CHAPTER –I

ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE NIRGUN BHAKTI THOUGHT

The term ‘Nirgun’ means devoid of all qualities or properties and ‘Nirgun Bhakti’ denotes devotion to the Nirgun God. It emphasises mainly on the impersonal concept of God, the monotheistic view of the ultimate Reality and the importance of Jnana (Knowledge). To establish the origin of Nirgun bhakti in India, it is necessary to find out the roots of its essential characteristic viz. monotheism which ultimately led to the emergence of Nirgun bhakti.

NIRGUN BHAKTI IN THE VEDAS (Circa 2000-600 B.C.)

The idea of monotheism can be traced as far back as the Vedic period. Vedas are the oldest record of Indian civilization. They are reckoned as the work of seers (rishis) and are an expression of their endeavour to arrive at an understanding of God as one. But monotheism in Vedas does not rest on the denial of other gods for any one personal God. It was the outcome of the identification of all lesser gods with the idea of one impersonal God. The hymns of Rigveda (The earliest among the four Vedas) are dedicated to a number of gods, most of them appear as personifications of the power of nature, such as Agni, Varuna etc. but there are many hymns in Rigveda, in which the plurality of Vedic gods is reduced to one through the philosophic abstraction and impersonalisation of God and the understanding of Him as the one cosmic Reality. A thoughtful negation of the plurality of gods can be seen in one of the earlier hymns, which asserts the unity of
many gods viz. Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Agni etc. and considers them all as one in these words:

इन्द्र मित्र वरुणमन्निमातस्यो दिव्यां सूर्यां गरुत्मन्।
एक सत्त्वप्रा वर्द्धिता वदन्यापि यम मातारिश्वान्मया॥

(Rigvedas – Mandala-I, Adhyay-164, Sutka-46)²

Similarly, monotheism is also evident in some of the hymns of Samveda. For instance, in the following hymn it is stated that the God, who is the Lord of heaven is one and He is the destination of all pathways:

समेत विश्व ओऽसा पाति दिवो य एक इन्द्रसत्ततिर्ज्ञनानाम।
स दूधायो नूतनालविगीण्यं वर्त्तिन्येन वाहुर एक इत्॥

(Samveda-Samhita-372 – 376, Jagati)³

NIRGUN BHAKTI IN THE UPANISHADS (600 B.C.-A.D.300)

In these two aforementioned hymns, the idea of an impersonal God is indicated, though it was developed more fully in the Upanishads which are known as the Jnana-Kanda (The section pertaining to knowledge) of the Vedas. The Vedic speculations about one God reached their culmination in the Upanishads, resulting in a more positive explanation of the oneness of ultimate Reality in terms of the ‘Brahman’ and the ‘Atman’. Brahman serves as the focal point in Upanishadic thought. It is explained as an eternal identity and the source of all that exists, i.e. as the whole of reality and as the very essence of things. As stated in the Katha-Upanishad:

‘There is that ancient tree whose roots grow upward and whose branches grow downwards—that indeed is called the bright, that is called Brahman, that alone is called the immortal. All worlds are contained in it and no one goes beyond, This is that’.

(Katha-Upanishad-Adhyay-2, Valii-6, Verse-1)⁴
Brahman is described in the Upanishads as undefinable which can not be seen and has not any personal form:

“That which cannot be seen, nor seized, which has no family and no caste, no eyes nor ears, no hands nor feet, the eternal, the omnipresent (all pervading), infinitesimal, that which is imperishable, that it is which the wise regard as the source of all beings”

(Mundaka Upanishad-Khanda-I, Verse-6)

In the Katha Upanishad it is said about Brahman that He is imagined by the heart, by wisdom and by the mind.

The word Atman originally meant “breath” “soul”, “self”. An important development which marks the Upanishads is the total identification of the Atman with the Brahman. Both are used as a proper name to denote the same cosmic force. 14th Khanda of III chapter of Chhandogya Upanishad begins with the words:

“All this is Brahman and after a description of the Atman it ends with the statement that Brahman and Atman are one”.

The emergence of the above notions about the Brahman or the Atman represent a fully developed concept of one God. His Nirgun character is also clearly evident in the Upanishads:

“He is the one God, hidden in all beings, all pervading, the self within all beings, watching over all works, dwelling in all beings, the witness, the perceiver, the only one, free from qualities”.

(Svetasvatara Upanishad-A-6, V.-11)

In this way, the genesis of Nirgun bhakti can be traced as far back as the emergence of the concept of the Brahman and its spirit is evident in the Upanishads.
NIRGUN BHAKTI IN THE BHAGAVAD GITA (C. 400-200 B.C.)

_Bhagavad Gita_ is a Vaishnava text and whenever it is discussed in connection with _bhakti_ the presence of an impersonal and _Nirgun_ view of God theirin is generally ignored and the position of the personality of Krishna, the God of the Vaishnavas, in the narrative is emphasized more to prove it as the first Hindu scripture with a well defined idea and image of God as personality.

The understanding of the God of _Gita_ on these lines has been possible mainly on account of two factors; one the position of Krishna in it as God incarnate; and two, its narrative form, that of a dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna. Arjuna in doubt and despair, seeks guidance and solace from Krishna who addresses him directly. The human situation represented in Arjuna, and the utterances of Krishna as God, do project a very personal image of the deity.

But inspite of Krishna being the central figure in the _Gita_, its ultimate description of God revolves definitely on His impersonal and unmanifest nature. Krishna states at one place ‘the foolish regard me as the unmanifest, not knowing my supreme state’:

अत्यक्ष्य व्यक्तिमापनं मनः पश्चात् भगवद्भवः।
परं भावमज्ञानं तोऽभाववयस्मुर्तं।

_(Bhagavad Gita-Adhyay-7, Sloka-24)_

and this deluded world knows me not, the unborn, the immutable:

नाम प्रकाश: स्वरूप: योगमायासमावृतः।
मूर्खोऽव नाभिज्ञानाति लोको भाववयस्मुर्तं।

_(Bh. Gita-A.-7, S.-25)_
Besides this, in chapter 13th of *Gita*, the nature of *Brahman* is described as *Anadi*-eternal and *Nirgun*-free from all qualities:

अनादिव्युत्तरप्रागातिमात्मायम्।
शरीरस्योषधि कौन्तेय न करोति न लिप्यते॥

(Bh. Gita-13, S-31)

Therefore, in *Bhagavad Gita*, it is the defined personality of Krishna which is raised to the status of the impersonal *Brahman*. Krishna, the manifest describes highest state as the unmanifest (*avyakta*). Finally, it is the devotion to the unmanifest and the impersonal God that has been advocated in the *Gita*.

In *Gita bhakti* and *jnana* stand inter-woven. Both the *bhakta* and *jnani* are described in similar terms and it is the *jnani bhakta* who is wise and has the true knowledge of the self, is described by Krishna as the highest amongst *bhaktas* and the one dearest to him. It is argued that when the ignorance is destroyed by *jnana*, the new knowledge, like the Sun, reveals the Supreme.

In this way, *Gita*’s description of the aforesaid state finally attained through *bhakti* and *jnana* leaves very little room for the idea of a personal God.

**NIRGUN BHAKTI IN THE PURANAS (C.A.D. 300-1200)**

The *Puranas* were originally bardic composition and were recast in the Kushana and Gupta period. *Puranic* literature being the exponent of *bhakti*, deals elaborately on the subject and all the relevant aspects of *bhakti* are dealt with and are presented concretely in them. Besides this, a very important fact is that both the *Saguna* (Furnished with attributes, qualities or properties) and *Nirgun* ideologies are expounded in some of these *Puranas*.
For instance, in the *Markendya Purana* it is especially stated that Narayana has two forms—Nirgun and Saguna. Nirgun, the aim of Yogis, is known as Vasudeva. Saguna has three forms. His form where the *tamas* quality predominates is Sesa. The *sattva* quality appears in the form of incarnations by which the world is maintained and *dharma* founded. *Rajas* predominates in his *sarp-sayya* form. The universe is created by it:

\[
\text{स देवो भगवान सर्व व्याप्य नानायणो विकु}।
\text{चुरा सत्यतः प्रवान नमुणी निर्मितस्था}।
\text{एका मूर्तिविदेश्या शुल्का पश्चयन्ने ता सुधा}।
\text{व्यालामलोपदेशी निखा सा योगिनां पर}।
\text{दूरस्था चालिकास्था च विजेत्या सा युक्तिणिगा।}
\text{वासुदेवब्रह्माभास्तस्य निर्मितचेन दृश्यते।}
\text{सर्पस्य दिग्वरस्था न भावः कल्पनास्या।}
\text{अस्त्ये च सदा शुद्धा पुरुषसङ्कर्वियिणी॥}
\]

*(Markendya Purana-Adhyay-4, Sloka-36-47)*

Regarding the concrete (*sakara*) and the abstract (*nirakara*) forms of the Lord the *Padam Purana* says that while the *Sakara Svarupa* has the advantage of serving Him the *Nirakara* has only *Rasa*:

\[
\text{साकारे हि लुक्षनेव निराकारो न दृश्यते।}
\text{सेवारस्त्र साकारे निराकारेण वे सत।॥}
\]

*(Padam Purana-A-52, S-104)*

Thus showing that even the devotion to the formless God (*Nirakara bhakti*) has bliss (*rasa*). By worshipping the concrete form (*sakara-upasana*) a devotee naturally knows His abstract nature (*nirakara-svarupa*):

\[
\text{साकारेण निराकारो ज्ञायते स्वयमेव हि।}
\text{हरिस्मृति प्रसादेन सोमचितलतनुर्वदा॥}
\]

*(P. Purana-A-52, S-10 5)*

All these attributes of the Lord are described in great detail in the later *Puranas*, as the *Bhagavata*, with further elaborations.
The *Bhagavata Purana* is definitely a Vaishnava text deals with the incarnations of Vishnu, mainly the life and personality of Krishna is dealt with in great detail. *Bhakti* of the *Bhagavata Purana* also is not confined to its *Saguna* form (as devotion to a personal deity) only, but both the *Saguna* and *Nirgun* traditions are represented simultaneously in it through the personality of Krishna. The personal deity, Krishna is interpreted throughout as the *Nirgun Brahman* – and the *Nirgun Brahman*, as Krishna:

\[\text{तृणा नि: श्रेयसाधाय व्यक्तिभंगवतो नुष।} \\
\text{अव्यज्ञप्रधायवर्य निर्गुणस्य गुणाल्मन।}\\
\]

\[(\text{Bhagavata Purana-Skandha-X, A.-29, S.-14})^{18}\]

In the *Bhagavata Purana*, *Nirgun bhakti* is explained and sustained with the help of the relevant principles of *Samkhya Vedanta* and *Yoga*\(^{19}\) (Three among the six classical systems of the Hindu Philosophy). In the III Book of the *Purana* in answer to Devahuti’s question about the distinctive features of *Bhaktiyoga*, Kapila enumerates three kinds of *bhakti* viz. *tamasika*, *rajasika* and *sattvika*, caused by the three *gunas* or attributes of the people. Distinct from these three he elaborates separately yet another category, i.e. *Nirgun bhakti*.\(^{20}\) Whereas the first three can be related with various forms of belief in a personal deity, the fourth can be understood only in relation with the idea of an impersonal God:

\[\text{लक्षणं भक्तियोगस्य निर्गुणस्य बुद्धादित्।} \\
\text{अहैतुक्यव्यवहिता या भक्तिः पुरुषोत्तमेऽ॥}\\
\]

\[(\text{Bh. Purana-SK.-III, A-29, S-12})^{21}\]

In the *Bhagavata Purana*, *bhakti* is not represented as a separate spiritual discipline excluding *jnana* and the idea of an
impersonal God. On the contrary, its Nirgun category is related to jnana and is directed towards the Nirgun Brahman. It is stated that one should contemplate on the impersonal Atman with bhakti as well as jnana and bhakti is described at one place as a characteristic feature of the knowledge of the Nirgun Brahman.

NIRGUN BHAKTI IN THE SHANDILYA BHAKTI SUTRA

_Bhakti Sutras_ of Shandilya and Narada are the two earliest known works concerned specifically with the bhakti theme itself. Here bhakti is not just one part of some wider philosophical or religious systematization, but is the very object of the whole enquiry.

As far as Nirgun bhakti is concerned, Shandilya’s approach is more in keeping with it as well as the classical systems of Samkhya and Vedanta. He draws his inspiration from the Upanishads and interpretes bhakti in both Upanishadic and Vedantic terms. Shandilya’s concept of God is impersonal in character. He makes it a point to emphasize that his bhakti should not be confused with deva-bhakti or devotion to a personal deity:

देवभक्तिरितर्सिन्न साहचयाति
(Shandilya Bhakti Sutra - 18)

Besides this, he does not attach very great importance to the ritualistic modes of bhakti. Important components of Saguna bhakti or the Vaishnava forms of bhakti, like Sravana (Listening to the name of the deity and his deeds) and Kirtana (Singing hymns in praise of the deity) are described by him as secondary forms of bhakti and according to him, such observances can be of
value only if they lead on to the primary and essential form of *bhakti* which must be felt for the self or Atman:

\[\text{भक्त्या भजनोपसंधाराय गौण्या पराये तद्भवत्} \]

\[\text{(Sh. Bh. S.-56)}^{25}\]

\[\text{रागार्थं प्रक्षीरतिसाहचर्यांच्छेदरेखाम्} \]

\[\text{(Sh. Bh. S.- 57)}^{26}\]

In this way, the primary *bhakti* is the end and secondary is the means to it. To attain the former the secondary is adopted.

Shandilya does not represent *bhakti* as a path separate or opposed to *jnana*. In the relative context of *jnana*, *karma*, *yoga* and *bhakti*, Shandilya tries to establish a definite relationship between *jnana* for *bhakti*, the final liberation comes only through the attainment of the latter. Bondage, according to Shandilya, is due to the want of devotion and not that of *jnana*\(^{27}\). When *bhakti* appears it destroys the existing knowledge and leads to new knowledge\(^{28}\). Shandilya’s *bhakti* is thus the experience of this renewed knowledge which is different from knowledge attained through intellect alone.

Therefore, there is no indication in Shandilya’s *Sutra* to suggest that *bhakti* was ever taken in it as the limited sense of belief in a personal God.

**NIRGUN BHAKTI OF SHANKARACHARYA**

In the context of *Nirgun bhakti* Shankaracharya (A.D. 788-820) occupies a very unique place in the history of India. He represented pure *Upanishadic / Vedantic* tradition and is known
for his academic exposition of the *Advaita Vedanta* and his advocacy of *jnana*.

Shankaracharya believed in the existence of an eternal Reality and emphasised upon the oneness of God that is differently understood by various philosophical controversialists in their several systems of philosophy, but which is indeed the one and offered a monistic interpretation of the philosophy of *Vedanta*²⁹ through his commentary on the *Vedanta Sutra* (Also known as *Brahmasutra*) of Badarayana which had served its formal base. His commentaries on the various *Upnishads* and *Bhagavad Gita*, which are written on the same lines, gave additional strength to his thought system which in its totality is known as the *Advaita Vedanta* (Or monistic interpretation of *Vedanta*). In the words of S. Radhakrishnan the *Advaita Vedanta* of Shankaracharya, “Stands forth complete, needing neither a before nor an after”³⁰.

Shankara’s concept of *Brahman* is *Nirgun*. According to him, the term ‘*sat*’ (existence) cannot be applied in case of *Brahman* since it is without *jati* (Generic attribute). Since it (*Brahman*) is without qualities we cannot express it through any term of qualifications (or with any qualifying epithets). It being without actions cannot be qualified with any terms denoting action:


\[
\text{न तु ब्रह्म जातिमद् अतो न सवादिशब्दवाच्यं}
\]

\[
\text{न असि गुणवद् येन गुणशब्देन उच्येत निरुणित्वाद}
\]

\[
\text{न असि क्रियाशब्दवाच्यं निदिक्षित्यावात्।}
\]

*(Bh. Gita- A-13, S-12)*³¹
At another place he says that, “Brahman has no genus, or qualities, does not act, and is related to nothing else”\(^32\).

Shankara is described as an exponent of the path of \textit{jnana}. But his \textit{jnana} does not exclude \textit{bhakti}, in fact he speaks of \textit{bhakti} in conjunction with \textit{jnana}. And by \textit{jnana}, he means the knowledge gained through the inner spiritual experience and not the knowledge acquired by intellectual endeavour. The highest knowledge according to him, is the experience of the \textit{Brahman} (\textit{Brahmanubhava}) which transcends all empirical knowledge\(^33\). He defines \textit{bhakti} as an enquiry and a search after the real form of one’s own self (\textit{svasvarupa})\(^34\). He regards \textit{bhakti} as a means as well as an end in itself. The highest form of \textit{bhakti} according to him is \textit{Jnana-Nishtha} or the state of abiding in the knowledge of the self\(^35\). In this form of \textit{bhakti}, there is no contradiction between \textit{bhakti} and \textit{jnana} and the two are identified with each other.

In this way, Shankara does not recommend the path of \textit{jnana} as opposed to \textit{bhakti} nor does he uphold \textit{jnana} in the sense of scholastic learning. \textit{Bhakti} and \textit{jnana} stands in close conjunction in Shankara. If he explains the highest form of knowledge as \textit{Brahmanubava}, the highest form of \textit{bhakti} is defined by him as \textit{Jnana-Nishta}. Thus, Shankara’s \textit{bhakti} falls in the category of \textit{Nirgun bhakti}.

\textbf{NIRUGNA BHAKTI IN THE NATH PANTH}

The Nath-Panth, which is also known as the “\textit{Yogi-Sampradaya}” because of the importance of \textit{Yoga} in it, was one of the most popular ascetic movements of the medieval period. In its
origin it was essentially a Northern movement, but was extended in different parts of the country from the 11\textsuperscript{th} to 15\textsuperscript{th} centuries.

The Nath-Panthis recognize Gorakshanath, more popularly known as Gorakhanath as the founder of their sect. The most authoritative scriptural text of the sect, like the \textit{Siddha Siddhanta Paddhati}, \textit{Goraksha Siddhanta Sangraha} and the \textit{Hatha-Yoga Pradipika}, are attributed to him.

Gorakhanath and his \textit{Panth} attached no importance to intellectual philosophical explanations of the \textit{Brahman}. The philosophical views of Gorakhanath relate to two fundamental principles only viz. that of the monistic explanation of the ultimate Reality and the \textit{Nirgun} nature of the \textit{Brahman}. In his concept of the \textit{Nirgun Brahman}, we find a kind of inflexibility. For instance, according to him, neither Brahma, nor Vishnu, nor Siva could be equated with the \textit{Brahman}, the \textit{Brahman} could not be put at par with any other entity for it reveals itself as a Self luminous Reality\textsuperscript{36}.

In this way Gorakhanatha strictly recognize the nature of \textit{Brahman} as \textit{Nirgun} and his firm belief leaves no room for the idea of any personal deity.

**NIRGUN BHAKTI IN THE MEDIEVAL NIRGUN BHAKTI SCHOOLS**

The Medieval movement of the \textit{Nirgun bhakti} which found a rich expression in the 15\textsuperscript{th} and 16\textsuperscript{th} centuries has a distinct character of its own. It’s antecedents must be ascertained directly from the works of the \textit{Nirgun bhaktas}, who had advocated
devotion to the *Nirgun Brahman*. Philosophical principles of the classical *Vedanta* had reached to the common people through these *bhaktas* in a simple, spontaneous and non-scholastic language, since we know they were all poets and their compositions are in the vernacular languages.

Kabir (A.D. 1398-1518) was the pioneer of this movement, although his activities were more or less confined to Eastern Uttar Pradesh, the trend set by him led to a number of similar movements in different parts of the country. The nature of his reasoning, and his freedom of thought and expression make him unique amongst those who nourished the monistic tradition and its impersonal view of God. Kabir’s uniqueness lies in his rejection of certain beliefs and practices which were always accepted and sanctioned by the followers of *Nirgun* ideology despite their overall commitment to that tradition. The most striking example of this is his rejection of the caste system and the Hindu cults based on the worship of personal deities and their idols, which were so deeply entrenched in the Indian society. He persued the monotheistic ideas to their rational and without caring for the popular religious sentiments and social conventions.

Kabir views God as *Nirgun*, and in that sense as impersonal and nameless. He very often uses the name Rama for his *Nirgun Brahman*:

\[
\text{निरगुण राम निरगुण राम जयहु रे भाई,}
\]

\[
(Kabir Granthavali, Pada-49)^{37}
\]

But he uses the name Rama, only in a symbolic sense, as an epithet for the ultimate Reality which he regarded as nameless and
undefinable. The terms Brahman, Atman and Rama are often used by him in close conjunction with each other and the oneness of their meaning can hardly be questioned:

अत्म राम न चीने संबंधः, केवल राम ते राम राया।

(K.G., P.-170)38

बङ्क ओजस्त जनम गवयो, सौरं राम घट भीतरि पायो

(K.G., P.-334)39

Jnana and bhakti go hand in hand in Kabir’s thought. According to him the true awakening and enlightenment of the spirit is not possible without jnana, for God must be known and worshipped through it:

करि सनुकिष्ठ जब ग्यांन बिचारी, सनुकिष्ठ परिया अमानि मंजारी।।

(K.G., Badi Ashtpadi Ramaini)40

But when he speaks of jnana, he does not mean the knowledge derived from the Sastras. According to him, he who knows the spiritual truth through his own experience is truly a man of knowledge even if he has no scholastic learning to his credit.41

Kabir preceded Nirgun bhaktas such as Jambhoji, Guru Nanak, Dadu Dayal and others and the beginning made by him was carried further by them.

Jambhoji (A.D. 1451-1536) was a very famous saint of Nagaur, Rajasthan. His important contribution is the establishment of Bishnoi sect which especially known for its protection of forests and animals.
Jambhoji was an advocate of the *bhakti* of Nirgun Brahman. It may be added here, that when he speaks of *Nirgun Brahman* in most of his exposition on *bhakti*, he underlines the equation of Vishnu with the Supreme God and emphasised on the *bhakti* of Vishnu who according to him is *Paramatattva*.\(^{42}\) Along with Vishnu various other names like Allah, Rahman, Rama, Krishna, Sambhu, Vasudeva etc. are also used by him in the sense of God. He states at one place that *Paramataman* (God) is called by thousands names.\(^{43}\) He is eternal, immortal, unbound, unborn and indefinable.\(^{44}\)

In this way, he identified the Absolute and the various personal deities worshiped by the different religious sects, with the concept of ultimate Reality, to make it acceptable to all.

According to him the knowledge of God cannot gained by intellectual learning but it can acquired through affection for God and by His remembrance.\(^{45}\)

Guru Nanak (A.D.1469-1539) was the founder of Sikhism. His concept of the Supreme was of a universal, omnipresent all embracing, all powerful, all knowing and all merciful God. The doctrine of one God is revealed with extraordinary clarity in his sayings:

> ‘In every place is contained that Supreme Brah. The donor of all is the one, there is no second. In his asylum emancipation is obtained, what one desires, that comes to pass. In whose heart the Supreme Brah dwells, they are perfect and foremost. Their pure lustre has become manifest in the world. Nanak is a sacrifice for those who have meditated on my lord.’\(^{46}\)
According to Nanak, “He is comprehensible, endless, incalculable, independent, immortal and actionless. He has no caste, He is not born nor He die, He is Self existent, He has no fear and no doubts......He has no family, He has no illusion He is beyond the beyond, the whole Light is Thine”\textsuperscript{47}.

The knowledge of God is called by Nanak as divine knowledge which can be acquired by hearing His name.\textsuperscript{48} According to him in the realm of knowledge the light of divine knowledge is resplendent.\textsuperscript{49} He does not present knowledge as a separate path excluding bhakti according to him divine knowledge and divine love both are necessary to acquire God’s favour.\textsuperscript{50}

As like other saints Dadu Dayal (A.D.1554-1603) also worshipped the one formless Brahman and like Kabir he also gave Him the name ‘Rama’, in most of his sayings. Besides this, he also called Him, Brahman, Sain etc. Dadu’s Brahman or Rama is Nirgun, (The Absolute, the unconditioned, free from all attributes and qualities), Nirakara (Formless), Niranjan (Free from passion and strain) and beyond from all religions and sects:

\begin{quote}
पर ब्रह्म परापूरं, सो मम देव निरजन।
निराकार श्रीगल, तस्य दादू वदनं।।
(Dadudyal Granthavali, Sakhi-3)\textsuperscript{51}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
दादू अलह राम का, हूँ पश्च त न्यारा।
सहिता गुण आकार का, सो गुरु हमारा।।
(D.G., S.-46)\textsuperscript{52}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
साई इसरा सति है, निरजन निराकार।
दादू बिनसे देशता, खूटा सब आकार।।
(D.G., S.-25)\textsuperscript{53}
\end{quote}
He is immortal, who is immune from birth or death, since which is born and die is the soul not the indwelling Rama. He is the world Guru who neither dies nor comes to life in Him all things are created and destroyed:

दादू जामे मरे सुजीव हैं, रसिता राम न होइ।
जामण मरण तै रहत हो, मेरा साहिब सोइ।।

(D.G., S.-13)\(^54\)

दादू उठें न बैठें एक रस, जागै सोवै नाहि।
मरे न न जीवे जगत युर, सब उपविष्ये उसमाहि।।

(D.G., S.-14)\(^55\)

According to Dadu Dayal one can enter into Brahman or attain Brahman with the help of knowledge which can acquired by concentration listening and thinking the words of Guru.\(^56\) And along with knowledge bhakti is also necessary to acquire God’s affection.\(^57\)

In this way Dadu Dayal gives equal importance to both, bhakti and jnana in his expositions on Nirgun bhakti.

In essence, These Nirgun bhaktas shared a common ideology which contributes a part of a continuous tradition rooted in the monotheistic stream of Vedic and Uphanishadic thought. It is true that followers of each one of them (including those of Kabir) formed separate sects of their own. But broadly speaking, these sectarian formations do not detract from the basic unity of the teaching of Nirgun bhaktas. They all shared many common beliefs and represent a common movement of Nirgun bhakti of the 15\(^{th}\) and 16\(^{th}\) centuries.
Notes And References:

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3. *Hymns From The Vedas*- Abinash Chandra Bose, original Text and English Translation, Mumbai, 1966, p. 238
5. Ibid., Kh.-I, V-6, p. 28
6. Ibid., A-6, V-9, p. 22
7. Ibid., I, A-3, Kh.-14, V-1-4, p. 48
8. Ibid., II, pp. 263-64
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid., p. 347
12. Ibid., A-7, S-17, p. 203
13. Ibid., A-5, S-16-17, p. 157
14. Williams, p. 1125
17. Ibid.


20. Ibid., A-29, S-7-12, pp. 300-01

21. Ibid., S-12, p. 301

22. Ibid., A-26, S-72, p. 292

23. Ibid., A-32, S-32, p. 315


25. Ibid., -56, p. 30

26. Ibid., -57, p. 31

27. Ibid., -98, p. 58

28. Ibid., -96, p. 57

29. One among the six classical systems of Hindu philosophy viz. Samkhya, Yoga, Vaiseshika, Nyaya, Mimansa and Vedanta.


31. Srimadbhagavadgita, p. 325

32. Radhakrishnan, p. 535

33. Ibid., p. 501


35. Srimadbhagavadgita, p. 445

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38. Ibid., p. 108
39. Ibid., p. 151
40. Ibid., p. 180
43. Ibid., *Sh*-94, p. 284
44. Ibid., *Sh*-6, p. 187
45. Ibid.
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50. Ibid., p. 217
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53. Ibid., p. 219
54. Ibid., p. 218
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56. Ibid., S-22, p. 3
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