CONTRIBUTIONS OF KABIR DAS TO SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ASPECTS IN COMPARISON TO OTHER CONTEMPORARY BHAKTI POETS
In fact, these two have not only single sense, but later on they became analogous. Some people establish relation of 'Nirguna' with Gorakh Nath. Gorakh Nath was mainly a Yogi, who used to lay emphasis on inner devotion. Nam Deva made some progress in it. It is said that Nam Deva was the disciple of Khechar Nath, a saint of Nath cult, who established his relation with both saguna and Nirguna cults. It is clearly seen in the works of Nam Deva that language of Saguna Bhakti-padas is Braja Bhasha or traditional literary language, but the language of 'Nirguna Janatani' is Khariboli borrowed from Nath Cult or Sadhukuri Language (mixed language in which words of different languages are freely used.).

The works of Nam Deva show that the founder of 'Nirguna Cult' was Nam Deva who was a Yogi and devotee of Nath cult. But the real founder of 'Nirguna Panth' was Kabir Das who borrowed something from Indian dualism and something from Yoga and sufism. He borrowed non-violence from Vaishnava cult. His works show a little impact of Indian non-dualism. He borrowed 'Nari Chakra' from Yoga, love from Sufism and also 'Paigambari

1. Ram Chandr Shukla Hindi Sahitya ka Itihas (Sambat 1957) Page 85.
To conclude he wanted to divert attention from those different methods of divine worship that Usually created religious differences among the people and to focus attention on pure divine love and simplicity of life.  

According to some critics mystical approaches of Kabir Das are the result of Sufi impact. But such mystical approaches are scattered here and there in Upnishadas too.  

If it is accepted, then, what would be the source of Kabir's thoughts and feelings, such as transitoriness of worldly life the shapeless presence of Divine entity, the ground of devotion of unexpressed God in the form of 'Parpati' etc. Even if it is accepted that the source of knowledge is Vedanta even then the problem remains unsolved. What is the true shape of Kabir's Bhakti? requires careful consideration Kabir's Bhakti called 'Prema Bhakti' seems to have emerged from vaishnave Bhakti. The impact of Vaishnava Bhakti

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1. Same Page 85.  
2. Same Page 85.  
3. Upanishad.  
is proved by the fact that Kabir never showed his appreciation for sufis in Bani. On the contrary he has appreciated Vaishnavas very much and called them his close companion. Some Padas of Kabir have the feeling of couple love which cannot be other than divine love. So it cannot be justified to say that kabir was influenced by sufi mysticism.

**Former Medieval Poets:**

Literature mirrors the age. A Poet who wishes to found a trend can never violate the limitation of his age. The age reflects in his creation.

History, too, influences literature, but it is kept confined within the bounds of references. A literary man has his relation with the general life of the age. A poet or author may not appreciate his age, Yet the reflection of the age can clearly be seen in his criticism.

The poets of medieval period were living in a peculiar atmosphere which was quite different from 'Aadikala'. The man of Aadi Kala had to fight against those circumstances which he thought quite favourable.

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1. Mere Sangi Dui Jana Ekvaishano Eh Ram o.k. br. 6.
and not his permanent enemy, but before the medieval man it was necessary to choose a way which might help him in extricating himself from such circumstances. Some were neglecting the prevailing circumstances, and some were arriving at a compromising term with them, while some of them were opposing them vehemently. Those who opposed the state and state religion had to pay a very high price, and those who reached a compromising term were converting the religious beliefs. Shudras who were free from state wrath were also showing sense of conversion, but this conversion was confined to those who were harassed.

Medieval poets faced the problem of self-expression. Though medieval poets were religious minded, yet they could not criticise the other religions. Other religion means Islam which was the arch rival of Hinduism with its staunch orthodoxy of a new religion and which enjoyed state favour and encouragement. Hindu poets were not at liberty to create religious awakening except to attack its weaknesses. No Saguna poet could dare to deprecate the high-handedness of the other religion. Sufi saints may be appreciated for not advancing malicious criticism towards Hindu
religion. Besides this they also absorbed that element of non-dualistic philosophy which was not contrary to Islam. With the help of this amalgamated shape of religion they prepared rainbow coloured love stories through historical or popular myths and legends. There are interesting stories with religious intentions. Religious art has considerably enhanced their charm.

Kabir's truth is nothing but the sincere truth of man, and his prescribed path of life is the best and easiest. It is the chief speciality of Kabir Bani that it introduces simple truth of daily experience in larger scope. This simple expression of true removes the complicacy and intricacy of traditional expressions. It also gave shattering blow to communal and religious differences. Kabir did his best to set humanity free from differences between high and low, and to bring into one unity. It evaporated individual sense of greatness of meanness, and filled all with the sense of equality.

Kabir's unique achievement lies in his power to make scholarly thoughts easy to understand by all.
Jain Philosophy:

jainism is basically aadharvadi truth, non-violence, aasteya, brahmacharya and aprigraha, etc, are its primary principles. In jain Sadhana Bodily pain and severe penance is needed to reach the stage of restraint of senses and complete control of mind.

The leftist tendency that arose in Guhya sadhana of Bajrayan of Buddhism and Shaiva and Shakta failed to influence Jainism. It could also not become dominant on account of political reasons. Jain cult that was based on non-violence could not become as accommodative to foreign invades as Shaivas and Vaishnavas were.

Atheist jain cult started worshipping Mahabir as God in the light of Aagamas and as result many temples were built. Jainagamas called krishna the future Tirthanker, and fabricated many stories about it. The literary tendency of Jainagamas developed like Shaiva Buddhist Aagamas which offered chances to many regular stories to develop freely.

Jain cult that opposed karma-Kand vehemently was caught so fast in the net of karma-Kand that it reached on par with Vaishnavas. The character and conduct of
Shwetambers and Digambers went away. Mutual rivalry and bitterness grew so intense that the prominent saints and scholars of both the sects started composing new puranas, framing rules of Vratanushthan and devotion and devotion of Tirthankers and establishing new places of pilgrimage. This rivalry led to the composition of different types of literary works.

The study of medieval Jain literature makes us believe that Jain and Buddhist customs and ways were similar & quite close to each other. The devotional element found in philosophical attitude of Jain poets has not come from Shaiva or Vaishnava, but it is the result of the impact of Sahaj Yana. As Buddhist Mahayan Sadhana gradually came close to Bhakti, similarly Jain Sadhana went on gradually accepting Bhakti.

It is quite difficult to tell how much Kabir's indebted to Jainism for the principle of truth, non-violence Aasteya, Brahmacharya and Aparigraha, but Kabir's doctrine of non-violence seems to be influenced by Jain-Yoga. To shatter blind faith of Jain followers Kabir could not refrain from attacking their violence nature.
"Padousi sun rusana, til til sukh ki hanri,
Pandit bhaye saravagi, pani pivain Chhanri."

Like Kabir Tulsi Das, too, had attacked conduct:

Is sis bilasat vimal, Tulsi taral tarang,
Swan sarawag ke kahe, laghuta gahai na Gani.  

Jain cult seems to have slight impact on Kabir's doctrine of Karma. According to Jainism it is the Vicious actions of this earthly life that make man full a victim to old age and death and suffer from different types of sorrows and sufferings man can attain salvation only after shattering these bondages of sufferings. This thing is acceptable to Kabir because he, too preaches the same doctrine of Salvation, but he is unable to accept this theory of Jainism that 'Kaivalya Gyan' can be attained only through severe penance, because Kabir looks down upon pilgrimage, fasts, penance etc. as is proved by this words 'Japa, tapa dikhen dhokhara'.

Kabir's "Kaivalya" may not be the true copy of Jain 'Kaivalya' but both of them have some similarity.

1. K.br., p. 37.
2. Dohawali, Doha number 383.
Kabir Bani and Jain Bani are similar in many other things which are also found in Siddha Bani. So it is very difficult to say what is the true source of Kabir Bani. Prohibition of Tantra-Mantra, Chat-Tirtha, sahaj sadhana of mind. Jal, saindhava-samarasata etc are visible in above mentioned works. Some part of Kabir Bani shows close similarity with Siddha 'Hohokosha' and Jain 'Pahur doha'. So this question becomes still more difficult to answer. Jain poets generally give 'Prema bhavana' and 'Niranjan bhavana' extra ordinary expression for which Kabir is known.

To be brief it may be said that a faint source of Kabir's thought about general conduct, spiritual life and sadhana can be seen in the works of Jain poets.

Sufi Cult:

The impact of sufism on Kabir Bani cannot be ignored. Sufi cult is an off shoot of Islam. There is no doubt about it, but sufis had developed a move purified and chastened shape of religion. Faith in one God of Islam and Spiritualism of Vedanta have reached on compromising term in non-dualism of Sufism.

The followers of Sufism learnt the secret of Yoga
Sadhana from Buddhists and Shaivas. Is it wrong to say that 'Duniya-a-phani' bears the impact of Buddhist 'Kshanika vāda' and 'Shunya vada'? and did 'Pind Brahmand Vada' of Sahaj Yani Sadhana not inspire sufis to find 'Yar ka deedar' in their own heart and mind?

Kabir probably learnt nothing from Islam. 'Tūrāki Dharam Bahut ham dekha' shows that Kabir had no high regard for Islam. It may be that Kabir's critical method has a little influence of Islam, but this is also found in Siddhas and Nathas etc. If it is confessed that Islam had its impact on Kabir even then it will be clear that it, too, had its influence on Kabir. This influence might be direct or indirect.

It is said that inspiration to criticise casteism and idolatry came to Kabir from Islam, but it can easily be seen that the contribution of Buddhists and Nathas in this field is not negligible. Those who seek the impact of sufism in Kabir's 'Viraha Bedana ki tibrata', can easily see that 'Gopi Viraha' of Bhagwat and 'Param virahasakti' of Nardiya bhakti is not less intense, though they lack the mundane feeling of hyperbolical sufi style. Such 'Adayen' are in abundance in Persian Poetry but medieval poetry, too, does not show dearth of such 'adayen' in the expression of the feeling.
of separation yet I think that Kabir is indebted to sufism for adaan and absurd expression of love.

Sufi attempt to bridge the gap between Hindus and Muslims is praiseworthy. In every thing pervades the light of same God. Sufi attempt of unity with this feeling is, indeed, very important.

A faint shadow of such attempts (if these are not original attempts) can be seen Kabir's sense of unity (Akya Sadhana).

It would be worth while to say that far sighted Kabir's Bani bears the stamp of Sufism, but we have no solid proof to prove it. The vehement manner of Kabir's scolding to Shekhtaki shows that sufism had little influence on Kabir Bani. Quite contrary to it Kabir's respectful appreciation for Vaishnava Bhakti and Vaishnavas leads us away from sufis impact.

Charvak Philosophy:

Charvak philosophy had its slight influence on Kabir. There is no doubt about it. Kabir was theist devotee of God - and charvak cult is atheist. What influence can charvak philosophy, the doctrine of eat,
drink and be merry, exert on Kabir? How can Kabir, the strict observer of social decorum, accept charvak doctrine that is quite indifferent to all sorts of discipline and decorum. So it is not worthwhile to seek charvak unrestrained freedom and indifference in Kabir Bani. The source of its faith should be sought in the established faith of devotees.

Buddhism had lost its glory in the period of Kabir. The doctrine of non-dualism of Shankar had inflicted crushing defeat on Buddhism. The Bhakti cult started by Alvaras of south was accepted by Ramanuj with some modification. Ramanuj gave it the shape of a movement. This movement had begun long before in reaction to 'Maya Vada' of Shankar. It was also helped by several Shaiva scholars. But the movement started by Ramanuj opened path for other movements. The reaction did not stop with 'Vishistadvaita Vada', but went on through 'Dvaita Dvait' doctrines etc.

The shape of Buddhism adopted by Bajra Yani and Sahaj Yani Siddhas has become extremely deformed with the major addition of 'Yoga Vritti'. Not only those people who were not the followers of Buddhism, were angry with its 'Paurukshya' and 'Kaustha' but also many
among the followers of Siddha cult became its opponent. Gorakh Nath himself who is called the founder of Math cult, was a traditional Siddha of Siddha Cult. He found ugliness in it, which was practised behind siddhi and which was a great black spot on the cult. So Gorakh Nath founded Math Cult in reaction to Siddha Cult. Math Cult deprecated 'Rag sadhana' vehemently. But Gorakh Nath accepted many things of Siddha Sadhana, and rejected many others of the cult. Yet he adopted many them as new Sadhana with new meanings.

To say that Kabir adopted only Math Doctrines is a fallacious statement, but he lived in close proximity and is indebted to it in many respects. Yet this thing cannot blot out the importance and originality of Kabir literature. Seeing some particular words used in Kabir Bani some critics of Buddhist tendency trace their source in Bajrayani and Siddhayani diction, which is no correct, because all the sources of this diction had been lost by the time of Kabir.

Besides this Kabir expressed his disregard for eighty four siddhas by his criticism. If it is accepted that Kabir got acquainted with them through other
sources which cannot be other than Natha Cult which was still popular in Kabir's time. 'Shunya', 'sahaj' etc. of Kabir Bani are very old, yet they have been used in new garb and with new meaning. They changed their meaning in the Bani of Nathas and they further changed their meaning in Kabir Bani. 'Khasam' word is an example of this. Indeed it is a word of Buddhist origin, and it means 'Aakashwata' or 'Shunyawata' but Kabir has given it the meaning of Arabi word 'Khasam' (Pati) which was current those days. Thus we see that Kabir's relation with siddhas is not direct but indirect and long journey of time has made it indistinct.

As it has already been stated earlier that Natha cult was extant in the time of Kabir. Kabir has expressed his respect and appreciation to Gorakh Nath who lived long before him. It makes it clear that Kabir was a great supporter of the principles and doctrines of Natha cult. Besides this, Kabir's spiritual teacher, Ramanand appears to have been influenced by some practices of Natha cult, such as purity of conduct and behaviour, emphasis on the importance of Guru, sharp criticism of caste and creed and his use of popular language to preach his audience etc. are the main.
These things must have come to Kabir through Ramanand.

Much importance has been attached to Guru in the Yoga cult of Gorakh nath. Guru is the root of all the achievements, and only an 'Awadhut' can deserve to be a Guru or spiritual teacher. Every sentence of a Guru has the significance of a Veda, his every step is a place of pilgrimage and his every sight possesses the salvation of 'Kaivalya'. He has total renunciation in one hand and carnality in the other and yet he remains untouched with both renunciation and carnality. Neither any one is greater than him nor on a par with him. Such a impartial Yogi attains 'Natha Pad'\textsuperscript{1}.

Natha Pantha has also laughed at bookish knowledge. Kabir, too, has laughed at such learned book-worms as have failed to understand the significance of 'Ram'\textsuperscript{2}.

\begin{itemize}
  \item[1.] Hajari Prasad Dwivedi, Kabir, p. 31 (1955)
  \item[2.] K.Gr., p. 100-39.
\end{itemize}
The supreme desire of an 'Avadhuta' of Natha cult is to reach the stage of Salvation which is far beyond the contradictory feeling of daulism and non-daulism. In Avadhuta song it has been stated that some people prefer non-daulism while some like dualism more, but nobody realize the mysterious element lying in the feeling of daulism and non-daulism. It is called 'Samtatwa'. If heavenly God is static and permanent, then, is this imagery idea of dualism and non-daulism not fallacious? ¹

Kabir has composed the following Pad expressing similar idea:

"Gorakh, Ram eko nahin Uashwan nawahveda bichara, 
Harihar brahma na shiva shakti na wah tirthachara, 
May bap guru jake nahin so houn duja ke akela, 
Kahahin kabir jo abaki bujhe soi guru ham chela. 
(Bijak Shabda 43)

The extra-ordinary, 'Swayam Joti Satya' on which the followers of Nath cult focus their thought, is extra-

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¹ Hajari Prasad Dwivedi - Kabir, p.
ordinary like Kabir's "Ram Niranjan". According to Kabir the supreme Math of Nathas, whose only light pervades in all the three world is 'Parbrahma' or the supreme 'soul'. This statement is found in that prayer of Siddha Jalandhar in which 'Nath' has been sung as extraordinary, supreme among Yatis and in the form of 'Shanker'.

According to some 'Sruti' has no 'Sadhika' Kabir too has the similar idea Kabir says at one place:

"Vo-onakar aadi jo jane, likhi ke metai tahi so mane.
Vo-onakar Kahai sab koi, Jinha yah lakha jo birale hoi."

Kabir resembles Nathas in his idea of pilgrimage and fasts.

In Natha cult no value is attached to "Smarta Aacharyas'. This peculiarity leads it against "Smarta Hindu dharma'. At one place in Gorakh Siddhant it has been stated.

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People often call 'Aachar, aachar, but this aachar is a derivative of "Atyachar."

Whatever food you serve comes from a "charmpatra" and the shoes you give to wear are also made of leather. At the time of solar eclipse you throw away clay pots culling them defiled. Why do you not throw away your corns and clothes. The truth is that 'aachar' itself is quite imaginary. Wise men never observe it. But we should not think that their is no 'aachar' in our mind. It is present but quite separate from thought. Are these sayings not shattering like the sayings of Kabir. So it is not worthwhile to say that such maxims were not in use in India before Kabir Das, and is it not wrong to say that these sayings of kabir are the direct result of foreign impact.

Most of the sects that were present in the time of Kabir were the supporters of Yoga. There were many touchables and untouchables among the followers of these sects. Those cults or sect in which caste difference was maintained went on declining and the meaner section of

Aryans and Anaryans embraced those cults. Those days tantras were dominant. Tantras had different branches such as Buddhist, Shaiva, Shakta, Vaishnava etc which were similar in many things, and had place for untouchables. Many current cults accepted tantras. Different doctrines of different tantras dissolved in several sects and cults and these removed the differences to a large extent. Puranas, too, attempted to bring unity, but their attempt was insufficient. Casteism was creating violent opposition in Indian society, and attempts to stop this sharp reaction through Ram literature started to be made in sixth century. The creators of Puranas, no doubt, made some effort to slacken the tie of Brahmanism, but they failed to bring meaner castes on equality. They could give them only some easy approaches. Tantras framed and prescribed their own path in reaction to this easy going way.

Tantras gave meaner castes not only higher regard through "Chandalini", 'Rajaki', 'Domini' etc sadhanas but they also called them holier. Tantra practitioners opposed not only casteism, but also expressed sharply bitter disapproval against Brahman cult and doctrines. Due to its nature of opposition 'Tantra marga' was
called 'Vama marga'. I will do against what you are doing is speciality of Tantras. This resulted in the development of anti-social deeds among Tantra-Sadhakas due to extreme opposition of 'Brahman vadi'. Tantra sadhana wore the garb of mystery, when reached the top. Yet 'Vama Margi sadhana' of Tantra cults could refrain from influencing rightist 'Brahman vadi' sects. Vaishnava Tantra remained close to Brahman tradition. One can reach this conclusion after going through 'Diksha niyam' of vaishnava cult, but every caste has been given the equal right of Bhakti. Ramanujacharya adopted 'Panch Ram Aagmas'. 'Dakshin Panth' and 'Vama Panth' are also found in 'Shaivagamas', 'Dakshin Panthi' has close similarity with Brahman Vada' but 'Vama Margis' are extreme revolutionaries, Even later puranas could not remain untouched with the changed shape of 'Vama Marg'. The whole fabric of 'Krishna-Gopi-Rati' of Srimad Bhagwat and Brahma Vaivarta Purana is on Tantrika line.

'Rag Sadhana' is the chief speciality of 'Vama marg'! It stresses on the attainment of supreme Siddhi 'through "Rag" but in Indian philosophy much emphasis has been laid on the control of 'Ragas'. "Patanjali Yoga"
is quite different from 'Vama Margi Yoga'. 'Nari Yoga' of Tantra Yoga is nothing but 'Chakra Yoga' and there is mention of 'Chakra Sadhana' in 'Patanjali Yoga Darshan'. In sixth century 'Rag Sadhana' Mantra-Sadhana', Chakra-Sadhana' etc tried to be on a par with "Brahman Vadi' sects.

Tantrika Buddhists, too, adopted 'Chakra Sadhana' like other followers of Tantras. Like all other Tantrikas they, too, started worshipping idols, "Kavach" "Vastra" "Vehan", "Astra", "Shasya" and Shakti-shaktiman etc. But Vaishnava Tantrikas adopted the unity of Shakti-shaktiman and the adoration and devotion of its 'Raman' 'Vilas' etc. With the imagery shape of Radha they started the adoration of Radha-Krishna vilas'. There is no need to say that the whole literature of Krishna Bhakti developed with doctrine of Shakti-shaktiman. The favourable interpretation of Shakti-Shaktiman in anch Aagmas reveals the prominent adoption of medieval Vaishnava Bhaktas.

Kabir and other saints like him showed no inclination towards 'Rag Lila'. They borrowed only 'Tantrika-Chakra-Sadhana' or Tantrika Yoga', whose close source was 'Natha-Chakra-Sadhana'. It would not be
unjustified to think that the 'Chakra-Sadhana' which has found favourable interpretation in Natha literature really belongs to the tradition of Buddhists and Buddhist Siddhas. There is no doubt about it that Nathas accepted it in its purified form. 'Lata-Sadhana' that was present in Chaura-Sadhana' of Buddhist and Shaiva Tantrikas was the culmination of misconduct and misbehaviour. Chakra-Sadhana which Gorakh Nath accepted was based on 'Rag-daman' Kabir, too, renounced it. Yet we have to agree with this thing that Kabir is indebted to the Bani of Buddhist Tantrikas for his chakra-Sadhana, Shabda-Sadhana, 'Dhyam-prakriya' and 'Pratik-puddhati'. But the contribution of Natha cult which has its clear stamp in Kabir Bani, should not be forgotten. To understand the originality of Kabir, the contribution of sects like Nath cult etc is very helpful.

The main source of Kabir's peculiar style of expression may be traced back into the Banis of Buddhist Tantrikas. Symbolised expression and the expression of opposites are based on the style of Buddhist Tantrikas. Even before Nathas, Siddhas popularised "Loka Bhasa" and "Loka Vedas". Here the contribution of 'Jain Stotra' is
worth considering. It would not be wrong to say that the rustic language which in traditional use of Buddhist Tantrikas got stability in Kabir Bani. It is popular language that establishes relation of Kabir with Siddhas and Nathas. To make their expression effective and easily graspable they have drawn their similes from popular life. The flow of this stream is incessant.

'Antarmukti':

Kabir accepted 'Maya Dvaitavada' of Sānker on one hand and preached the doctrine, of 'Tatwamasi' and on the other he accepted 'Shunya' or 'Niranjan'. Yet he did not adopt anything that could shatter the doctrine of Bhakti or might go against Yoga. Is it worthwhile to seek mysticism based on Yoga, harsh criticism of the social life and 'Kishistmarg' in the traditional conventions of Tantric cults? Is there no contribution of Kabir's daring spirit in the reformation?

To conclude 'Mantras' are the real source of Kabir's philosophy and Sadhana, but it would be wrong to say that Kabir Bani is based on only one 'Stotra'. Kabir was a free thinker. He was not a blind supporter of any cult or sect. He accepted only those things that
appealed to his critical brain. So kabir was a keen eyed and sharp minded man who could grasp the soul and essence of a thing.

Kabir's sharp mind also helped him in his 'Sadhana'. His essence grasping calibre had two things - basic elements and helping elements. Naradi Bhakti (Prema Bhakti) was the base of Kabir's sadhana and Yoga etc. Were the helping elements. Helping elements were drawn from Tantras. Faint impact of Tantra is also visible on the sweet feelings of Bhakti. No doubt, Kabir was an extra-Ordinary Sadhak. Kabir was an extra-ordinarily talented man. Every aspect of popular life bears his mark. Kabir was a free thinker. At many places he has given fine expression to his unique experiences. Kabir has an unique place in Hindi literature. His expression and interpretation are new but not surprising. There can be no distinction between 'Sakar' and 'Nirakar', because 'Sakar' becomes 'Nirakar' and 'Nirakar' changes into 'Sakar' as the time demands. Kabir had a different path to follow. He disliked artificiality of all sorts whether it is in social life

1. Dr. Sarnam Singh Sharma- Kabir Vayctitva Avang krititva Avang sidhatant.
or in religious practices. Real prayer springs from purer heart. Kabir's God was not imagery, but it was a God that pervades the whole universe. Kabir worshipped 'Nirakar' and wished to reach that place which was unique to common man. Kabir wanted to present God in a new shape, and for this thing 'Nirakar' was more helpful, because the common people were hurled in the deep sea of despair. There was no ground before them to stand on. That was why Kabir's spiritual thoughts provided solid ground to the people to stand on. The ideal presented by Kabir could bridge the gap between Hindus and Muslims. Kabir deserves our thanks for such noble works. Kabir tried hard to establish his thoughts on a solid ground to help the people. Kabir's work that helped progress of the society deserves praise from all sections.