

A Poem by Kabir (born 1440; died 1518)

This union with the guru, O Kabir,
Sets me free; like salt mingled
With flour, I am no more I!

Now I have no caste, no creed,
I am no more what I am!

O dear brother!
By what name would you call me?

I do not quote from the scriptures;
I simply see what I see.

When the bride is one
with her lover,
who cares about
the wedding party?

I am not a Hindu,
Nor a Muslim am I!

I am this body, a play
Of five elements; a drama
Of the spirit dancing
With joy and sorrow.

A drop
Melting into the sea,
Everyone can see.
But the sea
Absorped
In a drop—
A rare one
can follow!

I am looking at you,
You at him,
Kabir asks, how to solve
This puzzle—
You, he, and I?

Dying, dying, the world
Is dying only.
But lo! None knows how to die
In such a way
That he dies never again.

Man, here is your worth:
Your meat is of no use!
Your bones cannot be sold
For making ornaments,
And your skin cannot be played
On an instrument!