize that which is eternally free from all these encumbrances. That state of Self-Realization is unseen, but can be experienced only internally.

रमैनी-९

बाँधे अष्ट कष्ट नौ सूता, यम बाँधे अंजनी के पूता.  
यम के बाहन बाँधे जनी, बाँधे सृष्टि कहाँ लौं गनी.  
बाँधेउ देव तैंतीस करोरी, सँवरत लोह बन्द गौ तोरी.  
राजा सँवरे तुरिया चढी, पन्थी सँवरे नाम ले बढी.  
अर्थ बिहूना सँवरे नारी, परजा सँवरे पुहूमी झारी.

साखी- बन्दि मनावै ते फल पावै, बन्दि दिया सो देय .  
कहैं कबीर सो ऊबरै, निसुबासर नाम हि लेय

*ramaini 9*

*bāndhe asht kasht now sūta, yam bāndhe anjanī ke pūtā.  
yam ke bāhan bāndhe jani, bāndhe shrishti kahān lou ganī.  
bāndheu dev taintīs karorī, sambarat loha band gow torī.  
rājā sambare turiyā chadhī, panthī sambare nām le badhī.  
arth bihūnā sambare nārī, prajā sambare puhumī jhārī.*

*sakhi: bandi manāwai te phal pāwai, bandi diyā so dei.  
kahain kabīr so ūbarai, nisubāsar nāmahi lei.*

Meaning:

Maya has bound the soul with eight sufferings and nine threads. She has bound Yama and her own sons (humans).

Maya has bound the bearers of Yama (animals of conveyance) and all of creation. How much can one count?

Maya has bound three hundred and thirty million devas (gods), but by worship of God iron shackles are broken.

By worshipping God the Raja Yogi attains turiya (super-conscious state). The traveller worships God on his journey.

The lady worships God without knowing the meaning. The common people all over the world worship God, but without meaning.

Sakhi: One desiring the fruits of actions becomes the victim of bondage.

Kabir says that he who utters the name of God night and day will obtain liberation.

Commentary:

In this *ramaini* Guru Kabir speaks of the power of Maya over all beings, including humans, gods and goddesses, angels, Yama (the God of death), and animals - in fact all of creation. Maya is the 'grand illusion' or 'veil' which prevents us from seeing God manifest in the world. If we can remove Maya from our consciousness, then we will be able to realize God.

The eight sufferings are: ignorance, ego, attachment, aversion, fear of death, and the three gunas (qualities) that are inherent in all of us. The nine threads are the five sense organs, plus the mind, intellect, consciousness and ego. All of these manifest in us because of the power of Maya that has operated from the beginning of creation, in order to allow differentiation into various forms of living beings - in other words, for God to be projected into the various forms of His own creation. Guru Kabir states, though, that by remembering and worshipping God, even iron shackles can be removed. The Raja Yogi, by control of his mind and entering meditation, reached the super-conscious state. He states that even travellers recite the name of God on their journeys, but they do not realize Him. People all over the world are engaged in reciting God's name and worshipping Him, but often do not realize God because of the veil of Maya clouding their spiritual consciousness.

In the *sakhi* Guru Kabir explains that the desire for the fruits of one's actions is the cause of bondage. Desire is born out of Maya and keeps us trapped into this wheel of birth and death. He tells us, though, that there is a way of overcoming Maya, and that is, by uttering the Name of God at all times, that is, by living in the Consciousness of God.

रमैनी - १०

राही लै पिपराही बही, करगी आवत काहु न कहि.  
आयी करगी भौ अजगूता, जनम जनम यम पहिरे बूता.  
बूता पहिरि यम कीह समाना, तीन लोक में कीह पयाना.  
बांधेउ ब्रह्मा विष्णु महेसु, सुर नर मुनि औ बांधु गणेशू.  
बांधे पवन पावक औ नीरू, चांद सूर्य बांधेउ दोउ बीरू.  
सांच मंत्र बांधे सब झारी, अमृत वस्तु न जानै नारी.

साखी - अमृत वस्तु जनै नहीं, मगन भया सब लोय.

कहहिं कबीर कामों नहीं, जीवहि मरन न होय.

*ramaini 10*

*rāhī lai piparāhī bahī, kargī āwat kāhu na kahī.*

*āyi kargī bhow ajgūtā, janam janam yam pahire būtā.*

*būtā pahiri yam kīnha samānā, tīn lok men kīnhh payānā.*

*bandheu brahmā vishnu, maheshu, sur nar muni ow bāndheu ganeshū.*

*bāndhe pawan pāwak ow nīrū, chānd surya bāndheu dowu bīrū.*

*sānch mantra bāndhe sab jhārī, amrit vastu na jānai nārī.*

*sakhi: amrit vastu janai nahīn, magan bhayā sab loi.*

*kahahin kabīr kāmō nahīn, jīwahi maran na hoi.*

Meaning:

The traveller (soul) sheltering under the banyan tree (world) was washed away; no one told him of the coming flood (maya).

When the flood came, the world was deceived; life after life Yama (God of death) wears this power.

Wearing this power Yama enters the three worlds.

He ensnared Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, gods, men, munis and Ganesha.

He has bound air, fire, water and the brave sun and moon.

People, thinking the mantras to be true, bound themselves in their recitation. The ignorant people do not know the Eternal Soul (God).

Sakhi: No one understands the Immortal God, and the world is absorbed in worldly pleasures.

Guru Kabir says that he who is free of desires will not be subject to birth and death.

Commentary:

Guru Kabir keeps hammering into us the temporary and illusory nature of the material world that cannot give us eternal peace, joy and happiness. He tells us that coming into this world, we are preoccupied with material pursuits believing that these are the main purpose of life, but in the end we find that they are not the means of liberation. He likens the soul to a traveller coming into the world, and the banyan tree as all the material pursuits in this life. While people are thus engaged in their material life, they become fascinated by it and, in the end, are cheated, because death inevitably comes to all, and without devotion to, and knowledge of God people do not attain salvation. The whole material manifestation is an illusion, perpetrated by Maya. We must look behind Maya, or the material manifestations, to find God, the Divine Being, who is ever-present everywhere. Guru Kabir states that the various gods, men, holy people, angels, etc., were caught up in this noose of Maya. Even the natural elements, the sun, the moon and other planets and stars are all bound by Maya, because it is by her power that they became differentiated into their various forms. People are generally ignorant of the reality of God as the basis of all material manifestations. Even if they, theoretically, know this, it does not form a basis for transcendental knowledge. People are thus preoccupied with reciting

various mantras and with various rites and rituals, but they do not obtain the secret knowledge the God.

In the sakhi Guru Kabir summarizes that people are absorbed in worldly pleasures and do not know God. He outlines the method of obtaining liberation. We have to free ourselves from all material desires which keep us bound to the worldly plain of existence. Freedom from desires gives freedom to the soul. One who has been able to conquer his desires, and have knowledge of the Reality, manifesting in life, will be free from birth and death, because he will be free from the effects of karma.

रमैनी-११

आँधरी गुष्टि सृष्टि भई बौरी, तीन लोक में लागि ठगौरी.  
ब्रह्मा ठगो नाग कहँ जाई, देवता सहित ठगो त्रिपुरारी.  
राज ठगोरी विष्णु पर परी, चौदह भुवन केर चौधरी.  
आदि अन्त जाकी जलकन जानी, ताकी डर तुम काहेक मानी.  
वै उतंग तुम जाति पतंगा, यम घर कियेउ जीव को संगी.  
नीम कीट जस नीम पियारा, विष को अमृत कहत गँवारा.  
विष के संग कौन गुण होई, किंचित लाभ मूल गौ खोई.  
विष अमृत गौ एकै सानी, जिन जानी तिन विष कै मानी.  
काह भये नर सुध बेसूझा, बिन परिचय जग बूडन बूझा.  
मति के हीन कौन गुन कहई, लालच लागी आसा रहई.

साखी- मूवा है मरि जाहुगे, मुये की बाजी ढोल .  
सपन सनेही जग भया, सहिदानी रहिगौ बोल.

*ramaini 11*

*āndharī gushti shrishti bhaī bowrī, tīn lok men lāgi thagowrī.  
brahmā thago nāg kaha jāī, devatā sahit thago tripurārī.  
rāj-thagowrī vishnu par parī, chowdah bhuwan ker chowdharī.  
ādi ant jāki jalkan jāni, tākī dar tum kahek mānī.  
wai utanga tum jāti patangā, yam ghar kiyewu jīw ko sangā.  
nīm kīt jas nīm piyārā, vish ko amrit kahat ganwārā.  
vish ke sang kown gun hoī, kinchit lābh mūl gow khoī.  
vish amrit gow ekai sānī, jin jāni tin vish kai mānī.  
kāhh bhaye nar sudh besūjhā, bin parichai jag būdan būjhā.  
mati ke hīn kawan gun kahaī, lālach lāgī āsā rahaī.*

*sakhi: mūwā hai mari jāhuge, muye ki bāji dhol.  
sapan sanehī jag bhayā, sahidānī rahi gow bol.*

Meaning:

Like a meeting of blind people, this world has gone mad. Maya has cheated the three worlds;

Brahma, himself, is cheated; how can Naga escape? Shiva, along with the gods, is cheated;

Maya has cheated Vishnu - the leader of the three worlds. She has cheated the leaders of the fourteen worlds;

Why do you fear that of whom you know not even the reflection of the beginning and the end?

Why do you kill yourself like a moth in the flame of desires and keep company with Yama, the god of death?

Just as the nim worm relishes the bitter nim juice, just so the foolish people accept poison as nectar.

What benefit can one get with the poison of passions? For a small gain he loses his capital.

If poison and nectar are mixed together, the wise person will know that the mixture remains poisonous.

If man has no intelligence, what is the use of his manhood? Being foolish he unwittingly drowns in this world.

Those devoid of intellect, what quality can we say they have? They are caught up in false greed and hopes.

Sakhi: Many have died; you also will die. The drum of death is being beaten.

The world has fallen in love with a dream. Only sayings of the wise will remain.

Commentary:

Guru Kabir uses this *ramaini* to instruct us of the great power of Maya which has ensnared all beings in the world. Maya is the 'grand illusion' which makes us see only differences between us and all other beings and veils from our view the Divinity that is the same everywhere in all beings. He says that even the gods, Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva, have been deceived by Maya, as are the demi-gods who rule over the various astral and sub-astral worlds. These are well known by reading their stories in the Puranas. He instructs us that we must not be like the moth that flies to its death in the flames. The flames here are the passions and desires which seem to hold such a great sway on us. The more we become subject to passions, the more we are courting death, thus he says we are keeping company with Yama. He compares us to the nim worm that relishes the bitter nim juice. Just so, we appear to relish the various desires and passions not realizing that they are 'bitter' for us. He tells us that if passions and pleasures are mixed together we must have the discriminative intellect to realize that the mixture remains poisonous for us, because it will continue to create karmas for us that we have to repay sooner or later. He warns us not to be devoid of intellect and be attached to the false greeds and hopes of this world, or else we relinquish our status as human created by God with an intellect. He tells us that we really do not know Maya thus we should have no fear of her. We should fearlessly follow the teachings of the saints which lead to salvation, and not to remain in love with a dream which is the power of Maya manifesting in the material world.

रमैनी-१२

माटिक कोट पषाण को ताला, सोइक बन सोई रखवाला.  
सो बन देखत जीव डेराना, ब्राह्मण वैष्णव एकै जाना.  
ज्यों किसान किसानी करई, उपजे खेत बीज नहिं परई.  
छाडि देहु नर झेलिक झेला, बूडे दोउ गुरू औ चेला.  
तीसर बूडे पारथ भाई, जिन बन डाहो दवाँ लगाई.  
भूँकि भूँकि कूकुर मरि गयऊ, काज न एक सियार से भयऊ.

साखी-मूसबिलाई एक संग, कहु कैसे रहि जाय.  
अचरज एक देखो हो संतो, हस्ती सिंहहि खाय.

*ramaini 12*

*māti ke kot pashān ko tālā, soik ban soi rakhwālā.  
so ban dekhat jiw derānā, brāhman vaishnav ekai j jānā.  
jyon kisān kisānī karaī, upje khet bīj nahi paraī.  
chhādi dehu nar jhelik jhelā, būde dowu guru ow chelā.  
tīsar būde pārath bhāī, jin ban dāho dawān lagāī.  
bhūnki bhūnki kūkur mari gayawu, kāj na ek siyār se bhayawu.*

*sakhi: mūs bilaī ek sangh, kahu kaise rahi jāī.  
achraj ek dekho ho santo, hastī singhahi khāī.*

Meaning:

This body is a fort of clay, secured with a lock (mind) of stone.  
The fort is in the jungle of doubts, and doubt is its keeper.  
Seeing the doubts, the soul is sorely afraid. The Brahmins and Vaishnavas are trapped in the same doubts.  
Just as the farmer tends his fields, just so, the farm of doubts exist, but flourishes without seed.  
Oh man, give up the pulling and pushing (arguments indicating doubt). Because of doubt, both the guru and the disciple drown.  
The third to drown is the hunter who sets fire to the jungle to drive out the animals.  
The dog has died of barking, and the jackal could not accomplish his task.

Sakhi: The rat and the cat are placed together; tell me, how can they remain together?  
Oh saints! I see such a marvel that the elephant is eating up the lion.

Commentary:

In this *ramaini* Guru Kabir tells us that we become victims of doubt if we do not have a clear perception of the spiritual path to God realization. We have this body, which can function only by the dictates of the mind. The mind, however, is full of ignorance when it comes to the subject of a true spiritual life. Doubts are fed to us from all around, by people who, themselves, have not realized God, and are thus not able to give us the true teachings. Thus Guru Kabir says that doubts spring up, just as the carefully tended field of the farmer springs up in abundance. None is actually spared of these doubts, whether he is a Brahmin, a Vaishnav, or any other caste. He advises us to give up argumentations and seek to know God, who dwells within. There are many false gurus who, along with their disciples, drown in this world of materialism and bondage. Guru Kabir likens the leader of the false gurus to the hunter who sets fire to the jungle in order to drive out the animals to be captured. Just so, the false gurus put the fire of doubts in the minds of the people. The dog here represents the ignorant person who gives endless talks, but dies without God realization. Similarly, the jackal represents the cunning person, who in his cunningness thinks that he knows God, yet he has only fooled himself. In the *sakhi*, Guru Kabir refers to the rat as the ignorant person, and the cat as Maya. Just as the rat and the cat cannot stay together, since the cat will eat the rat, just so, Maya destroys the ignorant person. The marvel that he describes about the elephant eating the lion, refers to the mind full of doubts, figuratively, destroying the soul. In essence, Guru Kabir teaches us to get rid of doubts by seeking the truth, so that we may not be fooled by Maya (illusion), but rise to spiritual illumination and salvation.

रमैनी १३

नहि परतीत जो यह संसारा, दर्ब की चोट कठिन कै मारा.  
 सो तो शेषो जाइ लुकाई, काहु के परतीत न आई.  
 चले लोग सब मूल गमाई, यम की बाढि काटि नहि जाई.  
 आजु काज जो काल अकाजा, चले लादि दिगंतर राजा.  
 सहज बेचारे मूल गमाई, लाभ ते हानि होय रे भाई.  
 ओछी मति चंद्रमा गौ अथई, रित्रिकुटि संगम स्वामी बसई.  
 तबही विष्णु कहा समुझाई, मैथुन अष्ट तुम जीतहु जाई.  
 तब सनकादिक तत्व विचारा, जैसे रंक पड़ा धन पाया.  
 भौ मर्याद बहुत सुख लागा, यहि लेखे सब संशय भागा.  
 देखत उतपति लागु न बारा, एक मरै एक करै विचारा.  
 मुये गये की काहु न कही, झूठी आस लागि जग रही.

साखी –जरत जरत ते बांचहू, काहु न कींह गोहार.

विष विषया के खायहू, रात-दिवस मिलि झार.

*nahi partīt jo yaha sansārā, darb kī chot kathin kai mārā.  
so toh shesho jāi lukāī, kāhū ke partīt na āī.  
chale log sab mūl gamāī, yam kī bādhi kāti nahi jāī.  
āju kāj jo kāl akājā, chale lādi digantar rājā.  
sahaj bichāre māl gamāī, lābh te hāni hoi re bhāī.  
ochchī mati chandramā gow athaī, trikutī sangam swāmī basaī.  
tabahī vishnu kahā samujhāī, maithun ashth tum jītahu jāī.  
tab sankādik tattwa bichārā, jaise rank parā dhan paya.  
bhow maryād bahut sukh lāgā, yehi lekhai sab sansai bhāgā.  
dekhat utpati lāgu na bārā, ek marai ek karai bichārā.  
muye gaye kī kāhu na kahī, jhūthī ās lāgi jag rahī.*

*sakhi: jarat jarat te bānchahū, kāhu na kīnhh gohār.  
vish vishyā ke khāyahū, rāt diwas mili jhār.*

#### Meaning:

The world does not believe my word because their pride has severely injured them. Because of pride people lost everything. They did not believe in the troubles caused by pride.

They all left this world losing their capital (soul); they could not escape Yama's flood of troubles.

Today (in the human life) you can fulfill your destiny, but not tomorrow; one who is king today leaves the world loaded with karmas.

The foolish person, thinking of more wealth, loses his capital (soul); instead of gain he suffers loss.

Because of evil thinking man loses the moon (intellect); the master resides at the trikuti (third eye).

Therefore Vishnu advises to conquer the desire for the eight kinds of sex (eight types of sexual gratification).

Then sankadik thought upon that philosophy and were happy, just as a poor man who finds great wealth on a path.

The rishis followed the discipline of brahmcharya and became immensely happy, and all their doubts vanished.

One sees birth and death and thinks upon them but does not follow the proper way.

None of the dead returns to tell his story; this world is attached to a false hope.

Sakhi: You can be saved from the fire of the mother's womb. Why don't you call out to God?

You eat the poison of worldly desires and day and night all of you burn in fire.

#### Commentary:

Guru Kabir always points out to us our shortcomings that prevent us from leading a pure spiritual life. In this *ramaini* he speaks of pride that has inflicted a severe wound on us. Pride depends on egoism that, in turn, creates a sense of self that is separate from God. Since God is not separate from anyone, and He is, in the final analysis, the animating and motive force in all beings, we cannot be on a true spiritual path as long as we live with a sense of ego and pride. Ego is one of the greatest stumbling blocks in a spiritual life. It is thus that pride has severely wounded us. By not being on a true spiritual path because of pride, we are creating bondage for our soul. The soul needs liberation and not bondage. In this materialistic life full of pride, we are, figuratively, losing our soul. The end result is that we face Yama, the god of death, with the soul still in bondage, and subject to rebirth, so that it may reap its rewards and punishments, without attaining liberation. Guru Kabir states that it is only in this life that we can live righteously in thought, word, and deed in order to obtain salvation. We cannot do it in death. Even the king living a life of pride will have to return to this world because of his karmas.

Guru Kabir states that evil thinking results in the loss of our intellect. The moon is mythologically thought to be the god of wisdom, and the soul is inherently wise, but evil thinking results in the loss of this innate wisdom. Thus one who wishes spiritual progress must control his various passions. Here he mentions lust for sex that is enjoyed in different ways using the various organs of sense and action. When the rishis (apostles of wisdom) followed Lord Vishnu's advice and controlled sense gratifications, they became very happy because the happiness they got from their inner being surpassed any happiness they could obtain by satisfying the senses. Guru Kabir states that although we see birth and death and we think upon their significance, we do not live the spiritual life in order to obtain liberation. And if we do not obtain liberation we have to be reborn. Thus he talks of the fire of the mother's womb. We are born again and we eat the poison of the worldly desires and we continue to repeat this cycle over and over. If we truly call to God, we could obtain salvation.

रमैनी-१४

बड सो पापी आहि गुमानी, पाखण्ड रूप छलेउ नर जानी.  
बावन रूप छलेउ बलि राजा, ब्राह्मण कीन्ह कौन को काजा.  
ब्राह्मण ही सब कीन्हीं चोरी, ब्राह्मण ही को लागल खोरी.  
ब्राह्मण कीन्हीं बेद पुराना, कैसेहु मोहि मानुष जाना.  
एक से ब्रह्मै पंथ चलाया, एक से हंस गोपालहिं गाया.  
एक से शंभू पंथ चलाया, एक से भूत-प्रेत मन लाया.  
एक से पूजा जैनि विचारा, एक से निहुरी निमाज गुजारा.  
कोई काहू का हटा न माना, झूठा खसम कबीरन जाना.  
तन मन भजि रहु मोरे भक्ता, सत्य कबीर सत्य है वक्ता.  
आपुहि देव आपु है पाँती, आपुहि कुल आपुहि है जाती.  
सर्व भूत संसार निवासी, आपुहि खसम आपुहि सुखवासी.

कहइत मोहि भयल युगचारी, काके आगे कहौं पुकारी.

साखी-साँचहि कौन न माने, झूठहि के संग जाय .

झूठहि झूठा मिलि रहा, अहमक खेहा खाय.

*ramaini 14*

*bad so pāpī āhi gumānī, pākhand rūp chhaleu nar jānī.  
vāman rūp chhaleu bali rājā, brāhman kīnh kown ko kājā.  
brahmanhī sab kīnhin chorī, brāhmanhī ko lāgal khorī.  
brāhman kīnhon ved purānā, kaisehu kai mohi mānush jānā.  
ek se brahmai panth chalāyā, ek se hans gopalahi gāyā.  
ek se shambhū panth chalāya, ek se bhūt pret man lāyā.  
ek se pūjā jaini bichārā, ek se nihuri nimāz gujārā.  
koi kāhū kā hatā na mānā, jhāthā khasam kabīr na jānā.  
tan man bhaji rahu more bhaktā, satya kabīr satya hai vactā.  
āpuhi deva āpuhi hai pānti, āpuhi kul āpuhi hai jātī.  
sarv bhūt sansār newāsī, āpuhi khasam āpu sukhbāsī.  
kahat mohi bhyal jug chāri, kāke āge kahow pukārī.*

*sakhi: sānchahi koi na māne, jhūthahi ke sang jāi.  
jhūthahi jhūtha mili rahā, ahamak kheha khāi.*

Meaning:

This pride is a great sinner; it hypocritically cheated mankind;  
Lord Vishnu, becoming a dwarf, cheated King Bali; to whom did Brahmin do any good?  
The Brahmins have deceived the people, and they are to be blamed.  
Brahmins interpreted the Vedas and Puranas (according to their own motives) so that  
people will bestow honour on them.  
Brahma started a path of rituals, and Vishnu sang of the path of devotion.  
Shiva started the path of yoga, and another started the worship of ghosts and spirits.  
The Jains started one type of worship, and the Muslims started another form as namaz -  
bowing and praying towards Mecca.  
No one accepted the instructions of the others. Kabir does not accept a false master.  
O my devotees! With body and mind sing Kabir is Truth and the Speaker of Truth.  
He (God) is, Himself, God, and Himself, the Offering. He is, Himself, the clan and the  
caste.  
He, Himself, resides in all beings in the world. He is, Himself, the Master and the Abode  
of Bliss.  
I have been saying this for four yugas. To whom should I shout this message?

Sakhi: No one accepts the truth. All follow the liars.

The liar gets together with the liar and the foolish people bite the dust.

Commentary:

Although Guru Kabir appears to be critical of the Brahmins, he is in fact pointing out the lack of religious unity among the people of the world. When God is one and He is in fact all manifestations, then what need was there for people to start various religions. If the founders of religions knew the Real Truth - the Absolute - then they would not have created various religions. Because of pride, however, each felt that he had the answer to the Absolute and thus started a religion. He thus states that no one accepted the instructions of the others.

Referring specifically to India, it is necessary to understand that priestcraft held sway over the religious life of the people. The priests who were the Brahmins laid great stress on the studying of the Vedas and the Puranas and other scriptures, but did not delve into themselves to find the Reality of which Guru Kabir is speaking. They were thus not enlightened, nor could they enlighten others. All of them began to follow the exoteric form of the religion, being satisfied with reading the scriptures, praying, going to church, offering alms, making pilgrimages, etc. The people thus become preoccupied with these external observances of religion to the end of their days, and they do not obtain salvation. Guru Kabir is saying that if they followed the esoteric teaching, they would realize that God is, Himself, the Universal, Omnipotent, and Omniscient Being. They would realize that He is, Himself, the devotee and the offering, and He is, Himself, the clan and the caste of all. God is, Himself, the manifestation of all beings in the whole universe, and that He dwelt within. With this realization, the people could have been truly enlightened. He always stressed the necessity of seeking and knowing Truth, of knowing God, and not to settle for less. He thus said almost in resignation: "to whom should I shout this teaching?"

In this sakhi he summarizes that people do not accept the Truth. They are more enchanted by the 'liars' who keep on deceiving them. The foolish people remain unrealized and die without knowing God.

रमैनी-१५

वोनई बदरिया परिगौ संझा, अगुवा भूले बन खंड मंझा.  
पिय अन्ते धनि अन्ते रहई, चौपरि कामरि माथे गहई.

साखी-फुलवा भार न लै सकै, कहै सखियन सों रोय .  
ज्यों-ज्यों भीजै कामरी, त्यों-त्यों भारी होय.

*ramaini 15*

*wo naī badariyā parigow sanjhā, aguwā bhūle bandkhand manjhā.  
piya ante dhani ante rahaī, chowpari kāmari māthe gahaī.*

*sakhi: phulwā bhār na lai sakai, kahai sakhiyan so roi.  
jyon jyon bhijai kāmārī, tyon tyon bhārī hoi.*

Meaning:

Those new clouds have gathered and it has become evening; the leader lost his way in the jungle.

The husband is somewhere and the wife somewhere else; she places the folded blanket on her head.

Sakhi: When she was decorated with flowers by her friends, she cried out to them that she could not bear the weight. Now as the blanket got wet, it became heavier and heavier on her head.

Commentary:

This is a short *ramaini* in the Bijak and, as usual, Guru Kabir has packed it with metaphysical meaning. This is based on a story in which a king was under threat by an opposing army. He secretly sent his son and daughter-in-law through a hidden passage to obtain help from the prince's father-in-law. He sent a guide to show them the way through the forest. After arriving in the forest the wife became thirsty and asked her husband for water. He sent the guide for water and he got lost. He then went himself in search for water and lost his way also. In the meanwhile it started to rain, and the blanket that was folded in four and on which she was sitting, she placed on top of her head to keep herself dry. It became dark and, as the rain fell, the blanket got wet and became heavier and heavier. In the palace she complained of the weight of the flowers with which her friends decorated her, but now she has to bear the weight of the blanket. Guru Kabir, with his usual vivid imagination, used this story to make a comment on our condition in the world. The clouds are doubts and the night is ignorance. The four-folded blanket is our actions; the rain symbolizes desires; the wife is the soul and the husband is God. The leader is Brahma and the jungle is Maya (illusion).

In this life we are under the influence of the clouds of doubts and the night of ignorance. The leaders, who are the priests, are themselves lost in the jungle of Maya in this world. They have not attained God Realization, the goal that they are seeking. People, goaded on by desires, are occupied in various activities that, like a heavy wet blanket, keep weighing them down in this material world. The soul, separate from God, longs for union with Him, just as the wife in the jungle longs for her husband to return.

रमैनी-१६

चलत-चलत अति चरण पिराना, हारिपरे तहाँअति रेसयाना.  
गण-गन्धर्व मुनि अन्त न पाया, हरि अलोप जग धन्धे लाया.  
गहनी बन्धन बाण न सूझा, थाकि परे तहाँ किछऊ न बूझा.  
भूलि परे जिय अधिक डेराई, रजनी अन्ध कूप होय आई.  
माया मोह उहाँ भरपूरी, दादुर दामिनि पवन अपूरी.

बरसैं तपैं अखंडित धारा, रैनि भयावनि कछु न अधारा.

साखी-सबै लोग जहँडाइया, अन्धा सबै भुलान .

कहा कोई ना माने, सब एकै माहिं समान.

*ramaini 16*

*chalat chalat ati charan pirānā, hāri pare tahā ati risiyāna.*

*gan gandharv muni ant na pāyā, hari alop jag dhandhe lāyā.*

*gahanī bandhan ban na sūjhā, thāki pare tahān kichheu na bujhā.*

*bhūli pare jiu adhik derāī, rajanī andh kūp hoi āī.*

*māyā moha uhān bharpūrī, dādur dāmini pawan apūrī.*

*barsai tapai akhandit dhārā, raini bhayāvani kachhu na adhārā.*

*sakhi: sabai log jahandaiā, andhā sabai bhulān.*

*kaha koi nā māne, sab ekai māhin samān.*

Meaning:

Walking and walking in search of a false destination, the feet become very tired and, on not reaching the goal, the walker becomes very angry;

Ganas (servants of Shiva), Gandharv (celestial musicians), and munis (philosophers) were unable to fathom the mystery of God; God remains hidden in the world and keeps the world busy in their works.

The binder (their own actions) is the bondage but is not visible; they all become tired and could realize nothing.

The night came as a blind well in which the Jivas fall with great fear.

Maya (illusion) and attachment are in full force. Frogs (hope), lightening (greed) and wind (desires) are also in full force there.

Desires rain in an unbroken stream; the night (ignorance) is very fearful, and there is no help for them in that delusion.

Sakhi: All the people are deceived and are lost in darkness.

No one obeys my instructions, and all have been caught in the trap of Maya.

Commentary:

People are searching for God in many ways. Some search for Him in distant pilgrimages; other search for Him in various austerities and fasting, while others search for Him by bathing in the holy rivers. Others search for Him by arduous study of scriptures but, in the end, their 'feet' literally become tired, i.e. they have exhausted their search but have not found God. Even those favoured of the gods such as the servants of Shiva, the celestial musicians and the philosophers were not able to fathom the mystery of God. The mystery of God is that God is with them in their search, and God is in the thing for which they are searching. In other words, God in them becomes the searcher. God in the holy objects becomes the object of their search, and the energy expended by them is also the

energy of God. These people, however, do not understand this depth of philosophy and mystery of God, and so they go on searching and become tired and frustrated, and thus angry. They do not realize that it is their own actions and desires that are the real bondage for them that prevents them from seeing God.

Not having found God, they face the night of ignorance and become full of fear. They fall into this well of ignorance. In this well of ignorance Maya, the great illusion, and attachment along with hope, greed and desire, are in full sway, and play havoc with the lives of those caught up in that ignorance. In this state of existence desires reign supreme and keep the mind occupied in all types of pursuits, none of which bring peace and illumination to the mind.

In the sakhi, Guru Kabir observes the state in which people have found themselves as described above. This appears to be the average state of affairs of the majority of mankind. They all want freedom but are seeking in the wrong places. Thus Guru Kabir says no one obeys his instructions and all have been caught in the trap of Maya.

रमैनी-१७

जस जिव आपु मिले अस कोई, बहुत धर्म सुख हृदया होई.  
जासु बात राम की कही, प्रीति न काहू सो निरबही.  
एकै भाव सकल जग देखी, बाहर परे सो होय विवेकी.  
विषय मोह के फन्द छुड़ाई, जहाँ जाय तहाँ काट कसाई  
अहै कसाई छूरी हाथा, कैसहु आवै काटैं माथा.  
मानुष बडा-बडा होय आया, एकै पण्डित सबै पढाया.  
पढना पढो धरो जनि गोई, नहिं तो निश्चय जाहु बिगोई.

साखी-सुमिरण करहू राम का, छौँडहु दुःख की आस .  
तर ऊपर धै चापि हैं, जस कोल्हू कोटि पचास. १७

*ramaini 17*

*jas jīv āpu mile as koī, bahut dharm sukh hridayā hoī.  
jāsu bāt rām kī kahī, prīti na kāhū so nirbahī.  
ekai bhāw sakal jag dekhī, bāhar pare so hoi vivekī.  
vishai moha ke phand chhodāī, tahān jāi jahān kāt kasāī.  
ahai kasāī chhūri hāthā, kaisahu āwai katai māthā.  
mānush badā bada hoi āyā, ekai pandit sabai padhāyā.  
padhanā padho dharo jani goī, nahi toh nischai jāhu bigoī.*

*sakhi: sumiran karahu nām kā, chhārahu dukh kī ās.  
tar upar dhai chāmpi hai, jas kolhū koti pachās.*

Meaning:

When a person meets another like himself, he derives immense happiness and righteousness.

But he who speaks about God is not liked by the others.

One who sees the same condition of the world everywhere, and detaches his mind from it is a wise person.

He is able to get rid of the shackles of passions and attachment, but ignorant people will see Kal (the butcher) within, ready to slay them wherever they go.

The butcher stands waiting with knife in hand; as soon as one comes he is ready to sever his head.

Man came as the greatest of all forms, but he fell into the trap of rituals. He was taught these rituals by one pandit (Brahma).

Study your lesson of Self-knowledge and do not hide it from others, otherwise you will be lost.

Sakhi: Sing the glories of God and give up the desires for worldly enjoyments.

Otherwise Maya will crush you with fifty million millstones on your head.

Commentary:

When people of similar interests get together they have happiness. In this case Guru Kabir is speaking to Dharam Das who was his foremost disciple. He states that if people of similar interests could meet, then they will derive happiness and righteousness from such a meeting. Guru Kabir, however, recognizes that when a devotee speaks of God, he is often not liked by many people. This is so because the majority of people are too attached to the material world, and are busy pursuing various types of sense pleasures. They seek immediate pleasure, often without thought of what will be beneficial for their life later on. The pleasures, however, are transient. Guru Kabir thus advises that one should be wise and see that the same condition of material bondage prevails in the whole world, and to detach himself by using spiritual discrimination. If he does so, he will remove the bondage of all passions and desires that keep him bound in his daily life. Unless a person is detached from the worldly life and attached to a Divine life, Kal - the negative power – will, figuratively, be ready to cut off his head. That means that such a person will be subjected to the rounds of rebirths in order to satisfy his desires, along with all the accompanying sorrows.

Guru Kabir states that man is the highest form of life that has evolved, manifesting a high degree of consciousness of God. But what happens to this highly evolved creature? He becomes entangled with the trappings of rituals of various kinds. Brahma was the first pandit or Brahmin who taught rituals, but these do not give Self knowledge. Guru Kabir advises to master the lesson of Self knowledge that will remove all doubts and give liberation.

He states, in this sakhi, that the devotee must sing the glories of God, even if there are many in the world who do not like him. Those who remain entangled with Maya will be crushed, as if fifty million millstones were crushing him. Thus, if a person is not able to rise above Maya, he will be similarly crushed by all the worldly passions and desires.

रमैनी-१८

अद्बुद पन्थ वरणि नहिं जाई, भूले राम भूली दुनियाई.  
जो चेतहु तो चेतहु रे भाई, नहिं तो जीव यम लै जाई.  
शब्द न माने कथै जु ज्ञाना, ताते यम दियो है थाना.  
संशय सावज बसे शरीरा, तिन खायो अनबेधा हीरा.

साखी-संशय सावज शरीर में, संगहिं खेले जुआरी .  
ऐसा घायल बापुरा, जीवहिं मारे झारि.

*ramaini 18*

*adbud panth varni nahi jāī, bhūle rām bhūlī duniyāī.  
jo chetahu toh chetahu re bhāī, nahi toh jīw yam le jāī.  
shabd na māne kathai ju gyānā, tāte yam diyo hai thānā.  
sansai sāvaj base sharīrā, tin khāyo anbedhā hīrā.*

*sakhi: sanshai sāvaj sharīr men, sangahi khele juwārī.  
aisā ghāyal bāpurā, jīwahi māre jhāri.*

Meaning:

There are many strange religions, and it is difficult to describe them.  
Beguiled by Maya, the people have forgotten God.  
O my brother! If you wish to awaken, then wake up, or else Yama will take your life.  
Yama has given a refuge to the person who does not know the Word, but discusses words of wisdom.  
Doubts, as wild animals, are residing in the body, and eat up the precious, flawless diamond.

Sakhi: Doubts, as wild animals, dwell in the body, and gamble with the soul.  
They have sorely wounded the poor soul and have killed it.

Commentary:

The world has many religions that are divided into many sects and sub-sects or branches. Each interprets the scriptures according to its own understanding, and they have devised various ways of worshipping God, and of practising religious life according to their various interpretations of their scriptures. Guru Kabir calls them strange because they all

profess to worship one God, the one Truth. The followers of each have the same spirit dwelling in them. God resides in all equally, and yet they have caused confusion among themselves because of the proliferation of various beliefs. As a result, they have missed the point, and have lost sight of God in the process. In other words, they have failed to realize the Truth. They remain fooled by Maya (illusion) because they continue to be driven by the various passions of ego, lust, anger, greed and attachments in the world of materialism.

The soul resides within all beings and it manifests the consciousness of God. People cannot find God anywhere else in the world except in their own selves. Of what use then are the various belief systems and practices which people follow. They only cause misunderstanding and intolerance, and God 'falls through the cracks' between them. Without realizing the Truth, they try to discuss words of wisdom with great conviction. No wonder Guru Kabir exhorts people to wake up. If they do not, they will not find the salvation that they are seeking, but will find death awaiting them. Because they have not realized the Truth, doubts are having a grand time 'gambling' with the soul. The soul is divine, eternal and flawless, but the mind of man cannot grasp its reality because it is caught up with doubts perpetrated by all the various religions and their fragmentary branches. Guru Kabir has used the symbolism of killing the soul figuratively, as the soul cannot be killed. It means that doubts keep the soul in bondage due to spiritual ignorance. When all doubts are removed, only then can Self realization occur.

रमैनी-१९

अनहद अनुभव की करि आसा, ई विपरीत देखहु तमासा.  
इहै तमासा देखहु रे भाई, जहँवाँ शून्य तहाँ चलि जाई.  
शून्यहिं बँछे शून्यहिं गयऊ, हाथा छोडि बेहाथा भयऊ.  
संशय सावज सकल संसारा, काल अहेरी साँझ सकारा.

साखी-सुमिरण करहू राम का, काल गहे हैं केश.  
ना जानौं कब मारी हैं, क्या घर क्या परदेश.

*ramaini 19*

*anahad anubhow kī kari āsā, ī viprīt dekhahu re tamāsā.  
ihai tamāsā dekhahu re bhāī, jahanwān shūnya tahān chali jāī.  
shunyahī banchhe sunyahī gayau, hāthā chhori behāthā bhayau.  
sanshai sāvaj sakal sansārā, kāl aherī sānjh sakārā.*

*sakhi: sumeran karahū rām kā, kāl gahe hai kesh.  
nā janown kab māri hai, kyā ghar kyā pardesh.*

Meaning:

If one, without a Guru, hopes to experience the Anahad (God), it is untraditional and funny.

O my brother! See this fun. Where there is emptiness, people advance to that state. They want the void and enter into the void. Giving up what they had in hand, they become empty-handed.

The whole world is full of doubts that are like wild animals, and death, the hunter, awaits to stalk the soul from morning to night.

Sakhi: O man! Recite the name of God as death holds you by the hair.

You do not know when he will slay you, whether at home or on foreign land.

Commentary:

People want to obtain liberation or salvation, but this is not possible until one realizes God within. The word 'anahad' means limitless, therefore, it refers to God who is the Infinite Being. It is the spiritual tradition that a disciple should be initiated by his guru and be guided on his spiritual path towards liberation. People who try to follow the path without guidance, often fall into various traps and doubts. God realization thus becomes difficult. There are many people who say that they do not need a spiritual guide. Thus, Guru Kabir states that the practice would appear to an observer as 'fun.' It is the same as the first grade student who might say that he will graduate from the university without a teacher.

In meditation, people try to achieve a state of emptiness or the void i.e. complete stillness of the mind, with no thought on any object or idea. But meditation, which ends in the void, does not give one God realization. God is already dwelling in the meditator, and is closer even than the breath. God is the very source of life and being. One should realize this in meditation. Without this realization one falls into the traps of many doubts and thus becomes prey to the hunter who is Kal or death.

Guru Kabir advises to recite the name of God i.e. always keep God foremost in the mind in every undertaking. Death is lurking right around the corner and can strike one at anytime. One does not know if death will occur at home, or in some other place, or whether it will occur in the next moment, or some long time in the future. Liberation depends on constantly remembering God as the source of being, and personally realizing that the Soul is really God dwelling within.

रमैनी-२०

अब कहु राम नाम अविनासी, हरि छोडि जियरा कतहुँ नजासी.

जहाँ जाहु तहाँ होहु पतंगा, अब जनि जरहु समुझि विषसंगा.

रामनाम लवलायसु लीन्हा, भृङ्गी कीट समुझि मन दीन्हा.

भौ अस गुरुवा दुःख के भारी, करु जिय जतन जो देखु विचारी.  
मन की बात है लहरि विकारा, ते नहिं सुझै वार न पारा.

साखी-इच्छा करि भवसागर, बोहित राम अधार .

कहैं कबीर हरि शरण गहु, गौ खुर बछ विस्तार.

*ramaini 20*

*ab kahu rām nām avināsī, hari chhori jiara katahu najāsī.  
jahān jahu tahāan hohu patangā, ab jani jarahu samujhi vish sangā.  
rām nām laulāisu līnhā, bhringi kīt samujhi man dinhā.  
bhow as guruā dukh ke bhāri, karu jiya jatan je dekhu bichārī.  
man kī bāt hai lahari bikārā, te nahi sujhai wār na pārā.*

*sakhi: ichhā kari bhowsāgar, bohīt rām adhār.*

*kahain kabīr hari sharan gahu, gowkhur bachh vistār.*

Meaning:

Now, Oh Soul! Recite the Eternal name of God. Do not give up God and go elsewhere. Wherever you go you will suffer as the moth; understand what is poison and don't burn in it.

Fix your love strongly on God's name. Understand the nature of the wasp and fix your mind on Him.

This world is weighed down with severe miseries. Oh Soul! Realize this and try to overcome it.

The mind is full of worldly desires as the sea is full of waves, and man is not able to see their beginning or end.

Sakhi: The world is full of desires, as the ocean is full of waves. The refuge of God is like a ship on the ocean.

Kabir says to accept the refuge of God, and the worldly expanse will become as small as a calf's hoof.

Commentary:

In this *ramaini* Guru Kabir contrasts the pursuit of God on the one hand, and pursuit of worldly things on the other. He entreats the devotee not to give up God and pursue the worldly things, because the things of the world are like poison that superficially appear to be attractive. People have not obtained bliss by pursuing material gain, fame, pleasures, etc. In the modern world, although there is greater leisure time, and many more opportunities for recreation and other accomplishments, people are generally not any happier. More and more people are suffering from mental and physical ailments, and the various stresses of life that make people anxious, depressed, apathetic, lonely, etc. Even people who enjoy themselves in various social and cultural activities undergo the above turmoil. However, if a person places his trust in God and makes God the motivating

principle of his life, then it follows naturally that his life will become stable, and he will enjoy inner peace and bliss.

Guru Kabir used the example of the moth burning in the flame to which it is attracted. Just so, people are attracted to the worldly things and end up paying for it, often painfully, by suffering in one way or another. He advises not to burn in the flames of this world, or die by the poison of this material world. He advises to control the material desires that occupy the mind and make it restless, just as the waves of the ocean keep the water restless. When a person attains a spiritual life, his desires become less and less, as he progresses higher and higher, and reaches a state of indifference to the so-called worldly attractions, because he has tasted the joy of inner bliss. With this experience he sees the expanse of the world, with its accompanying problems, reduced to insignificance when compared to the Infinity of God.

रमैनी-२१

बहुत दुःख है दुख की खानी, तब बचिहो जब रामहि जानी.  
रामहिं जानी युक्ति जो चलई, युक्तिहु ते फन्दा नहिं परई.  
युक्तिहिं युक्ति चला संसारा, निश्चय कहा न मानु हमारा  
कनक कामिनी घोर पटोरा, सम्पति बहुत रहै दिन थोरा  
थोरी सम्पति गौ बौराई, धर्मराय की खबरि न पाई  
देखि त्रास मुख गौ कुम्हिलाई, अमृत धोखे गौ विष खाई

साखी-मैं सिरजों मैं मारों, मैं जारों मैं खाँव .  
जल थल मैं ही रमि रहों, मोर निरंजन नाँव.

*ramaini 21*

*bahut dukh hai dukh kī khāni, tab bachiho jab rāmahi jānī.  
rāmahin jānī yukti jo chalaī, yuktihu te phandā nahin paraī.  
yuktihin yukti chala sansārā, nishchai kahā na mānu hamārā.  
kanak kāmanī ghor patorā, sampati bahut rahai din thorā.  
thorī sampati gow bowrāī, dharmrāi kī khabari na pāī.  
dekhi trās mukh gow kumhilāī, amrit dhokhe gow vish khāī.*

*sakhi: mein sirjown mein marown, mein jārown mei khānw.  
jal thal mein hī rami rahown, mor niranjan nānw.*

Meaning:

There are many sufferings. The world is a mine of sufferings. You will be saved only when you know God.

Knowing God, if you follow the Satguru's teachings, then you will not fall into other traps.

But man flits about from one method to another. Although I spoke with emphasis, no one heeded my words.

People became involved with money, women, house and clothes. There is much wealth but life is short for enjoying them.

Man's folly is that he gets intoxicated with his small amount of wealth, and pays no attention to Yama.

Seeing the suffering inflicted by Yama their faces wilt. They swallow the poison of the world mistaking it for nectar.

Sakhi: I create, I destroy, I burn and I devour;

I pervade the water and the earth, and my name is Nirranjan.

Commentary:

Religions of the world have followers because there are sufferings in the world. Religions endeavour to teach people a path of life that alleviates suffering, and give them an understanding of God. People, however, do not pay attention to the spiritual injunctions given by their spiritual teachers, or by the scriptures. They lack commitment and flit about from one method to another in an effort to find solace for their troubled soul. God has spoken with emphasis through his saints, but people generally do not follow the way of the saints. Instead, they are attracted to the worldly things, such as wealth, women, horse, clothing and other things, for indulgence of their senses. Life, however, is very short, and they have to leave all their material things behind. Being attracted by the things of the world, man rarely pays attention to approaching death. When death, however, is close at hand, his face wilts with fear and with thought that he will not be any more. In life they did not accept the nectar of God's words, but instead swallowed the poison of worldly attractions.

In the sakhi (Guru Kabir speaks as God) God states that he creates, destroys, burns and devours. He pervades everywhere. In order to understand this sakhi it is necessary to understand that God is omnipresent and dwells everywhere in the universe at the same time. He is, thus, the Power that does everything in the universe, and He does whatever man says that he does. It is not man who does anything, but God does everything through man. Man is only the agent, and God is the motive power that enables man to do anything.

(In this *ramaini* Guru Kabir speaks on behalf of God.)

रमैनी-२२

अलख निरंजन लखै न कोई, जेहि बन्धे बन्धा सब लोई  
जेहि झुठे सब बाँधु अयाना, झुठा वचन साँच कै माना  
धन्दा बन्दा कीन्ह व्यवहारा, कर्म विवर्जित बसै निन्यारा  
षट आश्रम षट दर्शन कीन्हा, षटरस बास षटै वस्तु चीन्हा

चारि वृक्ष छौं शाख बखानी, विद्या अगणित गनै न जानी  
औरौं आगम करै विचारा, ते नहिं सूझै वार न पारा  
जप तीरथ व्रत कीजै पूजा, दान पुण्य कीजै बहु दूजा

साखी-मन्दिर तो है नेह का, मति कोइ पैठे धाय .  
जो कोई पैठे धाय के, बिन सिर सेति जाय.

*ramaini 22*

*alakh niranjan lakhai na koī, jehi bandhe bandhā sab loī.  
jehi jhuthē sab bāndhu ayānā, jhūthā bachan sānch kai mānā.  
dhandā bandā kīnh vyowhārā, karam vivarjit basai ninyārā.  
shat āshram shat darshan kīnhā, shat ras bās shatai vastu chīnhā.  
chari briksh chhow shākh bakhānī, vidyā aganit ganai na jānī.  
owron āgam karai bichārā, te nahi sujhai wār na pārā.  
jap tirath vrat kijai puja, dan punya kijai bahu duja.*

*sakhi: mandir toh hai neha kā, mati koi paithe dhāi.  
jo koyi paithe dhāi ke, bin sir seti jai.*

Meaning:

Niranjan is invisible so no one sees him, but his bondage has bound everyone.  
Whoever is bound by this false bondage is ignorant; he has accepted false words to be true.

Those who conducted business became bound by it; those who remained free of karmas lived free from bondage.

They established six ashrams (stages) and six philosophies, and accepted the six tastes, and all of these kept them in bondage.

They talk of the four trees (vedas) and six branches (philosophies) and of countless other forms of knowledge.

They also study the various Puranas, but they are not able to fathom the ocean of birth and death.

They observed recitations, pilgrimages, fasting and various forms of worship; they gave alms and did noble actions.

Sakhi: This is the temple of love. Do not rush to enter it.  
Whoever rushes in will first have to surrender his head.

Commentary:

In this *ramaini* Guru Kabir talks of the necessity of developing a discriminating spiritual intellect, in order to decide what is truly spiritual and what is not. People are caught up in

various types of activities, whether they are for supporting livelihood, or for worshipping with the aim of obtaining salvation. They are, nevertheless, on the wrong path until they can realize what is real spiritual life and what is not. Figuratively, Niranjan is the demi-god who keeps all people in bondage and prevents their progress towards Almighty God. People do not see Niranjan, but nevertheless, they are caught up into the traps he has set. These traps take on the forms of types of karmas (work), adorning of various forms of clothing to denote different ranks and castes or religious affiliations. There are various scriptures and philosophies, and also the six stages of life called *brahmacharya*, *ghrihast*, *vānaprast*, *sanyās*, *hans*, and *paramhans*. People are also pre-occupied with the various tastes of the world, but these only serve to keep them in bondage, because they are not able to free themselves from all these paraphernalia of life, and to realize the Eternal God that dwells within them. People are naturally drawn towards performing various kinds of religious observances, reading scriptures, adorning themselves in their particular sect marks, studying of the various scriptures, etc., but they are not able to free themselves from karmic effects. The person who, through spiritual discrimination, is aware of the bondage and what constitutes Truth, frees himself from all the bondage, and keeps his mind free, and enjoys union with God. Guru Kabir summarizes that God dwells in the temple of love, and no one can rush into it carrying his paraphernalia of worldly bondage with him. Whoever wants to enter that temple must sacrifice his head, i.e. give up his worldly bondage, ego and attachments, and become pure in heart. Only then can he enter the temple of love and unite with God.

रमैनी-२३

अल्प सुख दुःख आदिरु अन्ता, मन भुलान मैगर मै मन्ता  
सुख बिसराय मुक्ति कहँ पावै, परिहरि साँच झूठ निज धावै  
अनल ज्योति डाहै एक संगी, नैन नेह जस जरै पतंगी  
करहु विचार जो सब दुख जाई, परिहरि झूठा केर सगाई  
लालच लागी जन्म सिराई, जरा मरण नियरायल आई

साखी-भरम कै बाँधल ई जग, यहि विधि आवै जाय.

मानुष जनम पाय के, नर काहे को जहँडाय.

*ramaini 23*

*alp sukh dukh ādiu antā, man bhulān maigar mai mantā.  
sukh bisrāi mukti kahan pāwai, parihari sānch jhūnth nij dhāwai.  
anal joti dāhai ek sangā, nain neha jas jarai patangā.  
karahu bichār jo sab dukh jāī, parihari jhūthā ker sagāī.  
lālach lāgī janam sirāī, jarā maran niyarāyal āī.*

*sakhi: bharam kai bāndhal ī jag, yehi vidhi āwai jāī.*

*mānush janam pāike ke, nar kāhe ko jahandāī.*

Meaning:

From beginning to end there is little happiness but much suffering.

The mind, full of ego, is deluded just as an intoxicated elephant.

How can man obtain liberation by giving up happiness (sukh)? He gives up truth and runs after falsehood.

Man burns in the fires of three types of suffering, just as the moth, with love in its eyes for the flame, burns in it.

If someone considers this and gives up friendship with falsehood, then all his sufferings will cease.

Because of greed man wastes his life; old age and death are fast approaching

Sakhi: This world is entangled in doubts; in this way man comes and goes.

O man! Obtaining human birth, why do you go astray?

Commentary:

In this *ramaini* Guru Kabir instructs us that there is a great deal of suffering in the world. Birth is a suffering, and so is old age and death. During the lifetime there are innumerable sources of suffering and distress. True happiness is rare. This is so, because man does not tap the source of eternal happiness that lies within himself. Instead, he runs after the temporary and vanishing pleasures of the world. These pleasures give momentary happiness which is followed by distress again. There are three types of suffering: 1. Those arising within the body, such as mental illnesses, cancers and degenerative diseases. 2. Those arising from other beings, such as those inflicted by animals and humans. 3. Those caused by the elements of nature, such as floods, hurricanes, earthquakes, droughts, etc. Man burns in these types of sufferings. Guru Kabir here compares man to the moth that is attracted to the flame and gets burned by it. Just so, people are attracted to the various sense pleasures, and according to their karmas, have to be born over and over, and endure all types of sufferings. If they considered the Reality which lies within, and obtained salvation, then there will be only eternal happiness and no suffering. But man becomes intoxicated with greed for the pleasures of the world, and pays no heed to the fact that death is fast approaching. In the end, it is too late for him to rectify his ways.

In the sakhi Guru kabir says that the world is entangled in doubts, because people do not seek the path of Truth. Thus, they have to come into the world over and over. On obtaining the human birth, endowed with reason and intellect, why do they go astray like an intoxicated elephant?

रमैनी-२४

चन्द्र चकोर सि बात जनाई, मानुष बुद्धि दीन्ह पलटाई

चारि अवस्था सपने कहई, झूठो फूरो जानत रहई

मिथ्या बात न जानै कोई, यहि विधि सगरे गैल विगोई  
आगे दै-दै सबन गमाया, मानुष बुद्धि सपनेहु नहिं पाया  
चौतिस अक्षर से निकले जोई, पाप पुण्य जानेगा सोई

साखी-सोई कहन्ता सोई होउगे, तै निकरी न बाहर आव .  
हो हजूर ठाढ कहत हौं, धोखे न जन्म गमाव.

*ramaini 24*

*chandra chakor si bāt janāī, mānush budhi dīnh paltāī.  
chāri awasthā sapne kahaī, jhūtho phūro jānat rahaī.  
mithyā bāt na jānai koī, yahi vidhi sagare gayal bigoī.  
āge dai dai saban gamāyā, mānush buddhi sapnehu nahin pāya.  
chowntis akshar se nikle joī, pāp punya jānegā soī.*

*sakhi: soī kahantā soī howuge, tai nikarī na bāhar āw.  
ho hazūr thādh kahat hown, dhokhe na janam gamāw.*

Meaning:

The truth of the soul and God is explained as the love of the chakor for the moon; but the intellect of man turned things around.

The four stages of consciousness are but a dream to them. They understand falsehood to be the truth.

No one knows what is false. In this way all have lost their way.

They lost everything in the false hope of the future. Thinking this way, man cannot attain God even in a dream.

He who rises above the thirty-four letters (alphabets) will be able to understand what is sin and what is virtue.

Sakhi: As you speak, so you become. Why don't you escape from the traps of illusion?

Kabir says: "Come to me! I am standing here calling you. Why do you lose your life in falsehood?"

Commentary:

The chakor is a mythological bird that gazes longingly at the moon as if transfixed with great love. The soul similarly has a great yearning for union with God, but man, in his 'sophisticated' wisdom has produced all kinds of philosophies, dogmas, creeds, religions and rituals, and have thus confounded themselves, and have strayed from the path of simple Truth. There are four stages of consciousness: waking, dreaming, dreamless sleep and super-consciousness state. People generally, do not pay attention to these, but are preoccupied with their material existence. They ought to realize that life is meant for salvation that is, in effect, the realization of the fourth stage of consciousness. They have hopes of a better future, but they continue in the same old merry-go-round. They lose

sight of the fact that they will reap what they are sowing, according to the Law of Karma. Unless people improve themselves day by day in thought, word, and deed, there is no chance of their ever realizing God, or obtaining liberation. In order to attain to God Realization, people have to rise above the alphabets i.e. all the scriptures. The scriptures do not give God Realization. God resides in the hearts of all people, and that is where He will be found. Guru Kabir is beckoning to all devotees to free themselves from the traps of falsehood and illusion, and to come to him. He is genuinely interested in the welfare of humanity. Unless people follow the path of Truth, they would lose the opportunity given to them, in this precious lifetime, of obtaining God Realization.

रमैनी-२५

चौतिस अक्षर का इहै विशेषा, सहस्त्रों नाम याहि में देखा  
भूल भटक नर फिर घट आया, होत अजान सो सबन गमाया  
खोजहि ब्रह्मा विष्णु शिव शक्ति, अनन्त लोक खोजहि बहु भक्ति  
खोजहि गण गंधर्व मुनि देवा, अनन्त लोक खोजहि बहु भेवा

साखी-जती सती सब खोजहीं, मनहिं न माने हारी .  
बड बड जीव नबाँचिहैं, कहहिं कबीर पुकारि.

*ramaini 25*

*chowtis akshar kā ihai visheshā, sahastron nām yāhi men dekhā.  
bhūl bhatak nar phir ghat āyā, hot ajān so saban gamāyā.  
khozahi brahmā vishnu shiv shakti, anant lok khozahi bahu bhakti.  
khozahi gan gandharv muni devā, anant lok khozahin bahu bheva.*

*sakhi: jati sati sab khozahin, manahin na mānai hāri.  
bad bad jīv na bānchi hein, kahahin kabīr pukāri.*

Meaning:

The speciality of the thirty-four letters is that thousands of names can be composed from them.

Being lost in these thirty-four letters (scriptures) man is born again. He remains spiritually ignorant and loses everything.

Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva and Shakti searched for Him. Countless people, following countless ways of devotion, searched for Him.

Groups of gandharvas, munis and devas searched for Him. Countless people in many forms searched for Him.

Sakhi: The jati and sati searched for Him and do not think that they were defeated.

Guru Kabir says, shouting, that the greatest people cannot be saved from the trap of Maya in this way.

Commentary:

The thirty-four letters compose the Hindi alphabet. The letters refer to the alphabet of any language, in which all scriptures and languages are composed. People spend a great deal of time studying the various scriptures, thinking that they are actually on the proper path to knowing God. However, scriptures do not give people God Realization. People become very knowledgeable in the scriptures, but have not purified their minds, nor have they given up the various passions such as anger, greed and egoism. People follow certain scriptural injunctions, and practice various forms of worship according to their various denominations, but unless they realize God within themselves, their learning becomes purely academic. The gods, Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, and the goddess Shakti, along with the celestial musicians, philosophers and countless other people of various sects, have been searching for the omnipotent and eternal infinite Lord, but have failed to find Him. All of them have been caught in the trap of Maya. Scriptures and philosophies cannot be made ends in themselves. They are only stepping stones that should be used in conjunction with internal and external purity, simplicity, humility, nobility and other divine qualities, in order to reach the goal of God Realization.

रमैनी-२६

आपुहि कर्ता भये कुलाला, बहु बिध बासन गढै कुम्हारा  
बिधि ने सब कीन्ह एक ठाऊँ, अनेक जतन के बने कनाऊँ  
जठर अग्नि मों दीये प्रजारी, तामहँ आपु भये प्रतिपाली  
बहुत जतन कै बाहर आया, तब शिव शक्ति नाम धराया  
घर का सुत जो होय अयाना, ताके संग न जाहु सयाना  
साँची बात कही मैं अपनी, भया दिवाना और की पुनी  
गुप्त प्रकट है एकै दूधा, काको कहिये ब्राह्मण शूद्रा  
झूठे गर्ब भूलो मत कोई, हिन्दू तुरुक झूठ कुल दोई

साखी-जिन्ह यह चित्र बनाइया, साँचा सो सूत्रधारी .  
कहहिं कबीर ते जन भले, चित्रवन्तहि लेहि निहारि.

*ramaini 26*

*apuhi kartā bhaye kulālā, bahu vidhi bāsan gadhai kumhārā.  
bidhi ne sab kīnh ek thāūn, anek jatan ke bane kanāūn.  
jathar agni mon dīye prajāri, ta mahh āpu bhaye pratipālī.  
bahut jatan kai bāhar āyā, tab shiv shakti nām dharāyā.  
ghar kā sut jo hoi ayānā, tāke sang na jāhu sayānā.  
sānchi bāt kahi mein apanī, bhayā diwānā ovr kī punī.  
gupt pragat hai ekai dūdhā, kāko kahiye brāhman shūdrā.  
jhūthe garb bhūlo mat koī, hindū turuk jhūth kul doī.*

*sakhi: jinh yahh chitra banāiā, sānchā so sūtradhārī.  
kahahin kabīr te jan bhale, chitrawantahi lehi nihāri.*

Meaning:

Just as a potter, by various means, makes different types of pottery, just so, Brahma in creation acted as a potter.

He placed all the beings in one world, and with much effort he named them variously.

He fired them in the fire of the womb, and he protected them in that process.

The bodies formed with much effort and, on coming outside, they are variously named as Shiva or Shakti (male or female).

If a son in the home is foolish, the others who are wise do not follow him.

I am telling you the truth that I have realized, but you listen to the words of others and become confused.

Those who are unknown, or those who are known, belong to the same caste, who then is to be called Brahmin or Shudra?

No one should be fooled by false pride. The clan of both Hindu and Turk are false.

Sakhi: He who made this picture (universe) is the true puppeteer.

Kabir says that people who realize Him are fortunate.

Commentary:

In this *ramaini* Guru Kabir talks about one Creator who has created all living beings, and He is thus the Father of all. In the Hindu mythology Brahma is accepted as the God of creation. Here Guru Kabir talks of the Creator making various forms of bodies, just as a potter makes various forms of pottery. The potter fires his pottery in a kiln, and takes care that they are all done properly. Just so, God takes care of the developing body within the womb when that body is helpless. After birth, however, people are given various names and they are said to be male and female. Having come from the same parent (God) we are all, therefore, brothers and sisters. Guru Kabir advises us that we must not be lost in false ego and pride. He has explained the Truth to us, but we often listen to the words of others, who preach of various types of castes and segregations, and we become confused by their teachings, and deviate from the path of Truth. If we all belong to the same 'caste' (human), then who can be spoken of as being of a high caste, as the Brahmin, or of a low caste, as the Shudras. Similarly, who can be called a Hindu and who a Turk (Muslim) when the same God is the Father of both, and they are brothers embodying the same spirit?

In the *sakhi* Guru Kabir refers to God, the Absolute, as the puppeteer who holds the strings and controls everything. He is the controller of Brahma who is mythologically thought to be the creator. He says that those people are really fortunate who know the Creator of the universe. When we know the Absolute Creator who remains the same for all of us, then how can we be misled by the false pride of our various religious distinctions?

रमैनी-२७

ब्रह्मा को दीन्हों ब्रह्मंडा, सप्त दीप पुहुमि नौ खंडा  
सत्य सत्य कहि विष्णु दृढाई, तीन लोक मा राखिन जाई  
लिङ्ग रूप तब शंकर कीन्हा, धरती कीलि रसातल दीन्हा  
तब अष्टंगी रची कुमारी, तीनि लोक मोहा सब झारी  
दुतिया नाम पार्वती भयऊ, तप कर्ते शंकर कहँ दयऊ  
एकै पुरुष एक है नारी, ताते रचि खानि भौ चारी  
सर्मन बर्मन देव रु दासा, रज सत तम गुण धरति अकासा

साखी-एक अण्ड ओंकार ते, सब जग भया पसार .  
कहहि कबीर सब नारि राम की, अविचल पुरुष भर्तार.

*ramaini 27*

*brahmā ko dīnho brahmandā, sapt dīp puhumi now khandā.  
satya satya kahi vishnu dridhāī, tīn lok ma rākhin jāī.  
linga rūp tab shankar kīnha, dharti kīli rasātal dīnhā.  
tab ashtangī rachī kumārī, tīn lok moha sab jhārī.  
dutiya nām pārvatī bhayau, tap karte shankar kahh dayāū.  
ekai purush ek hai nārī, tāte rachi khani bhow chārī.  
sarman barman dev ru dāsā, raj sat tam gun dharti akāsā.*

*sakhi: ek and onkār te, sab jag bhayā pasār.  
kahahin kabīr sab nārī rām kī, avichal purush bhartār.*

Meaning:

God gave Brahma this universe to create, and he created the 'seven islands' and the 'nine parts' of the earth.

Vishnu, being truthful to his mother, was given the power to protect the three worlds.

Then Shiva came in the form of *linga* (male genital organ) and pierced the earth and reached the nether world.

God then created a young girl (Adhya) with eight parts (Maya) and the three worlds became fascinated with her.

Her second name was Parvati, and she was married to Shiva who was doing austerity.

There is one Purush, Niranjana, and one woman, Maya. The four forms of life came from them.

The Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras were created. The three gunas - *rajas*, *tamas* and *sattva* - were spread from earth to heaven.

Sakhi: Onkar is like an egg and the whole world manifested from it.

Kabir says that all are the wives of Ram, and He is the husband and Imperishable Lord.

Commentary:

In this *ramaini* Guru Kabir talks about God and the mythological concept of creation, according to the Hindu scriptures. God first created Niranjan and Adhya, and from them proceeded Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. Brahma is thought to have created the universe; Vishnu protects the universe and Shiva dissolves it, or is responsible for decay and death. All the various forms of manifested life that are mentioned are: 1. Live born (placental), 2. Those that are born from eggs, 3. Those that multiply by themselves, such as bacteria, and 4. Plants. Various castes made differences amongst people, and the different qualities of goodness, activity and inertia pervaded the whole universe.

This is a simplistic view of the creation of all things. However, the mystical point of view that Guru Kabir intends, is that God is the 'husband' or master, and the creation i.e. the, material nature, with all its various aspects, is thought of as 'woman' or Maya. Thus he states that Ram is the husband and all else are the wives. The eight parts of nature that are contained in all life forms are earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intellect and ego. All of these have resulted from Maya which is considered to be a woman. It is thus that Guru Kabir states that all of these are the wives, and God is the husband or master. Maya is responsible for the impermanent and illusory world, but people are beguiled by her and remain separated from God.

रमैनी-२८

अस जोलहा का मर्म न जाना, जिन्ह जग आनि पसारिन ताना.  
धरती-अकाश दोऊ गाड खँदाया, चाँद-सूर्य दोऊ नरी बनाया.  
सहस्रतार ले पूरनि पूरी, अजहूँ बिने कठिन है दूरी.  
कहँ कबीर कर्म से जोरी, सूत कुसूत बिने भल कोरी.

*ramaini 28*

*as jolahā ka maram na jānā, jinh jag āni pasārin tānā.  
dhartī akāsh dou gād khandāya, chānd sūrya dou nārī banāya.  
sahastra tar le pūrani pūri, ajahūn bine kathin hai dūrī.  
kahain kabīr karm se jorī, sūt kusūt bine bhal korī.*

Meaning:

No one could understand the secret of this weaver who, coming into existence, spread the warp as the world.

He fixed the earth and the sky as the pillars, and he used the sun and the moon as two shuttles.

He took thousands of stars and perfected the cloth, but even today he weaves, and the end is difficult to fathom.

Kabir says that the weaver, getting good or bad yarn and connecting karmas with it, weaves beautifully.

Commentary:

Guru Kabir was a weaver and was quite familiar with making a piece of cloth using yarns of cotton. Sometimes the yarn was good and sometimes bad, but he was still able to weave his fabric. He was in the habit of using homely metaphors for explaining God and Creation, and spiritual matters. In this *ramaini* he thus speaks of God as a weaver. He likens the earth and the sky to the supports of the loom, and the creation in the world as the warp and the woof for weaving the fabric of creation. Similarly, he likens the sun and the moon to two shuttles used in the weaving. Metaphysically, the sun and the moon represent the positive and negative energies (in yoga the right and left nostrils, or nerve currents) that are necessary for the manifestation of conscious life. The thousands of stars represent all the various forms of life including their karmas or actions. Using all of these, God created this world, but God's work is not done because he keeps on creating. Everything is in a state of evolution, or in a dynamic form. Nothing in the world is static. The end of this evolution is difficult to fathom and so Guru Kabir states that no one could understand the secret of this weaver. People are born according to their *samskars* (sub-conscious imprints) whether good or bad, and they are also subject to good and bad karmas (actions). Guru Kabir wishes to point out that although the yarn may be good or bad, and that the finished cloth (living being) is good or bad, nevertheless, God's work of creation is indeed beautiful.

रमैनी-२९

वज्रहुँ ते तृण खिन में होई, तृण ते वज्र करै पुनि सोई.  
निझरूनीरू जानि परिहरिया, कर्म का बाँधा लालच करिया.  
कर्म धर्म मति बुधि परिहरिया, झूठा नाम साँच ले धरिया.  
रज गति त्रिविधि कीन्ह परकाशा, कर्म धर्म बुधि केर विनाशा.  
रवि के उदय तारा भौ छीना, चर बिहर दोनों में लीना.  
विष के खावे विष नहि जावै, गारूड सो जो मरत जियावै.

साखी-अलख जो लागी पलक में, पलकहिं में डसि जाय.  
विषहर मन्त्र न मानै, गारूड काह कराय. २९

*ramaini 29*

*bajrahun te trin khin men hoī, trin te bajra karai puni soī.  
nijhrū nīru jāni parihariyā, karm kā bāndhā lālach kariyā.  
karam dharam mati budhi parihariya, jhutha nam sanch lai dhariya.  
raj gati trividhi kīnha parkāshā, karam dharam budhi ker vināshā.  
ravi ke udai tāra bhow chhīnā, char bīhar donon men līna.  
vish ke khāye vish nahi jāwai, gārud so jo marat jiyāwai.*

*sakhi: alakh jo lāgi palak men, palakhin men dasi jāi.  
visahar mantra na mānai, gārud kāhh karāi.*

Meaning:

In a moment the mind becomes hard like a club and in another soft like a straw. The desires of the mind flow incessantly like a waterfall. Knowing it, the sadhus control the mind, but a man of desires performs many actions and becomes bound by karmas. Because of weakness of mind, man gives up noble actions, intellect and wisdom, and accepts the false name as the true name.

When *rajogun* became active, it manifested in the three worlds and destroyed *dharam*, *karam* and intellect.

When the sun rises all the stars grow dim, and the sunlight shines in the place of the movable and the immovable things.

By eating poison one does not cure poison. He is a *garur* (bird) who gives life by removing the poison from the dying person.

Sakhi: The snake bites in that moment when one blinks and does not see.

The snake does not obey the orders of the *garur* (bird). Then what can the *garur* do?

Commentary:

In this *ramaini* Guru Kabir speaks about the condition of the mind. The mind is never steady. At times it becomes hard and at other times it becomes soft and polite. The mind is full of desires that flow continuously like a waterfall, and keeps man bound up by making him perform all types of actions. The sadhu (wise person) knows this and controls his mind, but the average person, because of the weakness of his mind, becomes entangled by the actions of the world. He gives up noble actions, intellect and wisdom because of the false lure of the material world.

*Rajogun* is that quality of activity and passion that keeps the mind of man bound up in karmas. But just as the rising sun causes the stars to grow dim and "disappear", just so, when knowledge of the Self appears, then that person sees God everywhere, both in the things that are movable and immovable. The ego and passions grow weak and disappear. People generally want freedom from the clutches of Maya, but they continue to engage in the activities of Maya, so they cannot cure the poison that causes them to remain entangled in the world of actions and passions.

The *garur* is a bird that kills the poisonous snake. In this *ramaini* Guru refers to the guru as the *garur*. Just as the *garur* removes the poisonous snake, just so the guru destroys the poison of desires and attachments, of ego and passions, of evil and ignorance from a sincere devotee. The devotee has to be ever watchful because if he slips up even for a moment, desires and passions will crowd his mind and lead him down the road of bondage. But if the devotee does not obey the guru and follow instructions, then the guru

becomes helpless, in spite of his love and goodwill towards the devotee. To achieve spiritual progress we must conquer the mind.

रमैनी-३०

औ भूले षट दर्शन भाई, पाखंड भेह रहा लपटाई.  
जीव शिव का आहि नसौना, चारिऊ वेद चतुर गुण मौना.  
जैनि धर्म का मर्म न जाना, पाती तोरि देव घर आना.  
दवना मरुवा चम्पक फूला, मानहु जीव कोटि सम तूला.  
औ पृथ्वी के रोम उचारे, देखत जन्म आपनो हारे.  
मन्मथ बिन्दु करै असरारा, कल्पै बिन्द खसे नहिं द्वारा.  
ताकर हाल होय अद्बूदा, छौ दर्शन में जैनि बिगुर्चा.

साखी-ज्ञान अमर पद बाहिरे, नियरे ते है दूरी.  
जो जानै ताके निकट है, रहा सकल घट पूरि.

*ramaini 30*

*ow bhūle shat darshan bhāī, pākhand bhesh rahāa laptāī.  
jīv shīv kā āhi nasownā, chāriū ved chatur gun mownā.  
jaini dharam kā maram na jānā, pātī tori deva ghar ānā.  
dawnā maruā champak phūlā, mānhu jīv koti sam tūlā.  
ow prithivī ke rom uchāre, dekhat janam āpano hāre.  
manmath bindu karai asrārā, kalpai bind khasai nahin dwārā.  
tākar hāl hoi adbūdā, chhow darshan men jaini bigurchā.*

*sakhi: gyān amar pad bāhire, niyare te hai dūrī.  
jo jānai tāke nikat hai, raha sakal ghat pūri.*

Meaning:

O brother! You follow the six philosophies and are lost, and are entangled in their hypocrisies.

These hypocrisies destroy life's welfare, and the four Vedas and their four categories of instructions are silent about them.

The Jains do not know the secret of dharma. They bring plucked leaves to the temple.

They pluck the flowers of *dawnā*, *maruā* and *champā* that is like killing ten million lives.

They pluck the hairs from their bodies, and they knowingly lose their life (by not knowing God).

They speak against losing a drop of semen, and so practice cruelty to it by withholding it while enjoying sex.

Because of these practices the Jains face a terrible fate. In the six philosophies the Jains are criticized.

Sakhi: The Immortal state is above worldly knowledge. It is near yet people think it is far.

But for him who understands that state, it is very near, because it is pervading all beings.

Commentary:

Guru Kabir taught a rational and logical path to God realization and liberation. He did not adhere to the teachings contained in the various scriptures and philosophies that were plentiful around him. He stated in many places that they could not give one the knowledge of the soul and of God, for they were mere words. One has to develop an inner realization of what he taught in order to obtain liberation. He also thus criticized all followers of religion who veered to extremes, and away from a rational and a logical path. It is in this vein that he speaks of the Jains who are supposed to be very non-violent. Although the strict adherents (mainly monks) will cover their nostrils and mouths with veils to avoid inhaling insects, and would carry a broom to sweep the path so as not to tread on insects, they nevertheless pluck the hairs from their bodies which in itself is painful, cruel and unnatural. They believe in self-mortification, which again is unnatural and not conducive to God realization. Although they are non-violent, some still pluck the leaves and flowers, which also contain life, and take them to the temple to offer as worship. Similarly, they enjoy sex but practice withholding the semen (a practice called *amrowlī*) that should naturally be ejaculated. The Jain monks believe that one has to practice nudity (to show total non-attachment) in order to attain liberation. Since women cannot practice nudity in this group, they are not likely to obtain liberation until they are reborn as a monk.

All people who stray from a logical and rational spiritual path face the same fate i.e. of deludedly thinking that they are saved, or will attain liberation, whereas in fact, they waste their lives by following various hypocrisies. Guru Kabir points out that a spiritual path must be natural, moderate, logical and rational in its approach to God realization. He teaches against going off on tangents with scraps of truth as many religious people do. He teaches us to realize the presence of God within. Thus, in the sakhi, he states that he who understands, realizes that God pervades all beings, but he who does not understand, God, though near, is very far from him. Guru Kabir advises not get hung up on religious books and philosophies. Instead, develop the means of awareness of God dwelling within.

रमैनी-३१

सुमृति आहि गुणन को चीन्हा, पाप पुण्य को मारग कीन्हा

सुमृति वेद पढे असरारा, पाखंड रूप करें हंकारा

पढे वेद औ करे बडाई, संशय गाँठि अजहुँ नहिं जाई

पढे शास्त्र जीव वध करई, मूँडि काटि अगमन के धरई

साखी-कहहिं कबीर ई पाखंड, बहुतक जीव सताव .

अनुभव भाव न दरशै, जियत न आपु रखाब.

*ramaini 31*

*sumriti āhi gunan ko chīnha, pāp punya ko mārag kīnhā.  
sumriti ved padhe asrārā, pākhand rūp karen hankārā.  
padhe ved ow kare badāi, sanshai gānthe ajahu nahin jāi.  
padhe shāstra jīv badh karaī, mūndi kāti agaman ke dharaī.*

*sakhi: kahahin kabīr ī pākhand, bahutak jīv satāw.  
anubhow bhāw na darshai, jiyat na āpu rakhāw.*

Meaning:

Smritis spoke about His attributes and also laid down the path of sin and virtue. Some people always studied the Smritis and the Vedas, but they become hypocritical and egotistic. They read the Vedas then boast. The knot of doubts, even now, does not disappear from their hearts. They read the Shastras but kill living beings. They cut the head and offer it to the deities and images.

Sakhi: Kabir says that because of hypocrisy, these people destroy many lives. Because they lack realization, they do not know that God lives in all beings as the soul.

Commentary:

It always pains a saint to see that people do not use their God-given intellect and spiritual discriminative ability to live a truly virtuous and spiritual life. He has to speak out against the unrighteous practices in which people engage. In this *ramaini* Guru Kabir points out exactly that.

People all over the world read their various scriptures and become very versed in them. They display their knowledge in eloquent speeches, and they display their egoism and pedantry. However, in their hearts and personal lives they practice various forms of hypocrisies. They do not personally realize God dwelling in their hearts, and in the hearts of all living creatures. God is omnipresent and is therefore present in all living beings. Scriptures also teach people not to kill. But what we see all around us is that killing is taking place on a massive scale, of humans and animals. If one could see how the young animals are taken from their mothers, confined into feed lots, and fattened and then slaughtered in the abattoir, with blood flowing, he will soon turn against killing. Every animal that is slaughtered, wishes to live every bit as much as its slayer. To confound the folly, they even sacrifice animals and offer them to statutes of various gods and goddesses. The whole universe, including all of us, belongs to God. What need does He have for a few sacrificed animals from errant human beings? Guru Kabir, ever compassionate towards all living beings, taught non-violence. People professing to have

love but practice violence in thought, word and deed, are being hypocritical. They do not realize that God dwells in all beings, and they continue to perpetrate sinful actions.

रमैनी-३२

अन्ध सो दर्पण वेद पुराना, दर्बी कहा महारस जाना.  
जस खर चन्दन लादेउ भारा, परिमल वास न जानु गँवारा.  
कहहिं कबीर खोजे असमाना, सो न मिला जो जाय अभिमाना.

*ramaini 32*

*andh so darpan ved purāna, darbī kaha mahāras jānā.  
jas khar chandan lādeu bhārā, parimal bās na janu gawārā.  
kahahin kabīr khoje asmānā, so na milā jo jāi abhimānā.*

Meaning:

For the ignorant person, the Vedas and the Puranas are like a mirror to a blind person. Whence does the spoon know the flavour of the food?

Just as a donkey loaded with sandalwood does not know the fragrance, just so the ignorant person does not know the essence of the Vedas and the Puranas.

Kabir says that ignorant people try to find God in the heavens but, lacking Self-realization, their ego does not vanish.

Commentary:

What an apt metaphor expressed in this *ramaini* for people who read the scriptures and do not get the essence! Just as the blind person cannot see himself in the mirror, just so many people read the scriptures but, not obtaining their essence, are not able to mould their own lives into truly spiritual ones. Just as the spoon, though it is repeatedly dipped into delicious foods, does not know their taste, or just as a donkey loaded with fragrant sandalwood does not realize the fragrance, just so many people read the scriptures and do not relish the nectar which flows from them. They continue in their old pattern of life and behaviour. They think that God dwells somewhere in heaven, not realizing that God is present in their own being. They manifest the consciousness of God, and can never be separated from God. As long as people lack Self-realization they will continue to blunder on life's path. Would that people could dispel their ego and ignorance, and awaken to a spiritual life!

रमैनी-३३

वेद की पुत्री सुमृति भाई, सो जेवरी कर लेतहिं आई  
आपुहि बरि आपुन गर बन्धा, झूठा मोह काल का फन्दा  
बाँधत बन्धा छोरि न जाई, विषय सरूप भूलि दुनियाई  
हमरे देखत सकल जग लूटा, दास कबीर राम कहि छूटा

साखी-रामहि राम पुकारते, जिभ्या परिगौ रौस .  
सूधा जल पीवै नहीं, खोद पियन की हौस. ३३

*ramaini 33*

*ved kī putrī sumriti bhāī, so jewarī kar letahin āī.  
āpuhi bari āpun gar bandhā, jhūthā moha kāl kā phandā.  
bāndhat bandhā chhori na jāī, vishai sarūp bhūli duniyāī.  
hamre dekhat sakal jag lūtā, dās kabīr rām kahi chhūtā.*

*sakhi: rāmahi rām pukārate, jibhya parigow rows.  
sūdha jal pīwai nahīn, khod piyan kī hows.*

Meaning:

O brother! The Smritis are the daughter of the Vedas and come with a rope in her hand.  
Man accepts her and binds his own neck.  
The false attachment to worldly things is the bondage of kal (time).  
Once bound, it was difficult to obtain freedom; the world is lost in sensual forms.  
Before my very eyes the whole world is being plundered, but the servant Kabir won  
salvation by Ram's name.

Sakhi: People's tongues have become callused by merely repeating the name of Ram.  
They do not drink the pure available water, but yearn to dig a well to obtain it.

Commentary:

The Smritis are the non-Vedic texts and consist of various writings of sages such as Manu and Parashar and the Puranas. They deal with codes of conduct, customs, rituals, stories of the various gods etc. They often contradict or misrepresent the Vedic teachings. People accept them as scriptures and live by them. These, however, represent bondage as they tie up people by their teachings and rituals, and they then have difficulty to free their mind to accept the uncluttered spiritual life as outlined in the Vedas, and especially so, in the Upanishads. Guru Kabir says that once man becomes ensnared by all the worldly entanglements that were created by Kal, it is very difficult to obtain freedom. Even before his very eyes, even as he taught the people the true spiritual life, the people were being plundered by false teachings and attachments to objects of the senses, and driven by their desires, that only serve to entangle them more and more into the materialistic web. He states that people keep repeating the name of Ram, and their tongues have become, figuratively, callused, but by not perfecting their hearts they were not able to obtain salvation. God is easy to find and available at all times, as He is the innermost part of

every being. God is omnipresent and dwells as the Soul in all. People often refuse to accept His omnipresence but, instead, search everywhere to find Him and salvation, so figuratively, they are not drinking the water which is readily available, but they are digging a well in order to find water to quench their spiritual thirst. (Ram here refers not to King Ram of Ayodhya and the hero of the Ramayan, but whenever Guru Kabir used the name Ram he meant the Almighty, All-Pervading, Omnipotent and Omniscient Lord - Satpurush). Man should awaken to realize that spiritual life is simple and uncluttered, and is free from dogmas, speculations, rituals, etc.

रमैनी-३४

पढि पढि पंडित करु चतुराई, निज मुक्ति मोहिकहु समुझाई.  
कहाँ बसै पुरुष कौनसा गाँऊ, सो पंडित मोहि सुनावहु नाँऊ.  
चारि वेद ब्रह्मै निज ठाना, मुक्तिका मर्म उनहु नहि जाना.  
दान-पुण्य उन बहुत बखाना, अपने मरणकी खबरि न जाना.  
एक नाम है अगन गँभीरा, तहवाँ अस्थिर दास कबीरा.

साखी-चिऊटी जहाँ न चढि सकै, राई ना ठहराय.  
आवागमनकी गम नहीं, तहाँ सकलो जग जाय.

*ramaini 34*

*padhhi padhhi pandit karu chaturāī, nij mukti mohi kahu samujhāī.  
kahān basai purush kownsā gāūn, so pandit mohi sunāwahu nāūn.  
chāri ved brahmai nij thānā, mukti kā maram unahu nahi jānā.  
dān punya un bahut bakhānā, apane maran kī khabari na jānā.  
ek nām hai agam gambhīrā, tahawān asthir dās kabīrā.*

*sakhi: chiuntī jahān na chadhi sakai, rāī nā thaharāī.  
āwāgawan kī gam nahīn, tahān sakalo jag jāī.*

Meaning:

O pandit! By reading and reading you have shown your cleverness. Tell me about your own liberation!

Do you know the Supreme Lord and the village where he dwells? O pandit, tell me his name.

Brahma himself created the four Vedas but he did not know the secret of salvation.

He explained a great deal about alms giving and noble deeds, but he did not know of his own death.

There is one Name that is unfathomable. There the servant Kabir has found tranquility.

Sakhi: Where the ant cannot climb, where the mustard seed cannot get a resting place;  
Where birth and death have no power, there let the whole world go!

Commentary:

Priests of all religions become versed in their scriptures and display their learning in their various sermons, arguments, debates and discussions. These however are all external learning based on their scriptures, and are not based on inner spiritual awakening. The priests (Brahmins) of India were no exception. Priestcraft flourished in India, and the ordinary people were made to pay obeisances to them as they thought themselves to belong to a high caste. They possessed the requisite spiritual knowledge to perform various ceremonies, to read horoscopes and to practice astrology etc. They preyed on the simplicity and gullibility of other people. Certainly their conduct was not in keeping with a spiritually developed person. It is for this reason that Guru Kabir challenges the pandit to talk about his own liberation, and whether he knows the Supreme Lord, where He dwelt, and what was His name? Priests do not generally have answers to these questions, but they would like to have others presume that they possess this knowledge. Guru Kabir knew their shortcomings and, as he was always in sympathy with the average person, he often challenged the learned priests in this manner.

Brahma is one of the trinity who is supposed to have created the universe. He is thought to have produced the four Vedas from his four mouths. These are the most ancient scriptures in the world. From him derived the Brahmin caste. In spite of Brahma's exalted position, Guru Kabir states that he did not know of his own death. His weaknesses are outlined in the Puranas. In the Vedas there is a great deal of instruction about noble deeds, the conduct of life, alms giving and various ceremonials. But they have not helped the priest to obtain liberation. The pandit has six duties: 1. To study the Vedas, 2. To teach the Vedas to others, 3. To do yajnas (ceremonies), 4. To make others do yajnas, 5. To take alms, 6. To give alms. An examination of these will show that these activities cannot produce liberation. Liberation results only through an inner spiritual awakening and purification.

Guru Kabir states that he has found tranquility in the Name of God, because that Name is profound and unfathomable. He states in this sakhi that the whole world should try to attain that state because it is a 'state' of pure Consciousness, and not a 'place' where an ant can climb or a mustard seed can rest. It is also beyond birth and death that can occur only in material life.

रमैनी-३५

पंडित भूले पढि-गुनि वेदा, आप अपन पौ जानु न भेदा.

संज्ञा तर्पण औ षट कर्मा,ई बहु रूप करें अस धर्मा.

गायत्री युग चारि पढाई, पूछहु जाय मुक्ति किन पाई.

और के छुये लेत हो छींचा, तुम सो कहहु कोन है नीचा.

ई गुण गर्व करो अधिकाई, अधिके गर्व न होय भलाई.  
जासु नाम है गर्व प्रहारी, सो कस गर्वहि सकै सहारी.

साखी-कुल मर्यादा खोय के, खोजिन पद निर्वाण.  
अंकुर बीज नसाय के, नर भये विदेही थान.

*ramaini 35*

*pandit bhūle padhhi guni vedā, āp apan pow jānu na bhedā.  
sanjhā tarpan ow shat karmā, ī bahu rūp kare as dharmā.  
gāyatrī yug chāri padhāi, pūchhahu jāi mukti kin pāi.  
owr ke chhuye let ho chīnchhā, tum so kahahu kown hai nīchā.  
ī gun garv karo adhikāi, adhike garv na hoi bhalāi.  
jāsu nām hai garv prahārī, so kas garvahi sakai sahārī.*

*sakhi: kul maryādā khoi ke, khojin pad nirvān.  
ankur bīj nasāi ke, nar bhaye videhī thān.*

Meaning:

The pandits have gone astray by studying and practicing the teachings of the Vedas, because they do not know the secret of their own Selves.

They perform the evening and morning prayers, and offer water to their ancestors, and they perform their six karmas. In these many ways they perform their religious duties.

They taught the Gayatri Mantra in the four yugas. Go and ask them who obtained liberation?

If an untouchable person touches you, you sprinkle water on yourselves. Tell me who is lower than you?

You indulge in this kind of behaviour and yet you are boasting. There is no benefit from so much pride.

He whose name is the Killer of pride, how can He tolerate your pride?

Sakhi: Give up the pride of your clan and tradition. Try to find the place of immortality.

By destroying the seed and shoot of pride, people become liberated in this very life.

Commentary:

The pandits are the Brahmins who belong to the 'high caste'. They study the Vedas that are the most ancient scriptures of India, and contain a great deal of instruction on various aspects of life, philosophy and religious teachings. They became very versed in the Vedas and they performed the various ceremonials and their six duties as outlined in the commentary of *ramaini* #34. They initiate disciples and teach them the Gayatri Mantra. If a 'low caste' person touches them, they feel themselves polluted, and have to ceremonially sprinkle water on themselves to become purified. Guru Kabir is pointing out here that the pandits have really gone astray because they have developed pride in

their clan, caste and religious education, but they have not really experienced the Reality of their own souls. The same holds true for most priests everywhere. They are preoccupied with their doctrines, dogmas and rituals, but do not delve deeply within them to know the Reality of God that is within. All religious practices are of no avail unless one gives up pride and the other passions, and purifies the heart, and humbly approaches the indwelling, ever present and eternal Master.

रमैनी-३६

ज्ञानी चतुर विचक्षण लोई, एक सयान सयान न होई.  
दूसर सयान को मर्म न जाना, उत्पति-परलय रैनि-बिहाना.  
बनिज एक सबन मिलि ठाना, नेम धर्म संयम भगवाना.  
हरि अस ठाकुर तजियो न जाई,  
बालनि भिस्त गावहिं दुलहाई.

साखी-ते नर कहाँ गये, जिन दीन्हा गुरु घोंटि.  
राम नाम निजु जानिके, छाडि देहु वस्तु खोति.

*ramaini 36*

*gyānī chatur vichakshan loī, ek sayān sayān na hoī.  
dūsar sayān ko marm na jānā, utpati parlai raini bihānā.  
baniḥ ek saban mili thānā, nem dharm sanyam bhagwānā.  
hari as thākur tajiyo na jāī, bālani bhist gāwahin dulhāī.*

*sakhi: te nar kahān gaye, jin dīnhā guru ghonti.  
rām nām nijū jānike, chhādi dehu vastu khoti.*

Meaning:

O wise and clever men of sharp intellect! The non-dualists are not wise because non-dualism depends on dualism. Dualists do not know the secret of God, and they fall into the cycle of creation and destruction, and light and darkness. They all made a business of religion with rules, regulations and duties to obtain God. O soul! Do not give up the Master dwelling in you as your own Self. Many people childishly believe in God dwelling in heaven, and with childish intellect they sing the songs of such a heaven.

Sakhi: Where are those people to whom the false gurus gave false knowledge? They have become lost.

Kabir says: "Give up the false teachings and realize that God dwells in your own Self."

Commentary:

The world is full of many smart and clever people who argue and split hairs about various points of philosophy and religion. There is the philosophy of non-dualism and dualism. The former accepts that only God exists, and all else are only reflections or projections out of the Being of God. This is possible because of the great elusive power of Maya that overshadows our true perception of what Reality is. The latter postulates that God and his creation are separate, and that people need to worship an omnipotent and omnipresent Being. There are also branches with various shades of meaning and interpretation about these philosophies. In the end, however, they do not give liberation until one becomes enlightened to the divine Being dwelling within, as stated by Guru Kabir. Various clever religious people have started various forms of religions, and there are innumerable rules of conduct, codes to follow, rituals to be performed, in order to obtain God. But Guru Kabir is saying that you should not be fooled by all these paraphernalia, because God dwells within you as your own Self. It is common knowledge that people describe the dwelling place of God as heaven. But you can ask the question: "Where is heaven?" And if God is in heaven, and that heaven is not the earth and all the beings in it, then God is not on earth or in all the beings. Therefore God cannot be omnipresent. Yet, people sing of God in heaven, or of the glories of heaven, as if they have only childish intellect. Guru Kabir rightly asked: "Where did all the people go, who were initiated or given religious instruction by the cunning teachers?" People have played with images and idols as children play with their dolls. People have killed innocent lives in the name of God who lives somewhere in "heaven" and remains unseen to them. He instructs that these are not the ways of a truly religious person. He advises against all forms of hypocrisy, and to give up the false teachings, and know that God dwells within as the real and ever present Self.

रमैनी-३७

एक सयान सयान न होई, दूसर सयान न जाने कोई.  
तीसर सयान सयानहिं खाई, चौथे सयान तहाँ लै जाई.  
पँचये सयान जो जानेउ कोई, छठये माँ सब गयल बिगोई.  
सतये सयान जो जानहु भाई, लोक वेद मो देहु देखाई.

साखी-बीजक बित बतावै, जो बित गुप्ता होय.  
ऐसे शब्द बतावै जीवको, बूझै बिरला कोय.

*ramaini 37*

*ek sayān sayān na hoī, dūsar sayān na jāne koī.  
tīsar sayān sayānahi khāī, chowthe sayān tahān lai jāī.  
panchaye sayān jo jāneu koī, chhathaye mān sab gayal bigoī.  
sataye sayān jo jānahu bhāī, lok ved mo dehu dekhāī.*

*sakhi: bījak bitt batāwai, jo bitt guptā hoi.  
aise shabd batāwai jīv ko, bujhai birlā koi.*

Meaning:

The first clever person (non-dualist) is not clever because non-dualism and dualism have relative existence with each other.

The second clever person is preoccupied with the theory of Maya (illusion - Mayavādi) and is lost in Maya.

The third clever person has been eaten by cleverness (ignorance covers the soul).

The fourth clever person took the people with him (the people who believe in different gods - wandered in many heavens and hells of their own beliefs).

Who will know the fifth clever person? He enjoys the pleasures of the senses and gets lost. All become puzzled with the sixth clever person who got lost in imagining the mind to be the soul.

O brother! If you know the seventh cleverness show it to me in the Vedas or the behaviour of the people.

Sakhi: Just as a coded document shows the way to a hidden treasure, just so this bijak shows the way to realize the soul.

It teaches such instructive words to the soul, but there is seldom anyone to understand them.

Commentary:

This *ramaini* is a condensed but critical examination of the theories of the various schools of thought. These are various schools of philosophy and other belief systems that are present in India and, in varying forms, in other countries. There are the Dualists and Non-Dualists as described in the previous *ramaini*. There is the Mayavadi school of thought that seeks to criticize Advaita, But itself does not itself properly understand the Supreme or Ultimate Reality. Guru Kabir does not mention the names of each school, but he has given several belief systems to which people adhere, and accordingly lead their followers.

The various systems of belief comprise only external, philosophical knowledge. They contain beliefs in various doctrines and dogmas, rituals and ceremonies, theories about heaven and hell, belief in the mind and the soul being the same, belief that pleasure is the highest good in life etc. None of these belief systems gives one knowledge of God that is an inner, intuitive realization of the Supreme Being as the Eternal Truth, Supreme Consciousness and the only Reality that exists without a cause. This Reality dwells within. The saints and satgurus do not pay attention to the wrangling and hair splitting of philosophical thoughts, whether practical or theoretical. They dive directly into the source and experience God for themselves. Thus whatever they say becomes scripture. They do not teach philosophy, doctrine or dogma, but they teach the Reality of God as the Ever-present Master dwelling within. They have no confusion about whether the mind is the soul, or whether the body is the soul, or whether pleasure is the highest good

in life. They have no confusion about heaven and hell. They have no confusion about Maya and Reality. As long as people are preoccupied with these, they will not obtain Self realization.

Bijak means a coded document that leads to a hidden treasure. In this Bijak Guru Kabir explains the path to that hidden treasure that is within, and not visible by the objective senses. He teaches everyone to give up cleverness and argumentation, and become humble and accept the divine Lord dwelling within.

रमैनी-३८

यहि विधि कहौं कहा नहिं माना,

मारग माहिं पसारिनि ताना.

रातदिवस मिलि जोरिन तागा, ओटत-कातत भरम न भागा.

भरमै सब जग रहा समाई, भरम छोडि कतहु नहिं जाई.

परै न पूरि दिनहु दिन छीना, तहाँ जाय जहाँ अंग बिहूना.

जो मत आदि अंत चलि आया, सो मत सबउन्ह प्रगट सुनाया.

साखी-यह संदेश फुर मानिकै, लीन्हेउ शीश चढाय.

सन्तो है सन्तोष सुख, रहहु तो हृदय जुडाय.

*ramaini 38*

*yahi bidhi kahown kahā nahi mānā, mārag māhin pasarini tānā.*

*rāti diwas mili jorin tāgā, otat kātat bharam na bhāgā.*

*bharmai sab jag rahā samāī, bharam chhodi katahu nahin jāī.*

*parai na pūri dinahu din chhīna, tahān jāī jahān anga bihūnā.*

*jo mat ādi ant chali āyā, so mat sabunh pragat sunāyā.*

*sakhi: yaha sandesh phur mānikai, līnheu shīsh chadhāi.*

*santo hai santosh sukh, rahahu toh hridai judāi.*

Meaning:

I instructed the people in this way, but they did not heed my words. Instead, on their path in this world, they spread their loom of rites and rituals.

Day and night they continually join the threads of their Karmas, and they weave the cloth of Karmas. They cannot get rid of their doubts.

Doubts are pervading the whole world and, by not giving up their doubts, people do not make any spiritual progress.

Day by day their knowledge grew weaker and they could not attain perfection. Wherever they went they lost part of themselves (losing spiritual knowledge).

I am explaining to you that essence of religion that was from the beginning and will be to the end.

Sakhi: Accept this message as true and place it on your head.

O devotees! Contentment is real happiness. With it the heart remains satisfied.

Commentary:

In this *ramaini* Guru Kabir speaks of the bondage that people create for themselves by not clearly understanding what spiritual life is. Without understanding the nature of the Self, and without developing contentment in all aspects of life, people cannot obtain the supreme bliss that is the ultimate goal of life. Instead, people are pre-occupied with weaving the fabric of karmas (actions), without paying attention to the ultimate results of such actions. They practice all kinds of rites and rituals in the name of religion, yet they are no further spiritually from day to day. Actually, people appear to be losing true spiritual knowledge, as they go through this earthly life. Guru Kabir has been explaining the real essence of religion that is eternal. He said that it should be put on the head i.e. accepted with a great deal of humility and reverence. The goal of life is to attain liberation through knowledge of the Self but, unfortunately, doubts create a great obstacle for humanity.

रमैनी-३९

जिन्ह कलमा कलि माहिं पढाया,

कुदरत खोज तिनहुँ नहिं पाया.

कर्मत कर्म करे करतूता, वेद कितेब भये सब रीता.

कर्मत सो जग भौ अवतरिया, कर्मत सो निमाजको धरिया.

कर्मत सुन्नति और जनेऊ, हिन्दू तूरक न जाने भेऊ.

साखी-पानी पवन संजोय के, रचिया यह उतपात.

शून्यहि सुरति समय के, कासो कहिये जात.

*ramaini 39*

*jinh kalmā kali māhin padhāyā, kudrat khoj tinahun nahi pāya.*

*karmat karm kare kartūtā, ved kiteb bhaye sab rītā.*

*karmat so jag bhow avtariyā, karmat so nimāj ko dhariyā.*

*karmat sunnati ovr janeū, hindū turuk na jāne bheū.*

*sakhi: pānī pawan sanjoi ke, rachiyā yaha utpāt.*

*shunyahī surati samoi ke, kāso kahiye jāt.*

Meaning:

Even the Prophet Mohammad who taught the Kalma in this Kaliyug (iron age) could not fathom the meaning of Maya.

In the name of karmas both Hindus and Muslims perform religious rites, and they have rendered the Vedas and Quran ineffective.

It was because of karmas that the soul is born into the world, and through karma the naming ceremony is performed;

It is through karmas that the Muslim performs circumcision, and the Hindu accepts the sacred thread, but both Hindu and Turk do not understand their inner meaning.

Sakhi: It is by the combination of water and air that all life was made.

If one meditates on the "void", he realizes that all are made from the same water and vital force. Of whom then will he ask his caste?

Commentary:

This *ramaini* deals with karmas that here carry two meanings. One meaning is the Law of Karma or Cause and Effect that determines the circumstances of one's rebirth into the world. The second are the various rites and rituals (sacraments) which people perform, such as the naming ceremony, circumcision, baptism, investment with the sacred thread, funeral rites etc. Guru Kabir is saying that all the people are preoccupied with the manifestation made possible according to their religious beliefs. But they have not understood the real karma or the law of cause and effect that operates in everyone's life. The word Kudrat means nature that is the physical manifestation by the power of Maya. People who follow orthodox religions do not know, nor do they try to know, what Maya is, and how it operates in their lives. Guru Kabir states that even Mohammad, who was the messenger of God, and who revealed the Quran to the people, did not truly understand the power of Maya. When people become preoccupied with all the sacramental duties, they lose the true essence of a spiritual life, and thus they make their scriptures ineffective in promoting their spiritual path to salvation.

The word water here also carries the meaning of semen, and pawan also the Prana or vital energy. Both of these are necessary in order to manifest life. When one meditates deeply, he understands how God has made life manifest in the physical form by the use of the power of Maya. When he realizes that all people are created in the same way, of the same elements and energies, then he has no need to ask the caste of anyone. Everybody belongs to the same "human caste."

रमैनी-४०

आदम आदि सुधि नहीं पाई, मामा हवा कहाँ ते आई.

तब नहीं होते तुरूक औ हिन्दू, मायके रुधिर पिता के बिन्दू.

तब नहिं होते गाय कसाई, तब बिसमिल्ला किन फरमाई.  
तब नहिं होते कुल औ जाती, दोजख भिस्त कौन उत्पाती.  
मन मसलेकी सुधि नहिं जाना, मति भुलान दुइदीन बखाना.

साखी-संजोगे का गुण रवै, बिजोगे का गुण जाय.  
जिभ्या स्वारथ कारणे, नर कीन्हे बहुत उपाय.

*ramaini 40*

*ādam ādi sudhi nahin pāī, māmā hawā kahān te āī.  
tab nahin hote turuk ow hindū, māike rudhir pitā ke bindū.  
tab nahin hote gāi kasāī, tab bismillā kin pharmāī.  
tab nahin hote kul ow jāī, dojakh bhist kown utpāī.  
man masle kī sudhi nahin jānā, mati bhulān dui dīn bakhānā.*

*sakhi: sanjoge kā gun rawai, bijoge kā gun jāī.  
jibhyā swārath kārane, nar kīnhe bahut upāī.*

Meaning:

Adam, who was supposed to be the first born, did not know the beginning of creation. He did not know where Eve came from.

Then there was no Turk and no Hindu. There was no blood of the mother or semen of the father.

Then there was no cow or butcher. Who at that time ordered the recitation of *bismillah*?

Then there was no clan or caste. Who then created hell and heaven?

People do not know the philosophy of the mind, and with confused intellect they talk of religion.

Sakhi: With self-control man improves his good qualities, and without it he loses them.

To satisfy the pleasure of the tongue, man indulges in many activities.

Commentary:

In this *ramaini* Guru Kabir discusses the condition that existed before creation. God existed and He possessed Consciousness, Intelligence, Energy and Power. All things came from Him. The Christians and Muslims accept that Adam was the first created man, and Eve was the first woman. Adam did not know where he came from, nor did he know the origin of Eve. In that original state there was no Turk and no Hindu, and there was neither mother nor father, nor their procreative abilities. At that time there were also no cows or butchers, or clan or caste. When nobody existed, who gave an order for the recitation of *bismillah* (in the name of God)? Who created heaven and hell?

These are legitimate questions when you consider that God exists as Consciousness in all beings. He manifests in us as Consciousness that is an attribute of the soul. The soul

possesses an innate knowledge of its connection or identity with God, but because of its entanglement through the body and senses, it loses its knowledge of that connection. Because man does not realize that connection with God and His omnipresence as the very soul and consciousness of our being he, in a confused state, created religions. In such a state he also created heaven and hell, and the clans and castes. Guru Kabir wishes to point out that all of these are creations of the mind that did know the essence of its own existence i.e. that the soul and God are eternally united, and there is no need for the various distinctions and divisions created by the mind of man.

In this sakhi he further points out that we need mental control in order to improve our good qualities. If we allow the mind to be controlled by all the senses and passions, then we lose our virtues or good qualities. In order to satisfy the tongue, man has learned to kill animals and often offer the dead animals, or their blood, to God. They really wish to satisfy their taste for meat. If you truly understand your connection with God, then what need is there to slaughter animals to offer to Him? All the living animals belong to God, and they are more precious to Him alive than dead. How then can God be made happy with animal sacrifice? People do this in ignorance of God's laws so in the end they do it to satisfy their own tastes and cravings.

रमैनी-४१

अम्बु की राशि समुद्र की खाइ, रवि-शशि कोटि तैंतिसों भाइ.  
भँवर जाल में आसन माँडा, चाहत सुख दुःख संग न छाँडा.  
दुःखको कर्म न काहु पाया, बहुत भाँति के जग भरमाया.  
आपुहि बाउर आपु सयाना, हृदया बसे तेहि राम न जाना.

साखी-तेहि हरि तेहि ठाकुर, तेहि हरि के दास.  
ना यम भया न जामिनी, भामिनी चली निरास.

*ramaini 41*

*ambu kī rāshi samudra kī khāi, ravi shashi koti taintison bhāi.  
bhawar jāl men āsan mārā, chāhat sukh dukh sanga na chhāndā.  
dukh ko karm na kāhu pāyā, bahut bhānti ke jag bharmāyā.  
āpuhi bāur āpu sayānā, hridayā base tehi rām na jānā.*

*sakhi: tehi hari tehi thākur, tehi hari ke dās.  
nā yam bhayā na jāminī, bhāminī chalī nirās.*

Meaning:

The universe is like a huge ocean full of the water of desires. The sun, moon and three hundred and thirty millions of gods are immersed in it.

The soul took its seat in the whirlpool of this ocean. It wishes happiness but does not give up its association with suffering.

No one could understand the secret of suffering and, in many ways, the people have become the victim of doubts.

Sometimes man acts foolishly and sometimes wisely, but he does not know the Ram who lives in his own heart.

Sakhi: The ignorant people do not know that the same Ram is God and the Lord, and also the servant of God.

When the devotee knows Himself, then neither Yama (god of death) nor Yamini (ignorance, darkness) cause him fear. The woman (Maya) departs from him disappointed.

Commentary:

In this *ramaini* Guru Kabir speaks of the darkness of ignorance that often overshadow the knowledge of our relationship with God. There is an intimate connection between the soul and God, and, in fact, there can be no separation. But people do not realize this connection, so they are living in doubts and spiritual ignorance. All people in the world live in an ocean of desires, and are driven here and there according to them. The soul has found itself fixed in the whirlpool of this ocean. This means that it is preoccupied with desires. Just as the whirlpool goes round and round, just so desires go round and round in the mind. Being driven by desires the individual suffers, but he does not realize the cause of his suffering. As long as he is driven by desires, he cannot fathom or realize that God dwells in his own heart.

In the sakhi Guru Kabir states the true mystical relationship between the soul and God, or the Lord, and the servant of the Lord. In effect, they are not separate because God is omnipresent and dwells in every heart. So the same soul that is the servant or devotee of God, also manifests God within himself, or he manifests the divinity of the Lord. When he realizes this, then he obtains salvation and the god of death and ignorance depart from him. Maya that causes us to be trapped in this world of illusion and doubts then departs, disappointed, because spiritual enlightenment has taken place.

रमैनी-४२

जब हम रहल रहल नहिं कोई, हमरे माहिं रहल सब कोई.  
कहहु राम कौन तेरी सेवा, सो समुझाय कहो मोहि देवा.  
फुर फुर कहेउ मारु सब कोई, झूठेहि झूठा संगति होई.  
आँधर कहैं सबै हम देखा, तहँ दिठियार बैठि मुख पेखा.  
यह विधि कहेउँ मानु जो कोई, जस मुख तसजो हृदया होई.  
कहहिं कबीर हंस मुसकाई, हमरे कहले छुटिहहु भाई.

*ramaini 42*

*jab ham rahal rahal nahi koī, hamre māhin rahal sab koī.  
kahahu rām kown terī sewā, so samujhāi kaho mohi devā.*

*phur phur kaheu māru sab koī, jhūthehi jhūthā sangati hoī.  
āndhar kahain sabai ham dekhā, tahan dithiyār baithi mukh pekhā.  
yaha vidhi kaheun mānu jo koī, jas mukh tasjo hridiyā hoī.  
kahain kabīr hans muskāī, hamre kahale chhutihahu bhāī.*

Meaning:

When I (Soul) existed in the beginning no one else existed. All then existed in me.  
Tell me, O Ram! Who served you then? O Lord! Explain this to me.  
If I explain the truth everyone wants to beat me. The liars enjoy the company of other liars.  
The blind person says that he sees everything, and the person with sight looks at him in surprise.  
I preach in this way if people would listen to me. It is proper that people's words and actions should agree.  
Kabir smilingly says to the devotee: "O brother you will obtain liberation if you follow my teaching."

Commentary:

The purpose of this *ramaini* is to explain two very important concepts in spiritual life. The first is that before creation only God existed, and all beings and things existed in God. The second is that liberation or salvation can come about only by understanding the nature of the soul. Guru Kabir is stating that it is necessary to understand that the soul is eternal and existed in the being of God at the very "beginning." No one else then existed. All beings emanated from, or were projected from, the being of God. Since no other living being then existed, Guru Kabir is asking the question of God: "Tell me who then did service to you?"

When Guru Kabir tells the truth and asks troubling questions like these, the people do not understand, and they oppose him or try to beat him. People seem to be contented to follow the company of those who propagate spiritual falsehood and hypocrisy. It is thus that, figuratively, the blind (ignorant) person says that he sees everything, (understands everything), but the person who has vision looks at him in surprise. That is, the person with spiritual wisdom looks at the spiritually ignorant person still deluded by his ignorance, yet proclaims that he has spiritual enlightenment. Guru Kabir explains, quite correctly, that what is in the heart, is what is the truth, must be what people should "utter." Yet people say things which are false and do not talk about the divine soul with any understanding. He endeavored to teach them the truth about the soul, and speaks to them with a benevolent smile, "O brother! If you understand and follow what I am teaching you, you will obtain liberation." Liberation comes from the knowledge of the soul or the absolute Atman that is always in union with Brahman or the omniscient or omnipotent Lord.

जिन्ह जिव कीन्ह आपु विश्वासा, नरक गये तेहि नरकहिं बासा.  
आवत जात न लागे बारा, काल अहेरी साँझ सकारा.  
चौदह विद्या पढि समझावैं, अपने मरण की खबर न पावै.  
जाने जीव को परे अँदेसा, झूठहिं आय के कहा सँदेसा.  
संगत छाँडि करे असरारा, उबहै मोट नरक कर भारा.

साखी-गुरु द्रोही औ मन्मुखी, नारी पुरुष विचार.  
ते नर चौरासी भरमिहैं, ज्यों लौं चण्ड्र दिवकार.

*ramaini 43*

*jinh jiv kīnha āpu vishwāsā, narak gaye tehi narakahin bāsā.  
āwat jāt na lāge bārā, kāl aherī sājñh sakārā.  
chowdah vidyā padhi samjhāwain, apne maran kī khabar na pāwai.  
jāne jīv ko pare andesā, jhūthahin āi ke kahā sandesā.  
sangat chhādi kare asrārā, ubahai mot narak kar bhārā.*

*sakhi: guru drohī ow manmukhī, nārī purush bichār.  
te nar chowrāsī bharmihai, jyown low chandra diwkār.*

Meaning:

The people who believed themselves to be Brahmins, and acted according to worldly desires, went to hell and remained there.  
Coming and going from this world takes no time. Kal hunts for the soul morning and evening (all the time).  
The people, thinking themselves to be Brahmins, teach others the fourteen vidyas (14 branches of knowledge), but they did not know of their own death.  
These clever persons also have doubts and fear of Maya, but they, without realization, give their false message to others.  
They give up the company of true seekers and indulge in quarrels. They are themselves the victim of hell, yet they say that they are liberating others.

Sakhi: Those who are enemies of the guru, whether man or woman, and act according to their own impulses,

Wander in the 8.4 million species of life, as long as the sun and the moon exist.

Commentary:

There are many learned people in the world in particular branches of knowledge. Thus, there are people very learned in the nature of the soul and God (Brahman) as a formless being. The Advaita Vedanta school of philosophy asserts that only God exists. Since the soul is a projection of God and is co-eternal with God, and apart from God it cannot exist,

they assert that the soul and God are one. This is similar to saying that the water in the drop and in the ocean is the same. The problem, however, is that although these people have this knowledge, they are still driven by worldly desires. Thus they are not free from the clutches of Maya, and death stalks them as it stalks anyone else.

These learned people teach others of the fourteen types of knowledge, - the six parts of the Vedas, the six philosophies, and archery and ayurvedic medicine. They feel themselves to be very clever and keep away from the company of humble but true seekers of God. They remain the victim of hell, but they boast that they are liberating others. They have fear of Maya and they are in doubts. Thus, the message they teach to others is likewise false, and will not liberate others from the clutches of Maya and this worldly, materialistic, existence.

Clever people such as these are often enemies of the true guru who teaches the path of self-realization and liberation. Instead of being *gurmukh* they are *manmukh* i.e. following their own impulses and not the teachings of the guru. They thus do not obtain liberation but wander in the endless cycles of births and deaths.

रमैनी-४४

कबहुँ न भयउ संग औ साथ, ऐसो जन्म गमायउ आछ।  
बहुरि न पैहो ऐसो थाना, साधु संगति नहिं पहिचाना।  
अब तोर होइ नरकमहँ बासा, निसिदिन बसेउ लबार के पासा।

साखी-जात सबन कहँ देखिया, कहहिं कबीर पुकार।  
चेतवा होय तो चेत ले, नहिं तो दिवस परतु है धार. ४४

*ramaini 44*

*kabahu na bhayau sanga ow sāthā, aiso janam gamāyau āchhā.*  
*bahuri na paiho aiso thānā, sādhu sangati nahi pahichānā.*  
*ab tor hoi narak mahh bāsā, nisidin baseu labār ke pāsā.*

*sakhi: jāt saban kahh dekhiyā, kahahin kabīr pukār.*  
*chetwā hoi toh cheti le, nahi toh diwas paratu hain dhār.*

Meaning:

Man destroys his noble life for nothing, by not keeping the company of noble and saintly people.

You will not get such an opportunity again, since you do not realize the value of saintly company.

Now you will get a dwelling place in hell, as day and night you have kept the company of false people.

Sakhi: Kabir says shouting to all: "I see all the people dying and leaving with empty hands.

If you wish to awaken to realization, do it now, otherwise the day will come when death will strike you."

Commentary:

Not many people in this world try to keep the company of noble and saintly people. They are more attracted to the alluring worldly life of sense gratification. Even if they go to the temples or holy places, and sing the glories of God, they still drift back into the mainstream of worldly life, beset with the passions of anger and hate, greed and ego, etc. Their minds are full with worries and anxieties. Somehow, their hearts are not receptive to the Divine presence that is within. Many falsely believe that they are 'saved' and will be assured of heaven. But they, nevertheless, are still entangled in the life of passions. The majority of people are thus not fit to enter the kingdom of God, but are fit to enter the kingdom of Kal (death). Guru Kabir ceaselessly exhorted the people to awaken to the Reality within them. He exhorted them to keep the company of noble and saintly people, and to give up the false teachers, and the traps of the glittering worldly life. He exhorted them to realize the Truth and that Truth will give them liberation.

रमैनी-४५

हिरणाकुश रावण गौ कंसा, कृष्ण गये सुर नर मुनि बंसा.  
ब्रह्मा गये मर्म नहिं जाना, बड सब गये जे रहल सयाना.  
समुझि परी नहिं राम कहानी, निर्वक दूध कि सर्वक पानी.  
रहिगौ पन्थ थकित भौ पवना, दशो दिशा उजारी भौ गवना.  
मीन जाल भौ ई संसारा, लोह कि नाव पषाण को भारा.  
खेवैं सबै मर्म हम जानी, तैयों कहें रहै उतरानी.

साखी-मछरी मुख जस केचुआ, मुसवन महँ गिरदान.  
सर्पन माहिं गहे जुआ, ऐसी जात देखि सबन की जान.

*ramaini 45*

*hirnakush rāvan gow kansā, krishna gaye sur nar muni bansā.  
brahmā gaye marm nahin jānā, bad sab gaye je rahal sayānā.  
samujhi parī nahin rām kahānī, nirvak dudh ki sarvak pānī.  
rahigow panth thakit bhow pawanā, dasho dishā ujārī bhow gawanā.  
mīn jal bhow ī sansārā, loha ki nāw pashan ko bhārā.  
khewain sabai marm ham jānī, taiyon kahen rahai utrānī.*

*sakhi: machhri mukh jas kechuā, muswan mahH girdān.  
sarpan māhin gahejuā, aisī jat dekhi saban kī jān.*

Meaning:

Hirnakush, Ravan, Kansa, Krishna, the gods, humans, and clans of the sages, all left this world.

Brahma went without knowing the secret. All those who were great and wise also went from the world. No one truly understands the story of Ram. Is it because of using non-nutritious milk or tasteless water?

People's breaths became exhausted but their paths remained. They all departed, leaving the ten directions in a void.

This world is like a net and all the souls are like fishes. Ignorance is like a boat of iron carrying a burden of karmas as stones.

The false gurus reassure their disciples that they know the secret of rowing the boat that is sinking, yet they say that they are reaching the other shore.

Sakhi: Just as the worm is in the mouth of the fish, and as the chameleon in the mouth of the rodent, and as the muskrat in the mouth of the snake, just so I see the life of all the people departing.

Commentary:

This *ramaini* deals with the transitory nature of this world, and the spiritual ignorance in which people live. Hirnakush (Hiranyakashipu), Ravan and Kansa were great, pompous and glorious ancient kings. In spite of their power, they had to leave this world. Krishna, the incarnation of God, also went from the world, as did the various gods and demi-gods, the sages and ordinary people. The god Brahma, who is said to be the creator aspect of God, also departed his life. All the people who were great and wise departed from this world. Guru Kabir is stating that all the great beings of the past departed from this world without really knowing the "Truth" about the eternal, self-existent and infinite Ram that dwells within us as the ultimate Reality. He asks the question whether this was due to their use of non-nutritious milk or just plain water. It is certainly due to weakness of human nature that prevents people from realizing God within themselves. Many people have followed their religious paths, but they departed from the world leaving the paths behind them. Guru Kabir is saying that this world is like a net that traps the soul just as the net traps the fish. This soul, embodied in the physical form, is beset with ignorance and carries a load of karmas, just as if a boat of iron is carrying a heavy load of stones, and is likely to sink. Just so the embodied soul is sinking in this world under the weight of its own karmas. There are many false teachers who say that they know the secret of "rowing" the boat to get to the other shore, and they reassure their disciples that they are rowing, and will take them to the other shore when, in fact, the boat they are rowing is actually sinking.

In the sakhi Guru Kabir compares the human being to a few animals that are being eaten by others, such as the worm being eaten by the fish, or the chameleon being eaten by a rodent, and the muskrat being eaten by the snake. He says that people are dying and departing from this world in the same way, being devoured by their own spiritual

ignorance and various passions and attachments to the transitory objects of the world. In reality, in order to obtain liberation, one has to use spiritual discernment and purify one's life in all aspects, before one can safely reach the 'other shore' of this life.

रमैनी-४६

बिनसे नाग गरुड गलि जाई, बिनसे कपटी औ शत भाई.  
बिनसे पाप पुण्य जिन्ह कीन्हा, बिनसे गुण निर्गुण जिन्ह चीन्हा.  
बिनसे अग्नि पवन औ पानी, बिनसे सृष्टि कहाँ लो गनी.  
विष्णु लोक बिनसे छिन माही, हौं देखा परलय की छाँहीं.

साखी-मच्छ रूप माया भई, जबरहिं खेलै अहेर.  
हरिहर ब्रह्मा न ऊबरे, सुर नर मुनि केहि केर.

*ramaini 46*

*binse nāg garud gali jāī, binse kaptī ow shat bhāī.  
binse pāp punya jinh kīnhā, binse gun nirgun jinh chīnhā.  
binse agni pawan ow pānī, binse shrishti kahān lo ganī.  
vishnu lok binsai chhin māhī, hown dekhā parlai kī chhānhī.*

*sakhi: machh rūp māyā bhai, jabarahin khelai aher.  
harihar brahmā na ubare, sur nar muni kehi ker.*

Meaning:

Both Sheshnag and Garud died. Those who are cheaters and betrayers also die. Those who perform evil or virtuous deeds also die. Those who believe in *nirgun* and *sagun* will also die. Fire, air and water are perishable, as is all of creation. How far can I count? Even Vishnu Lok is destroyed in a moment. I see all destroyed under the influence of *pralaya*.

Sakhi: Maya is like a fish that is always preoccupied with hunting for food. Vishnu, Shiva and Brahma could not get freedom from Maya. What then can one say of the gods, men and sages?

Commentary:

In this *ramaini* Guru Kabir speaks of the perishability of all physical bodies or things, whether living or non-living. Sheshnag is the great mythological serpent that floats on an ocean of milk, and on which Lord Vishnu rests. Similarly, the Garud is a great mythological bird, similar to the eagle on which Lord Vishnu rides. They are no more. All people are destructible whether they are cheaters or evil-doers, or even if they are virtuous. Even those religious people who say that God has attributes (*sagun*) and those

who say that God has no attributes (*nirgun*) are perishable. Even inanimate things such as fire, air and water are perishable just as all of creation is. Vishnu Lok is the heaven where Lord Vishnu resides. Even that is perishable when the great dissolution called *pralaya* takes place. The gods, men and sages all perished under the influence of Maya.

In order to understand this ramaini, one has to understand what Maya is. This is discussed in the philosophy of Vedanta. All things in the universe, both animate and inanimate, became differentiated into their various manifestations from the undifferentiated God because of the power of Maya. There are two levels of understanding in this ramaini. One is that we see all things around us being destructible. According to Indian cosmology, a time will come when there will be a great dissolution of all things on earth, and all things will then be recreated or differentiated again from a primal Being. The second level of meaning is that when one obtains Self-realization or God realization, then one immediately sees that all things have dissolved into the being of God, as all are really part and parcels of God. What then is the point of the ramaini? Guru Kabir intends to point out that we must not lose sight of our true being which is the eternal Soul that is indestructible. Too often we are pre-occupied with all the material things of life, and we become victims of Maya that keeps us from realizing our true Self.

रमैनी-४७

जरासिन्धु शिशुपाल सँघारा, सहस्रार्जुन छल सो मारा.  
बड छल रावण सो गौ बीती, लंका रहल कंचन की भीती.  
दुर्योधन अभिमाने गयऊ, पाण्डव केर मर्म नहिं पयऊ.  
माया के डिम्ब गयल सब राजा, उत्तम मध्यम बाजन बाजा.  
छौ चकवे बिति धरणि समाना, ऐकौ जीव प्रतीत न आना.  
कहाँ लौ कहौं अचेतहि गयऊ, चेत अचेत झगरा एक भयऊ.

साखी-ई माया जग मोहिनी, मोहिनी सब जग झारी.  
हरिचन्द सत्त के कारणे, घर घर सोग बिकाय.

*ramaini 47*

*jarāsindhu sishupāl sanghārā, sahasrārjun chhal so mārā.  
bad chhal rāvan so gow bītī, lankā rahal kanchan kī bhītī.  
duryodhan abhimāne gayau, pāndav ker marm nahi payau.  
māyā ke dimb gayal sab rājā, utam madhyam bājan bājā.  
chhow chakave biti dharani samānā, ekow jīv pratīt na ānā.  
kahān low kahown achetahi gayau, chet achet jhagarā ek  
bhayau.*

*sakhi: ī māyā jag mohinī, mohinī sab jag jhārī.  
harichand satt ke kārane, ghar ghar sog bikāi.*

Meaning:

Jarasandh and Sishupal were slain. Sahasrarjun was killed deceitfully.

The great deceiver Ravan, who lived in walls of gold in Lanka, was also finished.

Duryodhan got killed because of his pride. No one knows even the whereabouts of the Pandavas.

All the kings, sons of Maya, playing the best or mediocre music, also died.

The six emperors died and mingled with the earth. None of them believed in his own mortality.

How much more can I say? Everyone went without attaining realization. Still, the wise and the ignorant are busy with their arguments.

Sakhi: This Maya is fascinating to the world. The whole world is allured by her.

For the sake of truth Harischandra, in sorrow, sold himself as a slave from house to house.

Commentary:

The theme of this *ramaini* is the power of Maya and the perishability of the world. Guru Kabir refers to several ancient kings and emperors, who met their death because of their own ego, greed and deceitfulness. They felt invincible. Maya, with its great power of delusion, defeated them all. These rulers were prominent characters in the two great epics of India - the Mahabharata and the Ramayana. (It is beyond the scope of this commentary to go into details about them.) Modern equivalents can be found in some of the recent dictators, (such as President Marcos of Philippines, Chairman Mao Tsetung of China, Hitler, Baby Doc Duvalier of Haiti, and several others), who in spite of their assumed power and invincibility, have been defeated by revolts against them and by death. They are all perishable.

Guru Kabir is teaching here that we should uphold truth at all costs, and obtain liberation from this world. We should not become victims of Maya and be fooled by her allurements. She arouses the passions, cravings and desires, and these keep us in bondage. We become slaves to them. We should see the reality of the divine Being manifesting everywhere, and live in thought, word and deed in truth and in purity. He refers to Harischandra who was a king, but in order to uphold the truth, he lost his kingdom and even sold his family and himself to fulfill his word. But what do we see in this world? People are engaged in quarrels, whether they belong to high castes or low castes. They quarrel whether they are intellectual or ignorant. People quarrel on the basis of religious beliefs, races and artificial classes. They are all motivated by their own ego and vanity. They do not think that all of their wrangling is entirely useless, as it will not help them to obtain Self-realization and liberation from this world. They will all die and leave everything behind. Our daily activities should be motivated by the eternal issues that eventually govern our lives.

मानिकपुरहि कबीर बसेरी, मददति सुनि शेख तकि केरी.  
ऊजै सुनी जौनपुर थाना, झूसी सुनी पीरन को नामा.  
एकइस पीर लिखे तेहि ठामा, खतमा पढ़ें पैगम्बर नामा.  
सुनी बोल मोहिं रहा न जाई, देखि मुकर्बा रहा भुलाई.  
हबी नबी नबी के कामा, जहाँ लों अमल सो सबै हरामा.

साखी-शेख अकदी शेख सकदी, मानहु वचन हमार.  
आदि अन्त औ युग युग, देखहु दृष्टि पसार.

*ramaini 48*

*mānikpurahi kabīr baserī, madadati suni shekh taqqi kerī.  
ujai sunī jaunpur thānā, jhusī sunī pīran ko nāmā.  
ekis pīr likhe tehi thāmā, khatmā pardhe paigambar nāmā.  
sunī bol mohi rahā na jāī, dekhi mukarbā rahā bhulāī.  
habī nabī nabī ke kāmā, jahān lown amal so sabai harāmā.*

*sakhi: shekh akardī shekh sakardī, mānahu bachan hamār.  
ādi ant ow yug yug, dekhahu drishti pasār.*

Meaning:

When Kabir lived in Manikpur, he heard the fame of Shaikh Taqqi.  
In Jaunpur he heard the name Ujjai, and in Jhusi he heard the names of pirs (saints).  
There he found written the names of twenty-one *pirs*. They read the *khatmā* (discourses)  
in the name of the prophet.  
Hearing all of this, I could not hold myself back. Seeing the tombs of the pirs the people  
got deluded.  
They used the names of Habi and Nabi but look at their actions. In practice they feel  
everything is haram (impure).

Sakhi: O Shaikh Akardi and Shaikh Sakardi! Listen to my words:

From the beginning to the end of time, and in every age,  
see things with your own open eyes.

Commentary:

It must be remembered that Guru Kabir was opposed to false piety and external show of religious fervour, when true religious or spiritual feeling was not embedded in the heart. He spoke out against these whether the practitioners were of the Islamic or the Hindu faith. In this *ramaini* he is pointing out some of the deficiencies practiced by the Muslim saints and the lay-people who paid homage to them. He met these holy Muslim preachers in various places where he travelled. He heard them giving discourses, and reading scriptures in the name of the Prophet. Some of the saints were called Nabi and others Habi, or the friend of God. He saw the names of famous pirs or religious leaders

inscribed on tombstones. People went and prayed to the tombstones and made requests for their wellbeing. In spite of being religious leaders, their practices were not always pure and therefore considered to be *haram*. (Muslims use the word *haram* to mean that which is not pure, or it is bad, or not sanctified). Guru Kabir observes that the people get deluded seeing the tombs and the famous names written on them. They feel that they will obtain some blessing or favour by praying to the tombstones in the names of the people listed there. He felt that the people doing so were deluded because they could not get anything by praying to the dead. The people were not aware of the law of cause and effect that operated in their lives. Speaking to two famous pirs named Shaikh Akardi and Shaikh Sakardi, he admonished them to pay attention to his words. He said that at all times they must use their spiritual intellect to see things in the proper light. They must realize that the soul dwells within, and that it is divine.

Kabir was a down to earth saint who was very concerned with the spiritual welfare of the common people. It hurt him a great deal to see that people fell victim to hypocrisy, and were deluded into believing that they were on the right spiritual path. He tried to open their spiritual eyes wherever he went and preached. That is why he states that he could not hold himself back when he saw wrong things being done in the name of religion, and the people remaining gullible.

रमैनी-४९

दर की बात कहो दरवेसा, बादशाह है कौने भेसा.  
 कहाँ कूच कहाँ करे मुकामा, मैं तोहि पूछौं मूसलमाना.  
 लाल जर्द की नाना बाना, कौन सुरति को करो सलामा.  
 लाजी काज करहु तुम कैसा, घर घर जबह करावहु भैंसा.  
 बकरी मुर्गी किन्ह फरमाया, किसके कहे तुम छुरी चलाया.  
 दर्द न जानहु पीर कहावहु, वैता पढि पढि जग भरमावहु.  
 कहहिं कबीर एक सैयद बोहावै, आप सरीखा जग कबुलावै.

साखी-दिन को रोजा रहत हैं, राति हनत हैं गाय.

यह खुन वह बन्दगी, क्योंकर खुशी खुदाय.

*ramaini 49*

*dar kī bāt kaho darvesā, bādshāh hai kowne bhesā.  
 kahān kūch kahān kare mukāmā, mein tohi pūchhow mūsalmānā.  
 lāl jard kī nānā bānā, kown surati ko karo salāmā.  
 kāji kāj karahu tum kaisā, ghar ghar jabah karāwahu bhainsā.  
 bakarī murgī kinh pharmāyā, kiske kahe tun chhurī chalāyā.  
 dard na jānahu pīr kahāwahu, baitā padhhi padhhi jag bharmāwahu.  
 kahahin kabīr ek sayyad bohāwai, āp sarikhā jag kabulāwai.*

*sakhi: din ko rojā rahat hain, rāti hanat hai gāi.*

*yeha khūn waha bandagī, kyon kar khushī khudāi.*

Meaning:

O Dervish! Tell me the address of God and the form of his clothing?

Where does He travel and where does He live? O Musalman! I am asking you.

You talk of red and yellow colors in heaven. To what sort of meditation do you pay respect?

O Kazi! What sort of work do you perform? You help the people from house to house to kill the buffalo.

Who ordered you to kill the goat and the hen? Who advised you to use the knife on the animals?

You are called pir, but you do not understand the pain of others. You deceive the people pretending that you are reading the verses.

Kabir says that one sect is called Sayyad and it persuades the world to agree with it.

Sakhi: In the day they observe roza, and in the night they kill the cow.

On the one hand they spill blood, and on the other they do devotion. How can they please God?

Commentary:

In this *ramaini* Guru Kabir is asking some pointed questions of the Muslims, urging them to examine their conduct, and see if God will be pleased with what they are doing. He has also done the same thing with the Hindus, as Hindus and Muslims are the two major religions of India. A Dervesh is a Muslim fakir who dresses in white and dances in a whirling fashion. They do this in order to obtain attunement with God. Thus the term 'whirling dervishes'. Musalman is also a term used for Muslims. The Muslims pray to God (Allah) facing Mecca five times a day, and they must affirm that there is no God but Allah, and that Mohammed is His prophet. Considering their actions, Guru Kabir is asking them who is their God and where does He live, and what is His form and clothing? Muslims believe that when they go to paradise there will be beautiful colors and maidens to wait on them, and they will enjoy life immensely. Guru Kabir is asking from what sort of meditation, or spiritual discernment, do they arrive at such knowledge.

Guru Kabir addresses the Kazi, who is a Muslim holy man maintaining law and order of the religion, and asks him about his work. (Note the word 'kaj' means work and the word Kazi can be derived from that root). The Kazi is instrumental in helping Muslims to kill the cow and buffalo by offering prayers, thus making it *halāl* or pure. This is opposed to *harām* or bad. Who has ordered the Kazi to kill the goat, the hen or any other animal as a sacrifice? All scriptures and holy people, and saints, have taught not to kill. Thus Guru Kabir states that you are called a pir, or a holy man, but you do not understand the pain (*pīr*) of others. There is one sect of Muslims called Sayyad or the Wahabi sect who force other people to agree with them and become Muslims. Holy people do not behave in this way.

In the sakhi Guru Kabir asks how God can be pleased with the Muslims who observed the roza or fasting all day, and at night they kill the cow. On the one hand they are practicing violence and spilling blood, and on the other hand they are praying to God.

It is our duty in life to love God. If we love God we must also love all the creatures that God created. All scriptures teach us to be non-violent. If we practice violence against God's innocent creatures, how can we please God? Guru Kabir was a mystic saint of the highest order and, as such, he could not fail to point out to people of any religion their deficiencies and wrong practices in the name of religion. One must have compassion for all living things. Without compassion in the heart, one cannot truly be a religious person, in spite of all the scriptures and religious duties he performs.

रमैनी-५०

कहइत मोहि भयल युग चारि, समुझत नाहिं मोह सुत नारी.  
बंसहि आगि लगि बंसहि जरिया, भरममूल नर धंधे परिया.  
हस्ति के फन्दे हस्ती रहई, मृगा के फन्दे मृगा रहई.  
लोहे लोह जस काटु सयाना, त्रिया के तत्त्व त्रिया पहिचाना.

साखी-नारि रचंते पुरुषा, पुरुष रचंते नार.  
पुरुषहि पुरुषा जो रचे, ते विरले संसार.

*ramaini 50*

*kahiat mohi bhayal yug chārī, samujhat nāhi moha sut nārī.  
bansahi āgi lagi bansahi jariyā, bharambhūl nar dhandhe pariyā.  
hasti ke phande hastī rahaī, mrigā ke phande mrigā rahaī.  
lohe loha jas kātu sayānā, triyā ke tattwa triyā pahichānā.*

*sakhi: nāri rachante purushā, purush rachante nār.  
purushahi purushā jo rache, te birle sansār.*

Meaning:

Four yugas have gone by, and I am still advising the people. Through attachment to sons and wives they do not understand me.

The bamboo rubbing on bamboo sets fire to all the bamboo. Man, lost in doubts, becomes entangled in worldly business.

The male elephant is trapped by the female elephant, and the male deer is trapped by the female.

The wise person cuts iron with iron, and a woman recognizes the artifice of another woman.

Sakhi: A woman is attracted to a man, and a man to a woman. In this world it is rare to find a man in love with a Man.

Commentary:

Guru Kabir is explaining the strong hold that passions, such as infatuation and love, can have on people. People thus do not set their priorities correctly, and suffer as a consequence. Our foremost goal in life is to know the real Self, which is God dwelling within. However, people become entangled with family relationships, such as wives and sons, or husbands and daughters for that matter, and live their lives in pursuit of material and emotional satisfactions, to the exclusion of a spiritual ideal. He cites the example of a bamboo rubbing on another bamboo that results in fire and burns down the bamboo grove. Just so, people entangled with their materialistic pursuits, burn with all the passions that such a life arouses.

Guru Kabir cites the example of a male elephant being trapped by the female elephant, or the male deer being trapped by the female deer (the females being used as lures for the males). He advises that we must not be allured, similarly, because of passions, and be trapped in the material world. He cites the example of the wise person cutting iron with iron, that people should be wise and know how to be in the midst of all the worldly activities, but still use these worldly activities to steer him to a spiritual life. Just as a woman understands the mystique of another woman, just so, a person should understand the artifice of the world, and not be trapped by it.

In the *sakhi* Guru Kabir points out what is obvious to all, in that, a woman loves a man and a man loves a woman. This is the average every day experience of life. But he contrasts this with the idea of a man loving a man, which is rare indeed. (Does not refer to homosexuality). The Man here refers to the Self, or the Soul, which is Purush and is of male gender. Thus, the man who loves the Man (Purush or Soul) is truly the wise person who can free himself from the traps of Maya, or illusion, created by the material world, and obtain freedom.

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