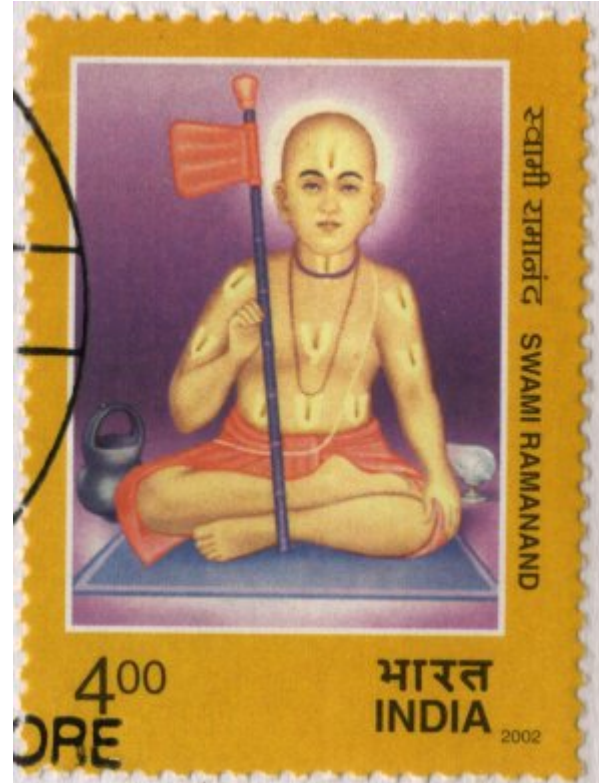


Saint Ramananda (1400 to 1480 A.D.)



जाति पाँति पूछे न कोई
हस्को भजे सो हरिको होई ॥

Saint Ramananda

"Let no one ask a man's caste or with whom eats. If a man is devoted to Hari, he becomes Hari's own." Thus declared saint Ramananda who is considered a pioneer of the Bhakti movement in North India. Political conquest of Muslims was taking root and the Indian society, ever divided over caste hierarchy was slowly forgetting its glorious past of universal brotherhood, transcendental knowledge and realization of God. Several saints appeared on the scene making people aware of age old values, especially when there was a challenge of Islamic supremacy.

Ramananda was born at Allahabad and had South Indian parentage. he studied scriptures at a very young age and was a disciple of Raghavananda, an ascetic of the Sri Vaishnava order. He went on a pilgrimage to South India and on his return, his brother saints refused to admit him into their fold, arguing that he might not have adhered to strict rules regarding food and other rituals, during his long absence. This was a rude shock to Ramananda who came out of the fold, became a liberal, practicing severe austerities on the banks of the Ganga River at Banaras. He defined his own interpretation of self-surrender and dedication to the Supreme soul. Disciples started coming in, Hindus, Muslims and Dalits (untouchables). Among them were Kabir, Ravidas and Dhanna.

Saint Ramananda

According to Ramananda, Lord Rama was the supreme spirit and humanity was one big family. He was a great preacher and drew big crowds wherever he went but his poems and sayings are not preserved. Only one poem is recorded in the Guru Granth Sahib, the holy text work of Sikhs. But this single piece advocates his profound philosophy.

Saint Kabir

(15th century: 1440-1518 A.D.)



Kabir is the most known disciple of Ramananda. Tradition says that he was a adopted son of a poor Muslim weaver couple who were earlier Hindus. They belonged to a lower strata in the eyes of both Hindus and Muslims, and hence not bound by strict rituals and religious discipline. This made Kabir an unconventional poet and mystic. He had no regular schooling and took to weaving, his family vocation and went on singing poems as he plied the shuttle to and fro.

Kabir

- Born to a Brahmin Woman (Widow)
- Brought up a Weaver family
- Lived most of his life in Varanasi later moved to Maghar before his death.
- Nirakshar (Masi Kagad Chhooyo nahi..)
- Widely Traveled in India
- Spoke in many dialects of Hindi:
 - Purvi-Janapadi, Awadhi, Bhojpuri, Khadi-Boli etc.

Saint Kabir



- He could not serve or claim anybody as guru because of his humble birth but was drawn to Ramanand's teachings.
- He thought of winning Guru's blessings in his own way. Ramananda went to the river Ganga, every day for bath very early in the morning. One day when he was returning from Ghat, his foot touched a human body in the darkness. Startled he exclaimed, "Ram, Ram!" Immediately Kabir got up and with folded hands and appealed to the saint. "Master, you have given me the Ram mantra and made me your Sishya, even though I am only a poor Muslim weaver" and told about his yearnings to reach God.
- Ramananda was touched deeply by Kabir's devotion and humility and accepted him as a disciple. He became a worthy sishya in no time by imbibing many secrets of spiritual mysticism from Ramananda.

Kabir

- His Main Works

- Beejak his main work.

- His philosophy

- No Gyan without a Guru, Guru Govind dono ..

- Social Response:

- Against blind faith:

- Kakar pather.....

- Mood mudaaye hai mile

- Moko kaha.N dnoode re bande

- Did he have a Son:- Kamal

- Chalati Chakki

Kabir

His Philosophy and works:

- Kabir: A poet admired by Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs
- His couplets (Dohas) found in Gurugranth Sahib
- His philosophy generated a Panth called Kabir Panthes
- Beejak
 - 810 Sakhiyan
 - 384 Pad
 - 13 Ramainiyan
- His meeting with a molavi :- No words exchanged
- One of most admired Indian poet in the Western world
 - Stanford studies on Kabir
 - Kabir Singer in USA
- “Kabir” Comes to USA :- Sung by Shekhar Sen

Suradas

Suradas

- Period: 1478 to 1583
- Born to a Brahmin family
- Born in a Village Seehee (UP) near Delhi then later lived in Gau Ghat between Agra and Mathura
- Disciple of Vallabhacharya
- Contemporary of Kabir
- Composed his poetry in Braj-bhasha
- Vallabhacharya asked him to sing songs in the praise of the Lord (before that he mostly wrote of Vinaya and Deenata)

Surdas

- His main Works
 - Sur-Saagar
- His Main Devotion:
 - To Baal Krishna of Vrindavan
- Bhramar Geet

Tulasidas

(1532-1623)



Saint Tulasidas Writing His Masterpiece
Ramacharitamanas

Tulsida

- **Gosvāmī Tulsīdās** (1532-1623;)
- Awadhi poet and philosopher
- Magnum Opus
 - *Rāmacaritamānasa* ("The Lake of the Deeds of Rama"), an epic devoted to Lord Rama.

Tulsidas

- Most educated among the middle centuries poet
- Main Works (about 20 in number, besides Ramacharit Manas))
 - Geetavali
 - Kavitaavali
 - Vinaya Patrika
 - Janaki Mangal
 - Parvati Mangal
 - Ramagyaa etc

Tulsidas

- Ramacharit Manas and Its Heros
- Ram and a Perfect Human and Son
- Bharat an Ideal Brother
- Seeta a Perfect wife
- Sugreev a Perfect Friend
- Hanuman a perfect role model of Sevak
- Vibheeshan: A role model of a Bhakta etc.