Chapter - 1

SOCIAL CULTURAL AWAKENING IN MEDIEVAL SOCIETY AND SAINT POETIC PERSONALITY OF KABIR DAS
The rise of social and cultural consciousness in the medieaval period and the Poetic Genius Of Kabir.

Economic:

The economic structure of the society of the period of Kabir was very complex. There was no dearth of wealth in the country. India still maintained its position as a golden bird, which constantly drew foreigners from foreign lands towards it. Generally the living standard of the ruler and the trader class was very high. Whatever Verni the writer of "Tarikhe Ki Raja Shahi" has written is perhaps based on certain affluent families, otherwise it can not be possible that the houses of the subjects were full of sereals properties, horses and furniture. Everybody had abundance of gold and silver. There was no woman without ornaments and there was no house without fine cot and comfortable bed. Wealth was in plenty and everybody enjoyed comfort and luxury. Verni can be justified in this statement that 'Embroidered and silken clothes and other commodities which were required by the ruler's families, were bought at the market rate and their prices were paid in full.' To me Mr P.D. Sharma seems to be more correct when he says "The distribution of wealth was unequal at this time. Jagirdars and the rich men had accumulated gold and silver with them and

1 S.P. Sharma; Bharat me Muslim Shasan Ka Itihas P. 151
2 The same, p. 151.
the common men had very little wealth left with them.  

Generally the people of the lowest caste, particularly Hindu Shudras were in extremely wretched condition. The subjects were groaning under the heavy load of different types of taxes. Hindus had to pay 'Jajiya' tax. Taxes were levied on agriculture, trade and other sources of income. The people had to send to the state-store a certain part of their produce.

There were both kinds of properties, moveable and immoveable. But the land was in the control of the king. A bond about the land given either in charity or in prize, was issued by the state.

Sovereign power has the power to confiscate. Palaces, buildings, temples, living-houses etc, were counted among immoveable properties. Moveable properties consisted of elephants, horses, cows etc. Gold, silver, jewels and commercial commodities were also included among them. Servants and maid-servants, too, were among moveable properties. They were also bought and sold.

1. P.D. Gupta; Madhya Kalin Bharat.
Accumulation of wealth was either in the state treasury or in the houses of Samantas and traders. Elephants and horses were taken to be the state-property. Much of their wealth was spent in paying taxes.

Hindu subjects were not allowed to have so much wealth that can enable them to ride on horses, have elephants, wear good clothes or bring into use the things of luxury.  

The state exploitation and natural calamities had their worst effect upon the life of the ruled. Famine caused by heavy rain made the life of the people extremely miserable. Besides this, they were not even free from the onslaughts of the foreign plunderers. It is not difficult to imagine the true nature of people's misery caused by famine that often tormented the life of the subject-people. During the Muslim period, the village life was at low ebb, miserable and narrow in outlook. During this period, there was no economic development in the village life.

1. S.R. Sharma: Bharat me Muslim Shasan Ka Itihas, P. 209.
In their own country where milk and curd were in plenty their lives (the lives of the countrymen) were not better than the lives of wood-cutters and 'bhistis'.

It is quite true that Mohamadans (or Muslims) adopted fair or foul means to accumulate wealth in their treasuries, but they never spent this wealth for the good of the people. They rather used it in their luxuries. It is proved by this line of Amir Khusaro that every gem of the crowns of the rulers was made up of the blood drops of farmers. It means that the money of the common people was spent for the luxurious life of 'Sultans'.

It is not wrong to say that the life of the common people was difficult. They were severely scourged by misery and poverty. Perhaps the respective professions of the common people failed to support and feed them. Even Brahmins had to move from door to door for their living. Many religious teachers used to go to royal mansions for alms. It not only includes the sense of greed and avarice but also the sense of want. Kabir was

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1. S.R. Sharma: Bharat me Muslim shasan Ka Itihas p.213.
shockd to see it. He did not want that they should go for begging.

The problem of support and feeding was not present before the people of Kabir's time only, but it remained much longer after Kabir. Tulasidas's ¹ statement inkabitawali about difficulty in people's livelihood gives clearer idea of economic disparity of Kabir's time. Any complaint about economic difficulties in family life gives distinct idea about the economic crisis and disparity of the period of kabir².

Due to the lack of means of earning livelihood people used to go to royal palace gates for begging. Hermits, saints and brahmins received 'Petiye' from the royal families. The historical records of Udaipur present such proofs. From the royal store of Ranas 'Petiyes' were given to Meera and other saints.

Even Kabir had to face economic difficulties. It is true that being lost in his divotion Kabir never concentrated his attention on any profession, but it is

1. Tulsi "Pat Bhari Sahari Sakal Sut Bare Bare".
2. The same p. 27 Sakhi 58.
not justified to say that he had quit all his family responsibility. He did his work much or less. Besides he got his wife's full co-operation in his work. Despite this he could not run his family life properly. This shows that constant and hard work was required to support and feed his family.

This presents before us a dim picture of the economic condition of the then society.

In such state there was no other way except begging before Kabir, but neither Kabir ever thought of making begging the means of subsistence, nor was he ready to spread his hand before temporal power for alms. He expressed his want, but it is before his God, and in it he never felt humiliated.

Generally the people were so poor that they could not afford to buy costly clothes. So the people who used costly clothes formed a different class mainly dominated by royal families The following 'sakhi' expresses this idea:

Nan han kati chitta de, manhage moli bikai l
gahak Raja Rama hai, Aur na nera kai

K. Gr. p. 27 Sakhi 58.

1. K. Gr. p. 27 Sakhi 58.
Among the several reasons of economic disparity distinction of castes and religions was the main. The lack of equal opportunity for all was also a chief factor. Both capitalism and exploitation were dominating factors. Capital was accumulated either in palaces and houses of 'Mahants' 'Samants', Kings, Nobles, Ranas Sultans etc. or by big business magnates, traders and businessmen who were the capitalists. Highly gold ornamented palaces and buildings showed the signs of affluence and wealth. 'Golden kalas' were not only on the royal palaces, but also on the buildings of rich traders and temples. The mention of Golden Kalas on the palaces of richmen has been made by Kabir in the following 'Sakhi':

Uncha mahal Vinaian, Sovan Kalas Charhai

Temples, too, were decorated with Golden Kalas which is clear from this line,

"Deval Bura Kalas Su".

Labourers earned their livelihood with hard work.

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1. K. Gr. p. 119, Pad 99, p. 3.
2. K. Gr. p. 74, 28 and "5/85".
Several means of earning were in use, but generally one person or one family adopted only one profession. The people had to accept a particular family profession.

Even in that period the practice of taxes was in fashion. A special kind of tax called 'Jajiya' was imposed upon Hindus. This is an historical fact. But no mention of it is found anywhere in 'Kabir Bani'. Begar practice (The practice of doing work or service by a worker without any remuneration, was in Vague. 'Begar' was utilized by the officials. It is needless to say that Begar worsens the economic condition of workers. On one hand the labourers lived from hand to mouth and on the other they were forced to do 'Begar Service' (Service without payment). He had to work without payment of any sort. These who were engaged in 'Begar', did not do so with their own sweet will, but they were compelled to do 'Begar'. This helplessness of the labourers has been well expressed in these lines of 'Kabir Padawali':

Janama Aneka Gaya, Aru Aanya
Kari Vegar na bhara paya

It not only attracts our attention with its philosophic words, but it also shows the picture of the social world. As the helpless bondage of the soul in transmigration is proved, similarly the helpless bondage in 'Begar' is proved. Begar\(^1\) caused no other benefit except pain and loss. How great was the disparity in economic distribution that the people of one side were forced to pay taxes while the people of the other side were free from it? while the rich and the nobles were immersed in prosperity, pleasure and luxury,\(^2\) the poor, slackened by labour and pressed hard by their daily needs were struggling hard for the bare necessities of life. They had to lead highly painful life. Behind the system of slavery there might be the severe poverty of the people. Not only slaves begot slaves but the people without means of subsistence sold their children\(^3\) many of whom were made slaves.

The people engaged in less profitable jobs borrowed loans from Creditors which was difficult to pay because the interest of the borrowed loans exceeded the original

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2. K. Gr. 20/1,2 .
amount. To fulfil the necessities of the family life the original capital was generally ruined and the debtor had often been put in jail.¹

High palatial buildings, studded with gems and jewels, ² beautified by 'Golden Kalas' and resounding with sweet music ³ had 'Naubat music' always on and big elephants in front, ⁴ indicating towards the affluent class of the society, but kabir has painted such a picture of the society as can present the want and poverty besides affluence to the reader some had comfortable 'Newerbed' to sleep on while some were satisfied with the rough 'payar' bed. Some few had silken clothes to put on but some moved about in ragged clothes.⁵

Thieves ⁶, importers ⁷ and swindlers were also present then, some of the people were engaged in the job of stealing and cheating. This shows the wretchedness of

3. K. Gr. p 20 4
5. K. Gr. p. 121, 105 p. 4-5.
a section of the society and presents before the reader severe economic want

This proves that the economic condition of the society in the age of Kabir was complex and deplorable.

It is a proven fact that from cultural point of view this country had a more respectable place than many other countries. But it is wrong to think that all the industries automatically developed despite economic disparity.

There is no need to say that all the industries were 'rurh' industries. Many of them were still in life, but following the custom of the age they showed clearly signs of change in their own shape. Whatever small industries they owned were mainly meant for bread and butter.

To-day all the industries are in the possession of industrialists and capitalists who aim at massing money through them, but those days they were decentralised. Then men was not for industries but industries were for man or meant for earning bread or livelihood. Big industries and commerce that need vast capital were managed and controlled by richest traders. If we think
over this background several classifications of industries and commerce can be made in the period of Kabir. Among them one class may be 'rurh' industries:\(^1\)

'Rurh' industry (Professional jobs):

According to religious customs Brahmins' duty was to read and teach, to observe the duties and rites of 'yagyan' and to accept alms and to give alms. These duties slowly and gradually developed into their professional jobs. In the age of Kabir this job was in the hands of Brahmins. Tulsidas has also given a hint towards this duty of Brahmins of his period by saying "Kewat Ki Jati Kachhu Veda Na Parhayo" in 'Kabitawali'. Some of the Brahmins of Kabir's time were engaged in other jobs,\(^2\) too, but their main job was 'rurh'. Some historical facts of this type are also found that the Brahmins of that period stated the job of agricultural cultivation and lending money at interest. Besides this 'Tantra-Mantra' was also a part of their job.

Protection of the society or the country was the duty of 'Kshatriyas'. Many of them were 'Bhupal' or kings and they were called 'Raja', 'Rawa', Rana', 'Kshatrapati' etc.

Some of them were engaged in the defence of the country. Most of 'Kshatriyas' were brave soldiers and warriors, but with the establishment of Muslim rule in the country other castes of Hindus and Muslims were also recruited in the army. In kingdoms ruled by Hindus Kshatriyas still maintained their high positions, but in the army of a Muslim ruler high posts in the army were reserved for Mohamddans. Due to this a change came in the 'rurh' jobs of Kshatriyas, so they started cultivation of land and other jobs.

The professional jobs of Vashyas was still the same. Agriculture and trade were their main profession. Besides buying and selling, export, import and exchange of things they were engaged in borrowing and lending. Those who were engaged in buying and selling or the exchange of commodities were called Baniyas¹ (traders). Those who used to go abroad to sell their goods were called travelling traders. Those who were engaged in large scale import and export were called 'Seth', but those who were doing lending and borrowing were called 'Shah' or 'Shahukar',² or 'Vohare',³. They were very rich⁴

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1. K.Gr. p. 121 - 103.
2. K.Gr. p. 42 - 22/9
The duty of Shudras was to serve the higher castes. Every care had been taken to protect all and to feed all in the social set-up of Aryans, but this structure gradually got slackened and their service was divided into several other duties or professions. In what period of Indian history did the demand of such a change emerge? is a difficult question to answer, but taking into consideration all the jobs and professions of Kabir's time one can imagine the long period of development. The settlement of foreigners in the country brought a revolution in the professional world and customs got slackened. Shudras started trade and commerce besides agriculture. A change in 'rurh' nature of profession in social structure started in the period of war but foreign invasion made it quick and gave success. 1

General professional jobs:

Besides 'rurh' professional works there were many other professional jobs to earn livelihood or to earn money. After the settlement of Mohamadans as rulers of the country and splitting up of religious works of

several religions caste system became slack. Complexity of the means of earning bread was the main reason of this slackness. In monastries and temples some people lived like royal servants in royal courts. Chiefs of monastries and temples enjoyed the benefit of God's grace. There was no lack of means of earning livelihood for them. They had large income from God fearing people besides land and other properties. They also used to get monetary help from royal houses. Besides this they used to earn money by way of alms from the people. Worship and religions works were not only for Brahmins, because many others than Brahmins entered into this work. Much importance was attached to Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, Shaktas, Yogis etc. yet most of the temple worshippers were Brahmins.

As temple-worshippers lived on temples, in the same way as Mohamddans ran mosques. Islam being the royal religion mosques enjoyed special monetary help from the ruler. Many of the jobs and professions of Hindus had been adopted by the Mohamddans. Mohamddans adopted many of the works of 'Shudras', too. These works involved import

1. K.Gr. p. 36-6.
2. K.Gr. p. 36-7.
export of many things besides the production and buying and selling of useful design works. To buy and sell useful and design works foreign markets were sought. Things of daily use could be obtained from local markets. Small traders, finishing their days' works, used to go home at night.

Things that were bought and sold were of three types:

(i) things of daily use such as cereals, cloth, timber etc.;
(ii) things of comfort such as meat, spices, leather goods, vehicles etc.; and
(iii) things of luxury such as silken cloths, wine, scent, glasses, ornaments, gems and jewels, colours and other things of fashion and beautification.

Besides commercial commodities men, animals and birds were bought and sold. Things of general use or things of daily use could be had from weekly local markets of villages or small towns, but things of special use or in large scale could be obtained from 'mandis' or from city markets only. People used to gather in local market and big town markets to buy and

sell things. Big business flourished in big and important places. Slaves and women were bought and sold at particular places. The fashion of keeping slaves and maid-slaves flourished in ancient India, too, but the bad practice of buying and selling slaves and women came into use only when Muslim rule struck deep root in India. The master or owner had full control over the slave not more importance than a thing was given to him. His master could sell him any time, any where and to any body. Towards buying and selling of slaves Kabir has pointed out.

Main gulam mohi bechi gusain
Aani Kabira hatri utara,
Soi grahak soi bechan hara.¹

Even Tulsidas has pointed out towards the practice of slave-keeping in his 'Vinai Patrika'

Ram ki gulam nama Ramabola rakhyo Rama.²

Horses, Camels, Oxen, Cows etc. were included among commercial animals. Kabir has mentioned several animals, but the ox has repeatedly been mentioned as an animal who can carry load.

¹ K Gr. p. 124 - 113.
² Tulsidas Vinai Patrika.
Against showy social prestige, illpractices outward behaviour and bookish knowledge the smoldering fire of revolt burst out vehemently in the words of these 'Siddhas'. In 'Siddha Bani' we see such a revolt as was against the involved selfish interest of the agents of religion. As a result it became very popular.

As the movement emerged from Buddhist thought can never be forgotten, in the same the memory of a revolution caused by the 'Buddhist Sadhana' can never be driven out of mind. To drive away ill customs and bad practices 'Sahaj Dan' came into being, but in course of time it itself took evil shape and lost its existence into new sects giving them some of the practices of its 'Sadhana'.

The 'Siddh' sect gave some of its specialities to 'Natha sect'. Among these the main are revolting nature, revolutionary zeal, keeping away from violence, opposition of bookish knowledge, keeping aloof from

1. Pan Na Tike Pipilika Logani Lade Bail
2. Na Ek Vanijare Bail Pachis Koa Sang Sath

outward social behaviour, revolt against 'Karma Kanda', criticism of pilgrimage of holy places and religious fasts, etc. They also tried to establish the importance of spiritual teacher (Guru) and 'Sharir Tirth' and penance mysticism (Sadhanatmaka rahasyavad). They did not hesitate to attach importance to symbols in popular language. 'Sahaj Sect' that gave much importance to natural instincts aimed at reaching 'Mahasukh' by describing the difficulty of practical behaviour and complexities of the knowledge of intellect. This path was more real and practical than 'Mantradan' and 'Tantradan', but this gave rise to fickleness and slackness in social way of life.

Remnants of this thought were available in all parts of India, but its doctrine influenced northern India most of all. Seeing the words and phrases of 'Kabir bani' resembling the words and phrases of this sect one can imagine the true nature of its importance, but this impact remained only after losing its originality.

Jain sect:

Jainism is originally nothing but 'Yoga'. Long before kabir 'Jain' religion had taken 'Tantra' colour. The
worship of 'Tirthankers' had started with the feeling heaven and hell. There was nominal difference between 'Jain Tirthankers' and Hindu incarnations. 'Hindus' and 'Jains' are similar in their belief towards gods and goddesses, their shape and riding animals and 'Mantras'. Therefore the shape of popular jain religion did not differ from 'Tantra sect' in Kabir's time.\(^1\)

'Jain yoga Sadhana' is an inner practice and 'nibriti' oriented and resembles Shanker's time cult. Jain religion moves on along with 'Kundalini yoga' and 'Saraswati mantra'. It believes in oneness of 'Sabda'. 'Bramha' and 'Parambramha', 'Jain Sadhanka' opposed false showiness and evil practices as vehemently as Buddhists and other followers of 'Tantra cult' did. Perhaps non-violence of 'Jain' religion had its impact on 'Kabir bani'.

'Smarta' religion.

'Shankeracharya' gave rise to a new religious movement. In it the philosophic part was called 'Vedanta' and the other part of 'Sadhana' was known as 'Smarta cult'. According to 'Advaita vedanta' only God is the symbol of reality in the universe, and the remaining things are false. Supreme soul is real and

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living soul is a part of that supreme power. This visible world is false, and attainment of true knowledge is 'Moksha'. For 'Gyana sadhana' it is essential that one should purify one's conscience by doing all duties of 'Varnashrama' life prescribed by the 'Vedas' and 'Shastras'. This purification may not be attained in one life only. For it one may have to be born several times with regular and continuous practices in all the lives. This religion, too, was popular during Kabir's time. Many of the 'Vaishnava' devotees, too, were 'Smarta' believers. They could not tolerate the violence of the limit of 'Varnashrama' duties. In the coming time even Tulsidas followed this tradition. But kabir was opposed to this 'Varnashrama dharma'.

The sect of Nath Yogi:

In the age of Kabir the sect of 'Nath yogi' or 'Nath pantha' was very popular. Its forerunner was 'Aadhinath', but the name of 'Gorakh Nath' has got wide currency. It is said that he belonged to western India but he did his work in northern India, from Nepal to Assam. 'Nath Pantha' spread in almost all the provinces of northern India.

Besides Gorakhnath there were many other teachers of 'Nath Pantha', among whom Jalandhar Nath, Chaurangi Nath, Chunkar Nath, Prithwi Nath etc. are more famous. Their 'Banis' are popular among 'Sadhus' of 'Rash' cult. Dr. Hajari Prasad expresses his opinion in this way 'Gorakhnath' developed the means of 'Kaya Yoga' on the line of 'Shaiva Pratyabhigya' philosophy, and by uniting soul-experience and 'Shaiva' tradition he fixed the number of 'Chakras'. Gorakhnath believed that none can attain self-knowledge without controlling natural instincts. So he preached the lesson of 'Yoga Sadhana'. He laid emphasis on the purification of mind along with the purification of body.

'Nath' cult believed in unity, followers of 'nirguna' were the believers of supreme power and 'Hath yoga' was 'Sadhaka pantha'. It contained the liberality and sense of good conduct of the followers of Jain religion and the instinct of severe criticism of 'Buddhist siddhas'. This took 'Sadhana' from 'Prabhatansa Tantras'. Perhaps in 12th century A.D. 'Shaiva' cult was in dominating position in all parts of India. In the north its main and important shape was Nath belief which does not seem to be related with the Shaiva cult of the South. Drinking deep in many wells of

Jain religion, Buddhist Sadhana, Smart cult and Muslim culture it maintained its position as the follower of 'Nirguna Pantha' and liberality.

According to Madhava these two offshoots do not think that 'Pranayama', 'Dhyana' etc. inner and outside control is essential unlike the other sects that find it necessary. So these offshoots developed separate shape from 'Shaiva' cult which gradually came out of terrible 'Kapalika' and Kalmukh' cult. Therefore adjective like 'Pashupat' or 'Lakul' can never be used for any of its 36 meanings.

This tradition gave birth to Somananda who wrote 'Shivadristi' in which he presented a full commentary on the doctrines of Vashugupta and Kallat, and arranged them into a philosophic shape. After Somananda his disciple, Utpal continued this work. He composed 'Pratibhiygan' 'Sutras' and after this 'Pratibhigyan' his philosophy has been ascribed the name of 'Pratibhigyan darshan'.

Almost at this very time emerged Shankeracharya whose teachings of pure non-dualism gave new energy to this new non-dualist Shaiva cult of Kashmir, proved its validity and increased its importance. At the very time of Shanker non-dualist Shaiva cult became all popular in

1. Dr. Bhandarkar, Vashavism Shavism & other minor religious, p. 187.
2. Shayamata. Dr. Yaduvanshi. p. 171.
Kashmir, and renowned scholars became its followers. Among these the greatest name is Abhinavagupta, the disciple of Utpal, who wrote 'Parmartha sar'. After that 'Pratyabhigyan Sutra' and 'Parmarth sar' became the standard books of Shaiva sect in Kasmir. Full development of Shaiva doctrine in Kasmir lies in these two books. Abhinavagupta's disciple Kashemraj has written many standard books in which he presented wide commentary on 'Pratibhigyan' philosophy. Amongh his books 'Pratibhigyan Hridaya' 'Spanda Sandoh' and 'Spanda nirmaya' are the prominent books. After Kshemraj only commentaries developed this philosophy. The famous commentator, Yograj, the disciple of Abhinavagupta, wrote a commentary on 'Parmarth sar' of Abhinavagupta. After some in 12th century Jairath wrote a commentary on Abhinavagupta's 'Tanyaloka'. After Yograj upto the end of 13th century no big name emerged in the history of Kasmiri Shaiva cult.

In Shaiva philosophy 'Shakti' was taken to be on par with 'Shiva' as Naturalism in Sankhya philosophy, but in 'Pratibhigyan darshan' of Kasmir. He is represented as an expression of Param Shiva or Supreme Man. He resides in Param Shiva and in Him only. That may
be called creative force of Param Shiva. This is why that is inseparable from Param Shiva. In this way seeming appearance of dualism of Shaiva philosophy was turned into non-dualism of 'Pratyabhigyan darshan'. Originally this 'Shakti' lives in five shapes:

1. 'Chitta Shakti' or self experience energy of Paramshiva;
2. 'Anand Shakti';
3. 'Ichha Shakti' or that energy of Paramshiva which enables Him to unite Himself with 'Param Ichha' to start the creation;
4. 'Gyan Shakti', and
5. 'Kriya Shakti' or that power of Param Shiva through which He manifests the many shapes of this universe.

In fact creation starts called 'Abhas' only when this 'Shakti' attains its final shape. The assumption of this 'Aabhas' resembles the assumption of 'Vishwa' in non-dualist 'Vedanta'. The only difference lies in it that in non-dualist 'Advait' many shapes of this manifested universe is called 'Maya', which is neither real nor unreal, but in 'Pratyabhigyan darshan' this many shaped nature or form has been called 'Sat' or real, because anything that is related to 'Paramshiva' cannot
be unreal soul in essence is only the outward expression of that 'Paramshiva' and 'Maya' keeps it within particular limitation. 'Maya' here means the power of 'Param Shiva' to disappear. Before the creation of physical shape of universe 'Param Shiva' lives in this state. The relation of 'Param Shiva' with the universe in this state disappears and 'Param Shiva' keeps Himself within the bounds of 'Kal', 'Niati', 'Rag', 'Vidya' and 'Kala'. Here 'Param Shiva' becomes many shaped bringing countless souls into being, that pass through many revolutions of life and death and at last attaining 'Sat Gyan' and realising their true essence and recognising their true relation with 'Param Shiva' become free from all bondage. They merge themselves into the vast essence of 'Param Shiva'. Thus we see that 'Pratyabhigyan darshan' is not far from the doctrine of unification of supreme. Being with soul and merging of living soul in supreme soul in 'Moksha' of Vedanta.

Kabir's spiritual doctrine resembles this doctrine to a large extent because it itself follows Vedanta.

Vaishnava religion:

At the time of kabir 'Vaishnava' religion was popular. In gupta period 'Vaishnava' religion was the
main force in northern India, but it seems that during 7th. century and after 'Shaiva' and 'Vajrayan' became more popular. These two religions laid emphasis on "Yoga kriyas" and "Guhya sadhanas". To them "Bhakti" and "Puja" had no meaning. Even then 'Vaishnava' religion was in high regard in northern India. No doubt it was more popular in south India. In northern India those who did show any regard to "Yoga Kriyas" and 'Guhya Sadhanas' were followers of Smart cult. These followers of Smart believed that real knowledge could help in attaining "Moksha". To purify conscience by doing duties of "Varnashram" was the main thing of their 'Sadhana'. At that time when those different sects that laid emphasis on 'Sadhana' and 'Gyan', were developing in northern India, in south India different religious teachers were engaged in preaching and explaining the ways of "Bhakti". 'Bhakti' cult was not new to India. In ancient India in the area of "Andhak Brishna-Association the "Bhagwata" cult brought into being by Vashudeo Krishna also laid more emphasis on 'Bhakti' than on "Yagyik Karma Kanda". But this cult of the Bhagwat gita was harmonizing. In it Knowledge, devotion and duty were put on par. This is why the followers of "Param Bhagwat" and "Param Vaishnava", Gupta kings observed "Ashwamedh" Sacrifice.¹

¹ Satyaketu Vidyalankar- Indian Culture and its history p. 497.
In 7th. century whatever religious thought pattern emerged from the development of Vajrayan in north India consisted of either mainly "Sadhana" or mainly "Gyan". "Bhakti" had no place in it. "Bhakti" could not get a place of honour during the period of Shanker who propounded the doctrine of the unity of supreme being and the living soul. Many devotees who gave importance to Bhakti were born in the south. They preached ways of "Bhakti" cult and taught people that devotion of God was a special kind of ship that would take across the vast sea of miserable human life. These were called "Alware". Their songs of devotion are contained in "Prabandhan". It is read devotedly by Vaishnavas. One section of south devotees was called "Naanmar". They were Shaiva devotees. Their different doctrines of "Bhakti" cult were developed systematically by many devotees of the South. They proved its Validity by philosophic Commentaries. In the non-dualistic philosophy of Shanker and Buddhist knowledge theory it was no worth-while for the living soul to follow the ways of "Bhakti". In reaction to Shanker's non-dualism Ramanuja charya propounded the theory of "Vishistadvaita" and established Bhakti on philosophic Ground. This thing highly developed Bhakti in the south. This period also gave
birth to Nimbakacharya in the south, who laid emphasis of the worship of Vishnu in the form of Lord Krishna. Idealising the love of Radha and other Gopis, he preached the lessons of Krishna's love. Later on this cult of Nimbakacharya got wide popularity and in the form of Vaishnva cult it won wide recognition of the people in North India. In North India too, many teachers taught ways of Bhakti. Ramawat sect of Ramanuj is, indeed, a developed shape of Bhakti. It involved 'Yoga' and opened the door of Bhakti for all classes.

After the spread and establishment of Islam in the country it was required that a new religion that can not only drive out orthodoxy but should also accept Hindus, Mohamdans, Buddhists and Jains without any distinction, should be started and developed. Along with this some Hindu-religious teachers thought deeply over the protection of Hindu religion with great care. Kabir belongs to those men who opposed distinction of castes and creeds and taught that no body was lower or higher in the eyes of God. Any body could get higher position by his excellence, work, good conduct and devotion. He also instructed the people that man could get freedom from all worldly trials and tribulation through God’s grace. For it true love and sincere devotion was needed Kabir
hoisted the flag of such religion as could give shelter to the people all castes and creeds. It is needless to say that "Vaishnava Bhakti" obtained from Rama Nand had great impact on Kabir.

Here it is necessary to state that Kabir has openly confessed the debt of "Vaishnava cult" (Vaishnava Dharma) by saying "Vaishnava ki upari mati, na sakata bar nanva", though worship of "Shiva and Shakti" was current among the people.

'Shakta' Cult:

Farquihar in his "Religious Quest of India" has called the period intervening between 500 A.D. and 900 A.D. "the shakta' age. 'Shakta' philosophy and "Sadhana" are supposed to have flourished in this age. The main peculiarities of this cult are:

(1) To establish the importance of 'shakti'
(2) Confidence on the use of "Mantra"
(3) Belief in "Kundalini Yoga",
(4) "Panchmakari upasana".

Farquihar "the Religious Quest of India" p. 167.
There are many sects of "Shaktas". Every one of them has a separate 'Upnishad' and a book of practice method (Kriya Shikha) In every one of them high regard has been shown to 'Guru' and 'Diksha'. Like this every sect has its own separate "Mantra". The religious books of "Shaktas" are called 'Tantra'. But nothing is certain about them. Among many 'Tantras', according to Farquihar, "Kuhjika Tantra", "Parmeshwara Tantra" and "Maha kaushala Gyan Tantra" are the oldest. In shaiva philosophy of Kasamir shakta cult' was in acceptance. So in the development of 'shakta philosophy the 'Vaishnavas' of Kasmir played vital roll.

'Yamal Literature' was mainly composed during the period between 900 A.D. and 1350 A.D.\(^2\), such as "Brama Yamal", "Rudra Yamal", "Lakshmi Yamal", "Uma Yamal", "Skanda Yamal" "Ganesh Yamal" etc. In these "Ratini magna" has been shown besides gods, goddesses and 'shaktis' Buddhist and shaiva 'Tantras' of this period have the same peculiarities. In this period "Kaul upnishad" and "Parashuram Kalpa sutra" were composed.

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"Parashuram Kalpa Tantra" is taken to be as the best and most dependable book of 'Kaula' cult. "Tripurtapiniya" "tripurkshat-Chakra-Bhawana" and "Devi Upnishad" are the works of this period.

Perhaps due to the presence of 'Vaishnava and 'Jain' or the impact of 'Nath cult' the practice of "Panchmakar" is on the decline. Leans towards 'Vaidika' practices perhaps encouraged this tendency.

'Kaulas' are the followers of "Vamachari Tantra" They wish to reach Salvation through "Bhoga". 'Shaktas' who attach more value to "Bhoga" and 'Mukti' believe inmixing. Their well-known eight ways are "chandrakala", 'kalanidhi', 'Kularnava' etc.

It is needless to say that "Shakta" philosophy shows similarity with 'Agamas' of 'Shaiva' cult of Kasmir. The 'Shaivas' of Kasmir contributed much to the development of 'shakta' philosophy, too. "Kamkala vikas", "Malini Vijai", "Tantraloka" etc. are also known as standard works of 'Shakta' philosophy. This sect has been called "Tripur-sundari" or "Srividha" sect.

To preach the doctrines of their cult shaktas made three divisions of India and nearly areas. There were
three main shrines of these three, such as 'Kamakhya', 'Kasamir' and 'Kanchi'. Among these 'Kamakhya' belonged to 'Kaul cult' and 'Kasimir and Kanchi were related to 'Srividha'. 'Kashi' was the mid point of these 'Pithas'.

'Tipur' in Kasimir, 'Tara' in Kerala and 'Kali' in Bengal had their sways.

It has already been stated that Shaiva cult and Shakta cult have close similarity. Shaivas attach more importance to 'Shiva' and Shaktas to 'Parashakti'. In Shakta philosophy 'Para Shakti' has been called 'Swatantra Shakti' like 'Shiva' of 'Shaiva cult'.

'Parashakti' is the automatic emergence of Supreme Being. It is manifested in two forms - 'Aham' and 'Idam'. The assemblage of philosophic consciousness is called 'Purnahanta' by 'Shaktas' The experiences of 'Purnahanta' comes only when individual pride is lost completely in the experience of consciousness beyond visible covering. It is 'Purnahanta' that wishes to create in the beginning of creation. He creates freely. It is, therefore called 'Maya Shakti'. This 'Purnahanta' being  

2. Gopinath Kaviraj, Tripura Rahasya Jilda, Bhumika Bhag.
a type of consciousness is also called 'Shuddha Chiti'.
This is transformed into the shape of the visible world.
So visible shape of the world is real, not false. This
energy takes three forms - Knowledge, desire and
practice, and in later period the visible of creation is
developed when this energy is manifested in the visible
shape of the world, even then Supreme Being, remains
stable and inert. He witnesses the play of different
shapes of the visible world. Thus God, is a witness and
'Shakti' remains the object seen or witnessed. In
'Tantra' 'Shakti' is called 'Vimarsh' or 'Kriya-shakti'
and 'Shiva' light. The union of light and 'Vimarsh' gives
birth to the visible world. Out of the union of light
and 'Vimarsh' 'Vindu' is born, just as the union of male
and female gives birth to a child. This is the symbol of
the union of these two. This is also called 'Swayambhu-
linga'. It is also known as 'Kar-rup-pitha'. Light and
'Vimarsh' are the two shapes of the Omnipresnt Power.
Just as Shaivas call this Omnipresent power 'Per\v\ramha'
(Supreme Being), so to 'Shaktas' this Omnipresent Power
is known as 'Shakti'. So light and 'Vimarsh' are also
called 'Shakti'. Here there is no differentiation of sex
of 'Bramha'. It should be remembered that 'Shaktas'.
like to call that Omnipresent being only 'Shakati'. It
is therefore 'Shaktas' call light 'Ambika Shakti' and
'Vimarsh ' 'Shanti Shakti'. After their union develop 'Vama' desire, 'Jyeshta' (knowledge), and 'Raudri' (practice).

Energy (Shakti) manifests 'Shiva' in the shape of the visible world and Shiva's pleased to see His own image in the different shapes of the visible world.

Kabir was a revolutionary not only in daily works but also in his thoughts and poems. In this sense he was dauntless. He had no fear either from Hindus or from Mohamdans. Then the social and cultural condition of the country was of a different type. Kabir wanted to seek a new path, he found evil in both of them. The path which both Hindus and Mohamdans followed led to falsehood and evil. The reality of life was present there. Grasping the truth about both of them he felt the necessity of developing a new way of life, which could open the path to pleasure and happiness for both them.

Kabir did not like that the people should follow the path he had preached, but whatever path seemed useful to him he followed with no follower by his side. He had a separate way of life. He sought human qualities in all human beings Kabir wanted that the people should behave with one another on equal terms and with love:

1. Some aspects of the Philosophy of Shakt Tantra, Jild 2 (Princes of Wels Series).
without any distinction of castes and creed and without any false shows. If it was so, it was sure to provide the true religion of man.

Kabir had no particular religion. He laid emphasis on 'Manava Dharma', and according to him it was necessary for the progress of society. He wanted to drive away false shows from the society and culture of man and liked to see an ideal shape of the society. His bitter taunts to Hindus and Mohammdans indicate to this thing.