



# Sant Kabir Das Jayanti

## Why in News

Recently, **Sant Kabir Das Jayanti** was observed on **24<sup>th</sup> June, 2021** to mark the birth anniversary of **Sant Kabirdas**.

- Kabirdas Jayanti is celebrated on the **Jyeshtha Purnima tithi**, as per the [Hindu lunar calendar](#).

## Key Points

### ▪ About:

- **Sant Kabir Das** was born in the city of **Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh**. He was a **15<sup>th</sup> century mystic poet, saint and social reformer** and a proponent of the [Bhakti Movement](#).
  - Kabir's legacy is still going on through a sect known as **Panth of Kabir**, a religious community that considers him as the founder.
- **Teacher:** His early life was in a Muslim family, but he was strongly influenced by his teacher, the Hindu bhakti leader **Ramananda**.
- **Literature:** Kabir Das' writings had a great influence on the Bhakti movement and includes titles like **Kabir Granthawali, Anurag Sagar, Bijak, and Sakhi Granth**.
  - His verses are found in Sikhism's scripture [Guru Granth Sahib](#).
  - The major part of his work was collected by the fifth Sikh guru, [Guru Arjan Dev](#).
  - He was best known for his two-line couplets, known as '**Kabir Ke Dohe**'.
- **Language:** Kabir's works were written in the **Hindi language** which was easy to comprehend. He used to write in couplets to enlighten people.

### ▪ Bhakti Movement:

- **Beginning:** The movement probably **began in the Tamil region around the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> century AD** and achieved a great deal of popularity through the poems of the **Alvars (devotees of Vishnu)** and **Nayanars (devotees of Shiva)**, the Vaishnavite and Shaivite poets.
  - The **Alvars** and **Nayanars** travelled from place to place singing hymns in Tamil in praise of their gods.
  - The **Nalayira Divyaprabandham** is a composition by the **Alvars**. It is frequently described as the Tamil Veda.
- **Classification:** At a different level, historians of religion often classify bhakti traditions into two broad categories: **saguna (with attributes) and nirguna (without attributes)**.
  - **The saguna** included traditions that focused on the **worship of specific deities** such as Shiva, Vishnu and his avatars (incarnations) and forms of the goddess or Devi, all often conceptualised in anthropomorphic forms.
  - **Nirguna bhakti** on the other hand was worship of an abstract form of god.
- **Social Order:**

- This movement was **responsible for many rites and rituals associated** with the worship of God by Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs of Indian subcontinent. For example, Kirtan at a Hindu Temple, Qawaali at a Dargah (by Muslims), and singing of Gurbani at a Gurdwara.
- They were often **opposed** to the establishment and all **authoritarian monastic order**.
- They also strongly criticized all **sectarian zealotry** and **caste discrimination** in society.
- Hailing from **both high and low castes**, these poets created a formidable body of literature that firmly established itself in the popular narratives.
- All of them claimed relevance for religion in social life, in the sphere of real human aspirations and social relationships.
- Bhakti poets **emphasized surrender to god**.
- The movement's major achievement was its **abolition of idol worship**.
- **Role of Women:**
  - **Andal** was a woman **Alvar** and she saw herself as the beloved of Vishnu.
  - **Karaikkal Ammaiyar** was a devotee of Shiva and she adopted the path of extreme asceticism in order to attain her goal. Her compositions were preserved within the **Nayanar tradition**.
- **Important Personalities:**
  - **Kannada Region:** In this region, the movement began by **Basavanna** (1105-68) in the 12<sup>th</sup> century.
  - **Maharashtra:** The Bhakti movement began in the late 13<sup>th</sup> century. Its proponents were known as the **Varkaris**.
    - Among its most popular figures were **Jnanadev (1275- 96)**, **Namdev (1270-50)** and **Tukaram (1608-50)**.
  - **Assam:** **Srimanta Sankardeva** (a Vaishnava saint born in 1449 AD in Nagaon district of Assam. He started the **neo-Vaishnavite movement**).
  - **Bengal: Chaitanya** was a renowned saint and reformer of Bengal who popularised the Krishna cult.
  - **Northern India:** From the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, a large number of poets flourished who were all Bhakti figures of considerable importance.
    - While **Kabir**, **Ravi Dass** and **Guru Nanak** spoke of the formless god (nirgun bhakti), **Meerabai** (1498-1546) from Rajasthan composed and sung devotional verses in praise of Krishna.
    - **Surdas, Narasimha Mehta and Tulsidas** also made priceless contributions to the canon of Bhakti literature and enhanced its glorious legacy.

## TIMELINE

### SOME MAJOR RELIGIOUS TEACHERS IN THE SUBCONTINENT

c. 500-800 CE	Appar, Sambandar, Sundaramurti in Tamil Nadu
c. 800-900	Nammalvar, Manikkavachakar, Andal, Tondaradippodi in Tamil Nadu
c.1000-1100	Al Hujwiri, Data Ganj Bakhsh in the Punjab; Ramanujacharya in Tamil Nadu
c.1100-1200	Basavanna in Karnataka
c.1200-1300	Jnanadeva, Muktabai in Maharashtra; Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti in Rajasthan; Bahauddin Zakariyya and Fariduddin Ganj-i Shakar in the Punjab; Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki in Delhi
c.1300-1400	Lal Ded in Kashmir; Lal Shahbaz Qalandar in Sind; Nizamuddin Auliya in Delhi; Ramananda in Uttar Pradesh; Chokhamela in Maharashtra; Sharafuddin Yahya Maneri in Bihar
c.1400-1500	Kabir, Raidas, Surdas in Uttar Pradesh; Baba Guru Nanak in the Punjab; Vallabhacharya in Gujarat; Abdullah Shattari in Gwalior; Muhammad Shah Alam in Gujarat; Mir Sayyid Muhammad Gesu Daraz in Gulbarga, Shankaradeva in Assam; Tukaram in Maharashtra
c.1500-1600	Sri Chaitanya in Bengal; Mirabai in Rajasthan; Shaikh Abdul Quddus Gangohi, Malik Muhammad Jaisi, Tulsidas in Uttar Pradesh
c.1600-1700	Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi in Haryana; Miyan Mir in the Punjab

*Note: These time frames indicate the approximate period during which these teachers lived.*

**Source: PIB**

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