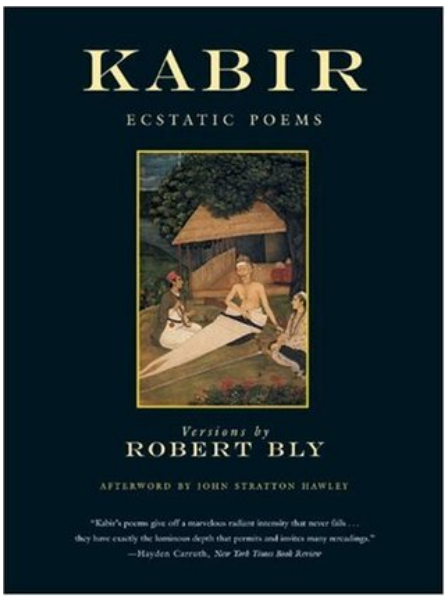


# The Kabir Book: Forty-Four of the Ecstatic Poems of Kabir

*Kabir , Robert Bly (Translator) , John Stratton Hawley (Afterward)*

# The Kabir Book: Forty-Four of the Ecstatic Poems of Kabir

*Kabir , Robert Bly (Translator) , John Stratton Hawley (Afterward)*

**The Kabir Book: Forty-Four of the Ecstatic Poems of Kabir** Kabir , Robert Bly (Translator) , John Stratton Hawley (Afterward)
Forty-four of the Ecstatic Poems of Kabir
"Kabir's poems give off a marvelous radiant intensity. . . . Bly's versions . . . have exactly the luminous depth that permits and invites many rereadings, many studyings-even then they remain as fresh as ever."
-The New York Times Book Review

## The Kabir Book: Forty-Four of the Ecstatic Poems of Kabir Details

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Date | : | Published February 1st 1993 by Beacon Press (MA) (first published 1977) |
| ISBN | : | 9780807063798 |
| Author | : | Kabir , Robert Bly (Translator) , John Stratton Hawley (Afterward) |
| Format | : | Paperback 71 pages |
| Genre | : | Poetry, Spirituality, Philosophy, Religion, Classics, Cultural, India |

# From Reader Review The Kabir Book: Forty-Four of the Ecstatic Poems of Kabir for online ebook

### T Fool says

Something about 'non-Western mentality', the less-than-rational, or the putting aside of the rational, that's sluggish in prose, but that sparkles in poems.

Kabir's own words will forever be unknown to me, just as I can make my way only clumsily and from the outside of mindsets rooted east of Suez, further east even, in the soil of the Asian subcontinent.

Rich, rich. Maybe the mystery is extra, my being so very American, so very molded from cosmopolitan ideals looking much like the best of New York City or the sporty imaginings of Hollywood.

My manner . . . should I denigrate the brash confidence I value by calling it simply 'superficial'? . . . is an approach, even when seriously engaged, that finds Kabir's sense of life deep indeed. If there are spiritual questions to answer, the answer is 'inside'.

'Inside' too often, for me, means a quiet reassessment of how to go about doing something better 'outside'. He's calling for me, for us, to look inside ourselves and actually *find* 'spiritual' joy. As in: it's right *there*, baby!

Kabir's words: by me, not ever to be known.

Bly's words, though: those of a master-at-trade. Does Bly actually know the Bengali of Tagore's that provide him *that* translation of Kabir's original (?) Hindi? Is he applying his own aesthetic to prior English translations?

As an element of 'lay' appreciation, it matters not. If Bly is taking liberties, I must believe he's done that in good faith. Translation is never an exactitude. What does cut ice is the final result. These pieces are gems.

---

### Erik Akre says

Kabir: ecstatic and rebellious originality; opposition to standard dogmas; intensity more important than method: The primary danger is spiritual passivity.

Listen to Kabir:

Don't go outside your house to see flowers.
My friend, don't bother with that excursion.
Inside your body there are flowers.
One flower has a thousand petals.
That will do for a place to sit.
Sitting there you will have a glimpse of beauty

inside the body and out of it,
before gardens and after gardens.

---

### Chiththarthan Nagarajan says

Kabir! Kabir! Kabir!

I asked myself, after reading this book. Did I miss anything special in my life?

Answer is **Yes** and **No**.

Yes. I didn't read the 14th century heart-melting soulful words. And that "No" is just a lie.

Kabir gives a mundane question with a complication in an air, but the answers were coloured with an essence of soul.

What is god?
*He is the breath inside the breath*

P.S. Why you should read this book?
*What is inside me moves inside you.*

**This.**

---

### Nick says

Painfully, awfully, cripplingly awesome. I've been a fan of Bly for years, and of course he turns all of his translations into Robert Bly poems, but damn...this is good. This book shames me and my own approach to writing---everything I try to say in 1000 words this book does in 70. Sometimes I find a book I know I'll read about 30 times, and this is one of those books---it has given me so much joy, I am angry at it.

---

### Jessica says

My first exposure to Kabir was when my stepmom played me a tape she has of Robert Bly reading these poems, so to this day whenever I read them I hear his voice in my mind saying the words with someone playing the tablas in the background. Fortunately, this is a good thing.

(Dear friend: you might not be familiar with Kabir yourself, and you might have just read what I just wrote and got the erroneous impression that somehow my Bookface account was hacked into by an overly sincere middle-aged goateed massage therapist with a ponytail who once got you stoned at some weird party and

spent the whole night talking about the time he spent in an ashram and trying to lure you back to his batik-covered futon; however, you would be wrong to think that.)

---

### sparrow says

There was probably too much lost in translation, too many substitutions and other changes for the poems to have the full meaning as intended. Plus my own blind spot of the politics & history of where the poems came from (which, as the afterward points out, were glossed over in Bly's version of the poems anyway) -- still, they were enjoyable.

---

### Bill Kerwin says

Not all that long ago, in another review, I wrote that I preferred the Rabindranath Tagore translation to this one. I take it back. I was a fool to say so. Revisiting Bly's translation recently, after more than two decades, I was struck by its clarity, its passion, its vivid and compelling voice.

I chose Tagore because—in philosophical seriousness and bibilical gravity—I imagine his translation more closely reflects the original. But, knowing nothing of the language, who am I to say? Besides, two of my favorite translations are Edward Fitzgerald's *Rubaiyat* and Ezra Pound's *Sextus Propertius*, and from what everyone tells me, they aren't close to the original at all.

No, the inescapable responsibility of the translator of poetry is to use his materials to create real poetry in his own language. Here—and elsewhere, too, in his translations from the Spanish—Bly does this as well as any translator ever has. In addition, he creates a Kabir who speaks with an intense and immediate voice that transforms these spiritual insights into something both urgent and essential.

But perhaps I should let Kabir—that is, the poet Robert Bly's *persona* Kabir—speak of what is is—and is not—essential:

> *2.*
>
> *I don't know what sort of God we have been talking about.*
>
> *The caller calls in a loud voice to the Holy One at dusk.*
> *Why? Surely the Holy One is not deaf.*
> *He hears the delicate anklets that ring on the feet of an insect as it walks.*
>
> *Go over and over your beads, paint werid designs on your forehead,*
> *wear your hair matted, long and ostentatious,*
> *but when deep inside you there is a loaded gun, how can you have God?*
>
> *5.*
>
> *Inside this clay jug there are canyons and pine mountains, and the maker of canyons and pine*

*mountains!*
*All seven oceans are inside, and hundreds and millions of stars.*
*The acid that tests gold is here, and the one who judges jewels.*
*And the music from the strings no one touches, and the source of all water.*

*If you want the truth, I will tell you the truth:*
*Friend, listen: the God whom I love is inside.*

*9.*

*Knowing nothing shuts the iron gates; the new love opens them.*

*The sound of the gates opening wakens the beautiful woman asleep.*

*Kabir says: Fantastic! Don't let a chance like this go by!*

---

### Joe says

Picked this up at random at a used book store that specializes in the occult and other such flim-flammery following my policy of occasionally doing this.

Kabir insists on a present, erotic divinity. We're, like, always getting f*cked by God (in the good way). This is a challenging conception of things, and the book is best when moving between this vital recognition and acknowledging the difficulty of following the path that such a recognition outlines--invitation and warning.

Bly's translation, I suspect, is a little too functional/lucid. It's not that it's too "plain" but that there's no music to it--it's rhythmically flat. It'd be interesting to read a translation of this that's more idiomatic and draws on a fuller range of language.

Either way, at 44 poems it's a quick read and an engaging (though as I understand it, idiosyncratic) entry point to Sufi thought. And, you know, reading Rumi is beat.

---

### Jan says

What is it about ecstatic poetry by poets like Rumi that invites "translation" by people with no knowledge of the language in which the poetry was actually written? Why would a poet, who as a poet must be acutely aware of the need for precision in language, think that paraphrasing a translation of a translation of someone else's poem produces something worthy of publication? I've seen this done by at least three different poets, all quite serious about their efforts. I guess this is the best one so far, but still, I find it annoying.

Robert Bly offers his "versions" of poems by Kabir, a 14th-century Sufi mystic and poet of Benares, India. These "versions" are paraphrases of a Victorian English translation of a Bengali translation of poems written down at least a century after their composition, preserved by an oral tradition. The best part of this book is the afterward by John Stratton Hawley in which he discusses the difficulty of identifying Kabir's voice at all

when the different extant written collections of his orally preserved compositions may not even contain more than one shared poem!

How does the poetry sound? Well, it sounds like Robert Bly (of *Iron John* fame) speaking in the voice of his idea of a 14th-century Indian mystic, and that's about what it is. It's like a Disneyland castle of spiritual insight. You know what, though? I've always had a soft spot for Robert Bly, and I kind of liked his Kabir. So sue me. At least this book, between its forward by Bly himself and the more scholarly afterward, is more or less honest about its origins and limitations. That's in contrast to the last "translation" of Rumi I read, which was practically a hoax on a gullible public hungry for spirituality.

---

### Mejix says

Poem 19 people. Effing poem 19.

---

### Srishtee says

A westernized interpretation, misidentified as a translation, that does little justice to the language of the original thinker.

---

### Jennifer says

*Knowing nothing shuts the iron gates; the new love opens them*

*The sound of the gates opening wakes the beautiful woman asleep.*

*Kabir says: Fantastic! Don't let a chance like this go by!*

---

### Robert Sheppard says

WORLD LITERATURE CLASSICS FROM MUGHAL DYNASTY INDIA---GHALIB--MASTER OF THE LOVE GHAZAL, SAUDA--MASTER SATIRIST, KABIR--POET SAINT OF RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE, MIR TAQI MIR, BANARASIDAS, BABUR, JAHANGIR AND AKBAR THE GREAT---FROM THE WORLD LITERATURE FORUM RECOMMENDED CLASSICS AND MASTERPIECES SERIES VIA GOODREADS—-ROBERT SHEPPARD, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

THE MUGHAL EMPIRE IN INDIA (1526-1857)

In the 1500's the Mughals under their leader Babur made their way into India, expanding under Akbar the Great, and built one of the most remarkable empires in history before being suceeded by the rule of the British Empire. They extended their sway over the greater part of South Asia bringing an era of peace and stability that allowed the economy and society to flourish. The Mughal Empire ruled over 150 million people at a time when Britain had fewer than 10 million, France less than 20 and even the comparable Ottoman Empire less than 30 million. They stimulated a wide range of cultural interactions and transformations that were to enrich the Indian world in remarkable ways,, from miniature painting, to calligraphy and the growth of the Urdu language and script to the splendor of the Taj Mahal, one of the wonders of world architecture. Equally important if less well appreciated in the West is the magnificent literature the Mughals produced and patronized, first in the imperial language of the court, Persian, and from the early eighteenth century, in Urdu, a north Indian language closely related to Hindi but using the Mughal Persian script and adding a large vocabulary of loan-words and cultural allusions, genres and aesthetics from Persian and Muslim Arabic. Writers of global significance from this period include such renown figues as Ghalib, master of the ghazal love poem, Sauda the great prose satirist, the Jain writer Banarasidas, Mir Taqi Mir, the great poet of religious tolerance Kabir, and even the journals and lagacies of the Mughal Emperors themselves, such as Babur, Jahangir and Akbar the Great.

Though geographically the sub-continent of India is somewhat isolated from its Eurasian surroundings by the barrier of the Himalayas, it has nonetheless remained a significant "crossroads of the world" in which movements of peoples and cultures have brought great cross-fertilization from the time of the arrival of the Vedic Aryans onward to include the movements of Greeks and Persians, Kushans and Scythians, Buddhist monks from China and Japan, Mongols and Timurids, Muslims, the Portugese, French and the global British Empire. As such it has also been renown as a cradle of spirituality, the origin of Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Sikh and other religions, as well as bearing the influence of other religious traditions such as Christianity and Islam.

The Moghal Empire was one of the three Muslim empires which arose following the Mongol destruction of the Abbasid Caliphate in the 13th century, which were often referred to as the "Gunpowder Empires" as part of their power and consolidation arose from the use of firearms and cannon, as exemplified in the Ottoman Janissary Corps. Thus the Ottoman Empire (1300-1922), the Safavid Persian Empire (1501-1736)which institutionalized the Shi'a religion in Iran, and the Mughal Empire (1526-1857) bridged the era from the fall of the Caliphate to the Mongols to the rise of global Western Imperialism. At the early stages they dwarfed the European states and their relative demise was anything but a foregone conclusion, the Ottomans almost taking Vienna; if America had not been discovered global history might have turned out quite otherwise.

As the West ascended to supremacy reinforced by the Renaissance, Reformation, Scientific Revolution and Industrial Revolution their empires gradually dismembered and absorbed their relatively stagnant Islamic rivals, particularly the modernizing Russian Empire (1547-1917) to the north and the economically, scientifically and culturally dynamic British Empire (1497-1970), which was destined to supplant all three as the largest and most powerful empire in all of world history, ruling over more than one-fourth of all global land area and human population. Nonetheless, for centuries the three Islamic empires constructively competed and also learned from each other cultually, sharing the Arabic language,Islamic religion and sharia law in the religious domain, as well as the Persian language for administration, diplomacy and culture in the royal courts, forming an impressive era of Islamic civilization.

The mission of the World Literature Forum is to introduce to readers coming from their own national literary traditions such as the West, to the great writers of all the world's literary traditions whose contribution and

influence beyond their own borders have had an influence on the formation of our emerging World Literature in our age of globalization, unprecedented travel and interaction of cultures including the instantaneous global communications of the Age of the Internet and the cross-border e-Book. The contributions of India and the Muslim world including those of the Mughal Dynasty in India form a rich part of this common heritage of mankind.

## KABIR, RENOWN POET OF RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE AND SPIRITUALITY

An early figure in the mixing of the Vedic and Muslim traditions was that of the poet Kabir (1440-1518) born as an illegitimate child of a Brahmin mother in Varanasi who was raised by a Muslim family, then became a desciple of the Vaisnava Saint Ramananda. As such he turned away from the intolerance of sectarian religion on all sides and strove for the unification of all spiritual traditions in an ecumenical mysticism, Muslim, Sufi, Hindu, Sikh and Buddhist, seeking after a simple "oneness" with God in all manifestations. He was also a staunch champion of the poor and oppressed and a devoted opponent of social injustice in all forms. Persecuted at times by all sides in the collision of faiths, Kabir's legend describes his victory in trials by a Sultan, a Brahmin, a Qazi, a merchant and god, and he became the subject of folk legends that still inspire tolerance in sectarian strife between Muslims and Hindus down to the present.

His greatest work is the "Bijak" (the "Seedling"), an idea of the fundamental oneness of man, and the oneness of man and God. He often advocated leaving aside the Qur'an and Vedas and simply following the Sahaja path, or the Simple/Natural Way to Oneness in God. He believed in the Vedantic concept of atman, but unlike earlier orthodox Vedantins, he spurned the Hindu societal caste system and murti-pujan (idol worship), showing clear belief in both bhakti and Sufi ideas. The major part of Kabir's work was collected as a bhagat by the fifth Sikh guru, Guru Arjan Dev, and incorporated into the Sikh scripture, "Guru Granth Sahib." An example of his poetry showing openess and tolerance is "Saints, I See the World is Mad:"

### Saints, I See the World Is Mad

Saints, I see the world is mad.
If I tell the truth they rush to beat me,
If I lie they trust me.
I've seen the pious Hindus, rule-followers,
early morning bath-takers---
killing souls, they worship rocks.
They know nothing.
I've seen plenty of Muslim teachers, holy men
reading their holy books
and teaching their pupils techniques.
They know just as much.
And posturing yogis, hypocrites,

hearts crammed with pride,
praying to brass, to stones, reeling
with pride in their pilgrimage,
fixing their caps and their prayer-beads,
painting their brow-marks and arm-marks,
braying their hymns and their couplets,
reeling. The never heard of soul.
The Hindu says Ram is the Beloved,
The Turk says Rahim.
Then they kill each other.
No one knows the secret.
They buzz their mantras from house to house,
puffed with pride.
The pupils drown along with their gurus.
In the end they're sorry.
Kabir says, listen saints:
They're all deluded!
Whatever I say, nobody gets it.
It's too simple.

## THE MUGHAL EMPERORS AS AUTHORS---BABUR, AKBAR THE GREAT AND JAHANGIR

### BABUR

The first Moghul Emperor, Babur (1483-1530) laid the foundations of the later empire by leading his army from the steppes and highlands of Samarkand and Afghanistan down into the plains of India. In addition to being a conqueror he was also a keen writer, and his autobiography, the "Baburnama" or "Memoirs of Babur" has been compared to the "Meditations" of Marcus Aurelius and the "Confessions" of Augustine and Rousseau, for its uncommon candor in the presentation of self. It is sometimes regarded as the first autobiography in the entire Muslim world, establishing the genre. His personality emerges from such small details as his correcting the spelling errors in the letters of his son and successor as Emperor, Humayun, and his catalogue of his likes and dislikes. He liked gardens with flowing water; he disliked India. Having conquered it, he writes of India: "It is a strange country. Compared to ours, it is another world, this unpleasant and inharmonious India." He did not stay long after the conquest but returned to the highlands; but his sons and successors did, making the Mughal Dynasty.

### AKBAR THE GREAT---EMPEROR OF RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE AND REASON

Akbar the Great (1542-16050 was great in more ways than one, being not only a conquering general who extended the Mughal Empire southwards to take in nearly all of India, but also like Kabir a seeker after

tolerance, peaceful coexistence and unity within the Empire across the divide of Hindu-Muslim sectarianism. He abolished the Muslim tax on other religious communities and encouraged intermarriage between Muslim and Hindu princes and princesses and royal courts. He was fond of literature, and created a library of over 24,000 volumes written in Sanskrit, Hindustani, Persian, Greek, Latin, Arabic and Kashmiri, staffed by many scholars, translators, artists, calligraphers, scribes, bookbinders and readers. Holy men of many faiths, poets, architects and artisans adorned his court from all over the world for study and discussion. He encouraged open and free debate and intercourse at the royal court between all the religions, even including atheists, first shifting his personal belief from orthodox Islam to the mystic Muslim interpretations of the Sufis, then reacting against the too prominent bigotry within his own Muslim faith to found a short-lived unsuccessful rationalist-syncretistic religion to unite all religions within India, termed Din-i-Ilahi, or Universal Peace. Needless to say, such efforts at religious tolerance and rationalism outraged fundamentalists within his own Muslim and other faiths, and ultimately his efforts, like those of Akhnaton in Egypt to found a more rationalist monotheism, were defeated by the reactionary clerics who after his death termed his policies heresy and returned to the traditions of orthodoxy and intolerance.

## JAHANGIR

Jahangir, son of Akbar the Great and a Rajasthani Princess, was fluent in Hindi, though he composed his "Autobiography" in the court Persian of the royal family. While not so penetrating as that of Babur, it is strikingly modern in revealing his personality in modern dilemmas such as his struggle with substance abuse---addiction to wine and opium, his search for spirituality from both Hindu and Muslim sources, and his almost childlike fascination with the natural world, including a passion for exotic things such as American Turkeys, pineapples, and African zebras.

## SAUDA----THE GREAT MUGHAL SATIRIST

Sauda is the penname of Mirza Muhammad Rafi (1713-1781) one of the greates prose writers, poets and satirists of the Urdu language. Urdu and Hindi, those peculiar twin languages of the Indian subcontinent are essentially the same language, yet divided into two by the usage of two different scripts for writing, Persian and Devangari, and the differing religions and cultures of their respective communities, being largely though not exclusively, Muslim and Hindu respectively. Urdu is also distinguished by the heavy influence of court Persian and of Arabic from the mosque. While Urdu literary culture was generally conservative, Sauda was anything but tradition-bound. With fierce independence of mind and an acid tongue, little around him escaped his wit and caustic laceration, including the Mughal Emperor himself. The Emperor fancied himself a good poet and often summoned literary men to hear him recite his works. Being thus called into the presence of the emperor, he remarked that his Royal Highness had composed a great many poems, asking him:

"How many poems do you compose a day?"

"Three or four couplets a day, if I am inspired....." answered the Emperor, then adding a boast, "".....I can even compose four whole poems sitting in the bathroom!"

"They smell like it," replied Sauda.

Escerpt from Sauda's Satires---"How to Earn a Living in Hindustan"

"Better to keep silent than try to answer such a question, for even the tongues of angels cannot do justice to the answer. There are many professions which you could adopt, but let us see what difficulties will beset you in each of them these days. You could buy a horse and offer yourself in service in some noble's army. But never in this world will you see your pay, and you will rarely have both a sword and a shield by you, for you must pawn one or the other each day to buy fodder for your horse; and unless the moneylender is kind to you, you or your wife must go hungry, for you will not get enough to feed you both. You could minister to the needs of the faithful in a mosque, but you would find asses tethered there and men young and old sitting there idle and unwilling to be disturbed. Let the muezzin give the call to prayer and they will stop his mouth, for no one cares for Islam these days.....You could become a courtier of some great man, but your life would not be worth living. If he does not feel like sleeping at night, you too must wake with him, though you are ready to drop, and until he feels inclined to dine, you may not, though you are faint with hunger and your belly is rumbling. Or you could become his physician; but if you did, your life would be passed in constant apprehension, for should the Nabob sneeze, he will glare at you as though you ought to have given him a sword and buckler to keep off the cold wind. You will live through torture as you watch him feed. He will stuff himself with sweet melon and cream and then fish, and then cow's tongue, and with it all fancy breads of all kinds; and if at any stage he feels the slightest pain in his stomach, then you, ignorant fool are to blame, though you were Bu Ali Sina himself.....Here there is nothing but the struggle to live; there, nothing but the tumult of the Judgment Day."

BANARASIDAS----JAIN MASTER OF AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Banarasidas was a merchant member of the Jain religious community in the mid-1600's who left behind in his "Half a Tale" one of the remarkable autobiographies of World Literature. It tells of his sorrow as a young man at the death of Emperor Akbar the Great in 1605, and the main occupations of his life, the quest for merchant success and the greater quest for spiritual fulfillment. It is not a mere succession of years, as the autobiography of Babur tends to be, but an inner dialogue of spiritual questioning and search. In Banarasidas, the writer conveys a more vivid sense of himself as self in his world than in the case of Jahangir. As a merchant, the archetypal "self made man," he explores the unique consciousness of such a process of "self-making." If the transition to Modernity turns on new forms of self-awareness, then Banarasidas begins this process in South Asia even as writers such as Montaigne began it in Europe.

MIR TAQI MIR & GHALIB, MASTERS OF THE URDU GHAZAL AND LOVE POETRY

The Ghazal love poem, or "Conversation with the Beloved" is one of the great traditions in Urdu and Indian tradition, being sung at weddings and celebrations as a living tradition. Mir Muhammad Taqi Mir (1723-1810) along with Ghalib (1797-1869) were two of the grandmasters of the genre, living in the days of the final decline and dismemberment of the Mughal Empire and the rise of the British Raj. Mir's love poems became classics of the genre, enjoyed by both Hindus and Muslims for their supple grace and lyrical expressiveness. He also left behind an autobiography, written in Persian, which relates his obsessions, his

private life with his father, an eccentric Sufi mystic, and the misery of public life in Dehli where the Emperor was reduced to an impotent figurehead hardly even in command of one city, his own capital. Ghalib was one of the greatest poets in two languages, Urdu and Persian, and was, like Byron, an aristocratic rebel, religious sceptic and outsider who was difficult for either his friends or enemies to understand or deal with. Also like Byron, Ghalib made himself a leading figure in his poems, assuming the stature of a kind of "Byronic Hero." Ghazals usually ended with some personal reference to the poet, but Ghalib built this tradition up to Byronic proportions, fashioning his persona into a witty, sophisticated and melancholy commentator on his own life and the crumbling and corrupt world of society and the Mughal court around him. Though he wrote for the Emperor and the court, Ghalib was never a sychophant, and like Sauda, did not hesitate to express his dislike for the Emperor's own poetry and the claims of Muslim orthodoxy. Interrogated by the British during the 1857 Mutiny, he was asked by the British commander: "Are you a Muslim?" He curtly replied: "Half a Muslim: I drink wine but I don't eat pork." Ghalib is now considered as the greatest poet of the Urdu ghazal of any period.

SPIRITUS MUNDI AND ISLAMIC LITERATURE

My own work, Spiritus Mundi the contemporary and futurist epic, is also influenced by Islamic and Sufi literary traditions. It features one major character, Mohammad ala Rushdie who is a Sufi novice in the Mevlevi order who is also a modern social activists in the Campaign for a United Nations Parliamentary Assembly for global democracy. He in the course of the novel is taken hostage by terrorists and meets the Supreme Leader of Iran, urging him to "Open the Gates of Ijtihad," or reinvigorate Islamic tradition with creative reasoning and openness rather than binding it to blind precedent and unthinking tradition--much in the tradition of Kabir and Akbar the Great. Another historical chapter, "Neptune's Fury" features the sojourn of Admiral Sir George Rose Sartorius in the Maldive Islands where he encounters the "Sultan of the Sea of Stories" and during which he must, like the Schehereqade of the One Thousand and One Nights, tell a story each day to avoid execution by the Sultan.

World Literature Forum invites you to check out the great writers of World Literature from the Mughal Age in India, and also the contemporary epic novel Spiritus Mundi, by Robert Sheppard. For a fuller discussion of the concept of World Literature you are invited to look into the extended discussion in the new book Spiritus Mundi, by Robert Sheppard, one of the principal themes of which is the emergence and evolution of World Literature:

For Discussions on World Literature and n Literary Criticism in Spiritus Mundi:
http://worldliteratureandliterarycrit...

Robert Sheppard

Editor-in-Chief
World Literature Forum
Author, Spiritus Mundi Novel
Author’s Blog: http://robertalexandersheppard.wordpr...
Spiritus Mundi on Goodreads:
http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/17...

Spiritus Mundi on Amazon, Book I: http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00CIGJFGO
Spiritus Mundi, Book II: The Romance http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00CGM8BZG



---

### Mark Gonzalez says

Hiss poems are very androgynous yet full of passion. Aside from J. Rumi, he is my other favorite sufi poet.

---

### Michael Graber says

Kabir is an ecstatic poet whose goal was to write the heart of experience. These translation free his words from the "hopeless" Victorian of Tagore and Underhill. This edition sets the stage with compelling prose, a feast of poems, then a longer, historic essay to end.

Given that the world has produced so few credible Wisdom poets, Kabir is worth every sublime second one spends in this intricate and inspired world.

---