Introduction

Indian philosophy is not just an intellectual exercise. It is part of the life of any philosopher. For example in the matter of spiritual etiquette, before saying anything, one should think first. Sant Kabir says, 'Establish one principle at a time, if a principle can be established. If you say one thing now, and another thing later, you will suffer many blows.' To establish one principle at a time means that you need to think deeply and understand the principle. You will then be steadfast in your life, and will not waver from day to day about what you say or do. A person without firm principles is likely to be ridiculed. Without understanding the philosophy behind any ritual will not get one anywhere. He says, “Listen, O saints! Such ignorant people are holding on to a dog’s tail.” Otherwise we are, figuratively, holding on to the tail of a dog. This means that we pin our hopes on false teachings and practices. The dog drowns in the ocean, and cannot save us. Just so we drown in the ocean of religious life. They do not have a firm footing in spiritual knowledge. They are wandering through the intricacies of life in a dream, or spiritually unaware state. He says, 'I met many who speak, but I met no one who accepts and practices what he preaches. Let those speakers, who do not practice what they say, be washed away by the worldly current.' This is evidently true in religious and spiritual life. People will preach at the top of their voices, practically shouting at their audiences or congregations, yet they themselves do not practice what they are preaching. Sant Kabir says, 'He who rises above the thirty-four letters (scriptures) will be able to understand what sin is and what is virtue. In other words it means that in order to attain to perfect life

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Kabir, Bijak, Sākhi – 81
ibid, Šabda – 107
ibid, Sākhi – 80
people have to rise above the alphabets i.e. all the scriptures. In this sense Sant Kabir was a revolutionist.

In this world, whoever is a householder or a yogi, must think according to his circumstances. The opportunity of your human life is passing. Therefore be alert, O unwise people! (Two types of people are mentioned here, the householder who has a family to maintain, and the yogi who lives a detached life. But each of these has certain rules of living, which have to do with spiritual life. It is not appropriate for the householder to live as a yogi, or the yogi to become a householder. If we are unwise, our opportunity to have liberation in this life will slip away.) At another place he says, 'Kabir, if you live the householder's life, then practice righteousness; otherwise, you might as well retire from the world.' For ascetic who think themselves to be great and superior to householders, Sant Kabir says, 'You think that you are high, but you take food from the houses of the lowly; you fill up your belly by forcibly practicing your rituals.' According to Sant Kabir both pray to same God who is 'not a house-holder, and is not a renouncer of the world.' The path of Self realization is open to all. Whosoever walks on that path it is for them. The important thing is to walk. Social, personal status is not at all important. Anybody can follow the path of Self realization provided one should intensively practice it.

Diligent practice is necessary for those who choose the pathway to God realization. In the mortal world we have a great chance to walk on this path.

**Spiritual Plane (Region of Diligent Practice (साधनत्तूमि))**

On the Spiritual Plane it can be interpreted as gaining a chance to God Realization through chanting *Nām (Simran)* and making use of the body as a tool to serve God and be a 'Gurumukha' (God centered).

The world is also a place for doing diligent spiritual practices. The body is the tool to get God-Realization. As we are in this world in this body the best use
of this condition/situation is to use the life span for getting true knowledge and Self-realization. To negate the mortal world one needs to do it with true knowledge obtained from Satguru and having the power of discrimination in real and unreal worlds and proper understanding of reality of the Mortal Realm. Our body is the tool for serving God. Mind is a tool to love God. The intellect is for rational thinking; and one can use the power to discrimination for searching the true nation/state of our soul. Sant Kabir says, 'One has to purify oneself in thought, word and deed, and practice meditation in order to realize that state which leads to salvation.' He says, 'Without knowing true devotion to God, the world is drowning and dying.' If people truly knew how to do devotion to God, with purity in their hearts, purity in thought, word and deed, then they would obtain liberation. Otherwise, people will continue to drown in superstitions and Māyā, and continue to die without obtaining liberation. From this Šabda we learn that this body is wonderfully made, and that it must be used wisely to obtain knowledge and freedom. It is not to be subjected to illusion and ignorance that create bondage, resulting in karmic effects and rebirths. Unless liberation is obtained through knowledge, one is destined to keep on suffering in this worldly ocean. Sant Kabir says 'study your lesson of Self-knowledge and do not hide it from others, otherwise you will be lost.' He says it is very necessary to understand the real nature of the mortal realm. He says, 'A person who understands the real nature of the world, and the nature of human beings that are beset with hopes, desires and passions, and that are entangled in countless activities, should make an effort to understand the reality of their situation, and the goal for which they are striving. The ultimate goal is God realization to obtain salvation.' In the Šabda 23, Sant Kabir teaches us that Māyā manifests in strange ways and can fool us. We must develop spiritually and realize the true knowledge of the Self that will give us liberation from the bondage of desires, cravings, materialism and false perceptions. And 'We should give up all the mythological and false teachings and practices that are prevalent in the world, and try to know

527 Kabir, Bijak, Ramaini - 7
528 ibid - 74
529 Kabir, Bijak, Šabda - 15
530 ibid - 53
531 ibid - 23
God. Without the knowledge of God the whole world will drown in ignorance and not obtain the sought after goal of enlightenment.\textsuperscript{532} He coins a new term 'Hansa' for Gurumukha. He says, 'Godly people move about in the form of Hansa (pure, unattached). They utter the pure name of God with great love, selecting it from among other words. They extend their beaks (mind) to pluck the pearls of wisdom. They remain silent or sing the glories of God.\textsuperscript{533} In this Šabda Kabir speaks about the pure devotee who moves about in the world unattached to worldly things. Their minds are attached to the name of God and purity. Hansa is the swan, and is used symbolically to portray the pure soul that is on its journey to God. ... A devotee of God avoids the evil thoughts of the crow (eating carrion, being noisy) but they keep the company of pure souls. By developing their mind in this way, being close to God, they are able to discriminate between the good and the bad, and they walk on the righteous path. While walking on this path one should be fearless. Sant Kabir says, 'The gross body is made of clay, and the subtle body of air. Kabir says the devotee is afraid of the thief cheating the world.\textsuperscript{534} The true devotee is afraid of the mind. A devotee practices introspection to understand his inner tendencies, and wayward wanderings of the mind, and tries to control them. It is control of the mind that allows discipline and development of positive ideals leading to spirituality. Sant Kabir says, 'All devotees who wish to obtain liberation from the passions, desires and material bondage, must travel this inner path, and realize the super conscious state which alone gives salvation.\textsuperscript{535} 'In this Šabda Kabir is really telling us that we should not become mired in delusions, false practices and false and cunning teachers. We must use our discriminative knowledge and realize the Truth that resides within us.\textsuperscript{536} The yogis and other devotees and sects, fakirs, and so called holy people, have all started different ways of worship, rituals, doctrines, sects etc., and they deviate from the simple and true spiritual path of union with God. Kabir

\textsuperscript{532} Kabir, Bijak, Ramaini – 1
\textsuperscript{533} ibid, Šabda – 34
\textsuperscript{534} ibid – 37
\textsuperscript{535} ibid – 49
\textsuperscript{536} ibid – 55
observes that there is one true yogi, and that is the soul. But it is trapped in this body and in the world, and it wanders as if lost. It is engrossed in worldly pleasures. If it could only realize its unity with God, its existence would become sublime, peaceful, and blissful.\textsuperscript{537}

'The devotee who realizes the truth reaps the benefit of reaching the eternal abode. Sant Kabir says that whoever understands this state will also attain it.\textsuperscript{538} 'Sant Kabir says that the devotees of God are colorfully adorned (as the colors of springtime and at the feet of God they sing melodiously. The soul that has transcended materialism, reaches a state of bliss.'\textsuperscript{539}

'He who sits on the steadfast throne of realization has light shining from the window (heart) of his body. I with my army dwell in the heart of such a devotee. A realized devotee is steadfast, and all noble qualities of God shine forth from him. The army Kabir refers to is knowledge, discrimination, wisdom, etc.\textsuperscript{540}

'Sant Kabir says, “Come down from your high path, as you have run out of supplies. When you run out of supplies, and your feet are tired, you are at the mercy of others.” The supplies are the means needed to reach the high path of Self-realization. They are faith, devotion, love, humility, kindness, contentment etc. Without them the devotee is at the mercy of the ego, passions and Māyā.\textsuperscript{541}

'The snake of separation from God has bitten the body. It does not obey any charms. Those separated from God cannot live. If they live, they become insane. A poisonous snakebite renders the body restless, and results in death. Kabir is using this analogy to state that true devotees, when they are separated from God, become restless. They die while alive. Often people, intoxicated with the love of God, appear to others to be insane.\textsuperscript{542}

\textsuperscript{537} Kabir, \textit{Bijak}, \textit{Šabda} – 102
\textsuperscript{538} ibid, Basant 1 – 7
\textsuperscript{539} ibid, 3 – 7
\textsuperscript{540} ibid, Sākhi – 28
\textsuperscript{541} ibid – 32
\textsuperscript{542} ibid – 97
Those who feel the separation from God are restless in mind and body. Do not inflict further suffering on them. They will die even by a touch, as they are very, very sensitive. Those feeling the pangs of separation from God are restless. Therefore do not burden them with worldly issues. They almost die when their mind is diverted from God to materialistic things. We need to be sensitive to their condition and aspiration, and help them along in every possible way, instead of dragging them down.\(^543\)

'The snake of separation has entered the body, and inflicted a severe wound on the heart. The devotee does not try to save any part of him, and the snake eats whatever it likes. Sant Kabir compares this separation that causes suffering, to the bite of a snake. Because of deep love for God, the devotee endures the suffering, and does not try to save himself in any way. He does not turn away from God in spite of suffering.\(^544\)

“When I was, God was not; now God is, I am not”. This is the gist of mysticism when the devotee realizes his unity in God and loses his self-identify.”\(^545\)

'A sincere devotee longs to know God in this life: “Let me have the realization of the Supreme Sentient Self while I am alive.” Kabir said that you cannot know God after death.\(^546\)

The above has been explained by Sant Kabir with the help of beautiful metaphor: 'A girl has her parent's home as well her husband's home; at her parental home she is born and her husband's home is her own home. She is happier with her husband than with her parents. She gets all the happiness in her husband's home.\(^547\) All the souls in this world who have come to do their actions in the dual world as a woman who lives with her birth family with her parents until she is eligible for her marriage. On the attainment of correct age she gets marriage and goes to her husband's home where she takes on a new identity and looses the old one. Her husband is represented by God wherein,

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\(^543\) Kabir, Bijak, Sâkhi – 98
\(^544\) Ibid – 99
\(^545\) Kabir, Sâkhi Granth, Prem ko Anga – 39
\(^546\) Kabir, Bijak, Sâkhi – 270
\(^547\) Ibid, Sabda – 54
lies securities, safety, permanence, and happiness with peace. That is a symbolic representation of the Immortal Realm, the real world, the non-duality. Sant Kabir says that 'all are the wives of Ram and He is the husband and Imperishable Lord.'^548 The soul takes birth in this material world which is like the parents' home, one day she has to leave. The husband's home is her real home. In Bijak, in the allegorical Śabda Sant Kabir symbolizes the soul as the bride, and God as the husband. He uses the imagery of a wedding to symbolize the formation of the body in which the soul dwells. Sant Kabir is speaking as the bride, which is one of the marks of many mystical saints. They feel that they are the brides of God. Sant Kabir thus states that when he, as the bride (soul), will go to her husband (God), then he will embrace the husband and will play beautiful music. This means that he will be liberated from all sorrows, and will then live in happy union with God.^549

For a spiritual discipline, a good code of conduct is a necessity. Unless the virtues are imbibed, the seeker cannot move further on the spiritual plane. A balanced combination of action, knowledge and devotion is required. To be a true seeker you should be without vices. (vikār-rahit, nirvikār). And for being a nirvikār you should be an ethical person indeed. Without being ethical, one cannot be a true spiritual seeker, a true devotee. A Nirvikāri is the person who has these qualities, viz., truthful living, fearlessness, friendliness, love, purity, justice, generosity, graciousness, sweetness and the like, which can make us godlike.

He accepted good conduct and an ethical householder’s life. He preferred a householders’ life to the life of an ascetic. He said that while living a householder’s life, one should do Niśkāma-karma, i.e. live in the world yet be above it, like a lotus flower which although growing in dirty water, yet is always above it. He taught society love for all, non-violence (ahimsā), truth, compassion and help to needy (paropkāra). He accepted the way of Pravutti-mārga. Sant Kabir accepts that religious and spiritual quest is an internal process of man. It is not a matter of external practices and observances of traditional forms of religion, rites and rituals.

^548 Kabir, Bijak, Ramaini — 27
^549 ibid, Śabda — 54

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Sant Kabir’s ethics stresses on humanism, truthfulness, honesty, respect for life, humility egoism (vice). Sant Kabir’s ethics is restricted to man not only to human relationship. He extends his ethics to include animals as well as nature.

**One can realise God only with grace of Guru and total surrender and love for Him.**

**Sant, God as Guru**

Guru is the teacher who shows the way. He is not an intercessor, but an exemplar and guide. He is no avatar or God’s incarnation, but it is through him that God instructs men. He is the perfectly realized soul; at the same time, he is capable of leading the believers to the highest state of spiritual enlightenment. The Guru has been called the ladder or the rowboat by means of which one reaches God. He is the revealer of God’s word. Through him God’s word, Šabda, enters human history. The Guru is the voice of God, the Divine self-revelation. Man turns to the Guru for instruction because of his wisdom and his moral piety. He indicates the path to liberation. It is the Guru who brings the love and nature of God to the believer. It is he who brings that Grace of God by which ego is mastered. The Guru is witness to God’s love of His creation. He is God’s Will, made concrete.

**The Relationship between Guru and Disciple**

The relationship between Guru and disciple works on many levels. The Guru is like a bridge between us and God. The Guru is one with God, and brings in us peace or bliss. The Guru has the ability to take from us all that is separating us from God within our-selves; our doubts, our fears, our jealousy our ignorance, and replace it with divinity, but we need to be willing counterparts in this exchange. We have to constantly practice the art of surrender that is to surrender our lower nature to our higher nature so that we can know God intimately.

The Guru’s presence in our life greatly expedites this process. Like a giant vacuum cleaner, the Guru helps to draw forward and transform all that is not divine inside us, to uncover our soul. It is like an incredible ongoing spiritual cleanse! Not always easy, because like a divine warrior, we must face every
part of ourselves that may be slowing our progress and binding us to suffering. Every doubt, every fear, every attachment, every aspect of the ego, every identification with our limited small selves must, when the time is right and we are ready, surface in ourselves to be purified and transcended so that we may eventually merge with our larger Self - which is God.

The result, at each step of this cleanse, is an ever new and higher perspective a broader vision, a greater awareness, a deeper and higher consciousness and ultimately Yogic perfection. If we are holding onto any aspect of our ignorance, we are unconsciously delaying our journey. We must willingly let go of our ignorance, so that the Guru can free us from our lower nature. As Guru Nanak says, “a true disciple begins to realize that his life is really an extended workshop on God-Realization, and that every hardship or problem simply presents him with another opportunity to achieve progress through surrender and desirelessness.

When a Guru accepts a disciple he takes the disciple as an extended part of his own consciousness. The disciple will be able to receive the most from the Master if he too, feels a sense of oneness with the Master as though the Master is a dear friend, the closest divine friend, or part of his immediate family. If the disciple feels that he is separate from the Master as though the Master is a distant acquaintance, or if his meditation practice is irregular, it makes it difficult for the Master to be of any help to them, because the inner connection is weak.

The strength of the inner connection, the oneness, love and faith between Master and disciple is the absolute secret of receiving the utmost from the Guru and making the fastest possible progress. The more you can feel your closeness to the Master, the easier it is for the Master to offer you all that they have and all that they are, as Sant Kabir say: "I have made a friend and with that I colored myself as permanent, as nobody can separate us. Even if the washer of the world comes and tries to wash out the color it will not go." The relationship between a Guru and a Sisya (disciple) is a very special one, transcending that between parent and child, husband and wife or friends.

550 Kabir, Kabir Granthawali, man ko anga – 22
God is the source of all light or consciousness. God kindles that light, in the chosen human body, the Guru; in the jyoti-aspect the Guru is the most enlightened human being, he is in direct communion with God. He communicates the message of God to mankind. He transmits His light to the world. Without the guru, darkness prevails. Says Kabir: “The light of the guru alone dispels darkness”.\(^5\) “The guru is that lamp which illuminates me full of oil in the lamp, and guides me that way so I never need take birth again”.\(^6\)

A Guru is God’s representative on earth who is helping his brothers and sisters to find the real true Guru, the Supreme. We all have the Supreme inside us but in the case of the Guru, God is fully and powerfully realize and in the case of most of humanity God is yet to realize within or only partially realize.

Guru is the Word of God, as spoken by the real seekers of the God, the enlighten persons, pious and religious ones, the persons who, in his ecstasy of love for God, sang about the nature of God and man. The devotee sings these poetic songs of saints, and so comes to love and live with the Guru’s word implanted in the heart, mind, and soul. He may express that love of the Guru in many ways – the Guru is his breath of life, his sustenance, most personal friend, companion, source of divine wisdom, and joy. The Word of the Guru is the path on which a devotee walks. By obeying the word of the Guru, the devotee is transformed, healed, and he becomes a source of light and wisdom for others. The Guru is what gives you the experience of your higher nature. For the devotee it is the supreme living wisdom which removes ignorance, the cause of suffering, through its Truth, and through the repetition of its powerful sound current. The word of Guru is the experience of the soul and its journey through life to oneness with God. Thus, the Guru speaks universal Truth. It relates to all people in all places at all times.\(^7\)

Guru plays a central role in Sant Kabir’s philosophy, acting as the intermediary between the soul and the Supreme.\(^8\) Like many schools Sant Kabir claim that God-realization without spiritual guidance of an experienced

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6. ibid, *Gurudev ko anga* - 12
7. ibid, *Het pritsaneh ko anga* - 53
8. *Kabir, Sākhi Granth, Gurudev ko Anga* - 4
one is impossible, for one will be waylaid by māyā (illusion). The guru is required in order to properly understand scripture. Many schools also claim that the blessings of God come through the genuine spiritual teacher, and that the teacher speaks and acts on behalf of God.

The Bible says, “In the Beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God.” A devotee recognizes Guru to be the embodiment of God’s word. It is the pivot around which a devotee’s mind revolves throughout the busy hours of the day. The Guru guides the mind to the experience of God’s light lives which within the soul of mankind, and that God is One.

God, who is “without form, color or feature,” is self-communicating. “A Sundari, a true devotee only can realize God when s/he is awakened by her/his guru, true spiritual teacher,” as says Sant Kabir. Further: Within every heart is hidden the Lord; In all hearts and bodies is his light. By the guru’s instruction are the very strongly closed doors opened. Sākhi is the same as the guru, says Sant Kabir. “Sākhi (the guru’s utterance or word) is the eye of knowledge, and the knowledge is guru; without understanding one cannot get rid of the doubts of the world.” Sabda, ever present, is articulated through the human medium, the guru, so ordained by the Supreme Being. Sant Kabir believed to have uttered the truth vouchsafed to them by God. “As I received the word from the Lord, so do I deliver it.”

God, thus, is the primal Guru of the whole creation. Sant Kabir affirms that the Satguru is God. The light of the pure Lord, the essence of everything, is all-pervading. He is the infinite, transcendent Lord, the Supreme God Him has obtained as his Guru. Accredited is the personality of the bright Guru, God. Who is brimful of all might. Nanak, the Guru is the transcendent Lord Master. He, the ever present, is the Guru.

When Sant Kabir speaks of his guru or Satguru, it is not such teachers that he has in mind. The true guru is the means of the revelation of God. He makes the
concealed and ineffable God known. He symbolizes the supreme act of God's grace in revealing Himself as Truth, as the Nām, as the Word. The true guru comes to unite all people of the world and to unite them to the Supreme Being. A false guru creates schisms, divisions and prejudices. The true guru as manifested to suppress the forces of evil and to rally the forces of good. He comes to resuscitate the values of true religion, dharma.

**Guru as a model of life**

Guru at empirical as well as transcendental level stands as a model of perfection. At empirical level a realized person inspires others by his very existence itself (as a perfect person to be imitated). At transcendental level God as a Guru is to be approached to attain perfection in life at all levels and even life here after. In fact an ordinary instructor has his own limitations but a real Guru or God has no limitation. As a person thinks so will he become.

Sant Kabir says 'As I love you (God) and if so do you, then we will merge into each other as hot iron merges into hot iron and no one can make out the joint of it.' The same way Satguru, at his higher stage, God Himself will merge into the devotee and they become one. A Guru knows through and through and without any explanations. He need not speak in all the circumstances but his mere (seen or unseen) presence itself inspires the devotee and disciples to do what one ought to do and knows what ought not to do.

Sant Kabir says ...'there are many qualities of God which are written on my heart.' He says ... 'I am very much aware of the world, the Maya and beware interacting with it, which may rub the qualities of God from my heart.'

It is said that there is no gain without pain and one has to accept if he or she truly wants to be a disciple of a Guru. There cannot be a true disciple without discipline and at the same time there cannot be true devotee without the true discipline of devotion. Therefore a Guru plays the role of a disciplinarian at the pragmatic level as well as in spiritual life. It is due to the ignorance of a disciple and devotee that one experiences pain and hardness of Guru but Guru

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561 Ibid, Binti ko Anga - 7
562 Ibid, Gurudev ko Anga - 35
563 Ibid, Upajani ko Anga - 7
by very nature is an ocean of love, compassion and grace.\textsuperscript{564} It is to add his own perfection that he tries to discipline the disciple which is misunderstood by the latter. Eg. A potter wants to bring perfection to the pot and therefore he pays attention to all the negative aspects of the pot which may cause imperfections.\textsuperscript{565} Once again to bring perfection he take outs all the negative things (stone, pebble) and even when he beats the pot, forget not that he gives the real support needed to the pot. Here when a Guru gives little suffering, then very often devotees and disciples at times get shaken but deep down there is love for disciples. It is not that he wants to give pain but he wants perfection and it is not that he brings perfection only through pain but also with love and grace.

At times a scripture is considered as Guru. Sikhism accepts its holy scripture as Guru and in my opinion it is the only religion which has this very unique concept of Guru, in the form of scripture.

\textbf{Guru ( Human as guru and God as guru)}

From a metaphysical point of view goodness and truth are both infinite, which cannot be found in a finite human. Even when explained, human weakness could still be an obstacle in perfect expression. A Guru as a human, can express a particular circumstance and context but the divine word, which is supremely pure and eternal, is applicable in all circumstances and situations of life. I strongly feel a fully realized human form is bound by the cycle of birth and death. Who would be the Guru after the death of the human Guru? Therefore a Holy Scripture stands far superior to a human Guru at various levels in various circumstances. Though a Holy Scripture stands superior to personified Guru, at the practical level an ordinary person needs instruction and direction. For e.g. if a person is illiterate how is he going to repeat the \textit{Nám} of God, how is he going to meditate on it without having received any instruction? In such a situation at least some guidance is needed even to approach the Holy Scripture, though Holy Scripture is supremely pure and perfect but finally it is carved through human efforts. Therefore, I would give importance to both, human Guru as well as Holy Scripture as Guru.

\textsuperscript{564} Kabir, \textit{Kabir Granthāwali}, Binti ko Anga – 3

\textsuperscript{565} Kabir, \textit{Sākhi Granth}, Gurudev ko Anga – 14

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Sometimes without having received any instruction on scripture if a devotee goes on repeating the *Nām* of God without having even a thought and reasoning to it then what is the difference between a human devotee and ordinary parrot. Finally, I would say it is the matter of faith and freedom of will. Therefore, let the devotee decide who is better for him a personified Guru or the, Holy Scripture.

**God Realization**

The main stream of the thought behind this heading is to propose to analyze the base of the God-Realization according to Sant Kabir. He wanted to lead all men to the love of the lord with devotion and live a righteous life, as well as a good moral and social life which is free from all blind faith.

**The path of Self-enquiry**

The consciousness of the “Self” emerged as its focal point, just as the same ‘self-centeredness’ remained the focus of one’s life. “Absorption in the Self continued unbroken from that time. Other thoughts might come and go like the various notes of music, but the “I” continued like the fundamental Shruti note that underlines and blends with all the other notes.” Hence the direct means of achieving God-realization, as taught by him, is inquiring into the nature of the Self. The method is called the path of self-enquiry. It is basically an investigation into the essence of the Self.

Nirmārka adheres only to the worship of *Gopāla Krisna*, the cowherd *Krisna*, attended by his wedded consort Rādhā and engaged in playful pastimes with the gopis. Rāmānujaśāstra and his followers worship *Nārāyana* attended by Sri or Lakṣmi. But in the Rāmānujaśāstra sect the Bhakti or devotion is dominated by the sentiment of awe and reverence to the lord and so it is designated as *aisvaryapradhāna-bhakti* (अइस्वर्यप्रधान भक्ति). It involves the process of continuous meditation and as such is much more intellectual in character than that of the Nimbarkacārya sect, who takes pride in calling it *Mādhurya-pradhāna* where the intimate relation of love supersedes the majesty of God.

To Rāmānujaśāstra mokṣa does not mean the total loss of personality. In refuting the Advaita doctrine of Śaṅkaracārya, he writes that ‘release’ does not
mean a mere return to the substance of Brahman, because such a return signifies complete annihilation as when an earthen vessel is refunded into clay, its causal substance. He elucidates the point by citing the example of a person suffering from pain and trying to find out the means of freeing himself from manifold afflictions so that he may enjoy a state of untroubled bliss. If he is told that the effect of such activity will be the loss of his personal existence, he will certainly desist from his efforts, because he seeks release for self-realization and not for self-annihilation. According to Rāmānujācārya, the released soul experiences bliss of Śāyujya or intimate communion, which is more intimate than Śālokya (living in the same place), Śāmipya (nearness) and Śvārupya (having the same form). Long before Rāmānujācārya the Viśnu Purana had stated that the Mukta is attracted to Brahman as iron to the magnet. The iron, however, does not become the magnet. Rāmānujācārya is more definite in his commentary on the Bhagvatagita. In explaining VIII.14-15 of the Gita he stated that the released soul is set aflame with a passionate love for God. By the grace of God he is enabled to possess God as a lover. Though liberation is generally understood to be complete detachment, yet the liberated soul falls into an attachment more passionate than anything he had experienced before. He retains this glowing love even after fruition. In comparison to love, liberation appears as a mustard seed before mount Meru.

The ultimate state of Bhakti is identified with God himself. This prema bhakti is called Maharasa. This is also called Sahaja Sukha and Rama Rasa. But under the influence of this divine liquor a man keeps his sense organs and mind in perfect control. The state of divine love described by him is something attributed to the influence of Sufis on him. But while this is not impossible that Indian saints came in contact with the Sufis, it cannot be said that the idea of monism and the ecstatic love of God and the use of poetry and music in worship did not exist in India before the advent of Islam. It is equally plausible that Sufism could have imbibed certain Hindu and Buddhist mystical influences along with Neoplatonism in its formative period so that when it came to India it could easily serve as a bridge between Hindu and Muslim spirituality. Sant Kabir while describing the love he says, 'the love does not
grow in the fields and even one cannot get it in any market. The king or the people whoever wants it can get only after beheaded.\textsuperscript{566}

This state of Bhakti as a \textit{Sthayi-Bhāva} was later analyzed by scholars like Madhusudana Sarsvati who pointed out that the form of the Lord remains as a vivid impression in the mind as in a piece of sealing wax and does not leave the mind. The same idea can be seen in the vivid practical experiences of Sant Kabir.\textsuperscript{567}

\textbf{Meditation in Sant Kabir's Philosophy}

On Indian soil we find a variety of practices along the 'Pathway to Self-
realization'. Though all practices are known with their respective names but in a broad sense we can group all under 'Yoga'. The secret of yoga is spread through various philosophies like \textit{Yogasutra of Patanjali}, \textit{Karma-mimānsa-darśan} by Maharśi Bharadwāja, and again it is in \textit{Mantrayogasamhitā}, \textit{Hathayogasamhitā}, \textit{Rajyogasamhitā} and various \textit{purānas} and \textit{trantras}. These are texts for different styles of yoga.

Meditation is the most essential part of any instrumental method of pathway to God. There are varieties of meditational methods and practices. It depends upon the basic thought, philosophy, and eligibility of the pursuer or practitioner of that method. Considering the sky view of complete \textit{Yoga} systems of Indian philosophies, we find that it can be classified into four major parts; a) \textit{Mantra Yoga} b) \textit{Hatha Yoga} c) \textit{Laya Yoga} and d) \textit{Rāja Yoga}\textsuperscript{568}. Further, it can be divided into three basic nature of the practice viz. \textit{Karma-mārga}, \textit{Gyān-mārga}, and \textit{Bhakti-mārga}. Vedas also talk about \textit{Karma-kānd} and \textit{Upāsanā-kānd}. These divisions and practices have their root in Indian soil and have existed over the ages.

During 12\textsuperscript{th} to 17\textsuperscript{th} century, a great social and spiritual reformation took place. It is well-known as the 'Bhakti Movement' and is also known as 'Sant-Mat'. All saints involved in this reformation made the spiritual path more easy and meaningful. They diverted attention from the un-understandable and dry

\textsuperscript{566} Kabir, \textit{Kabir Granthūwali}, p. 70
\textsuperscript{567} ibid, p. 53
\textsuperscript{568} Unknown author, \textit{Sadhana ank}, Kalyan, Gita Press, Gorakhpur, p. 145-150

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Karma-kānd to surrender and devotion. They were successful in giving self-esteem to lower classes and castes, and removed all that was unethical and unnecessary from earlier methods. They selected the gist of various methods of meditation and gave their own meaning and interpretations to it. Thus, a new and updated method was developed. It was not just a mixture of older methods but a proper combination and permutation of all practices with a different point of view. The beauty of this Sant-Mata is that it is not an ownership nor does it comprise hero-worship.

The new developed meditational method came up on a new platform for religious and spiritual understanding which was made available to all. This is also known as a) ‘Bhakti-Yoga’. The practices under this tradition is famously known as b) ‘Sabda-Surati-Yoga’ and c) ‘Sahaja-Yoga’. Sant Kabir was the first and most famous founder of this system of meditation. In this method two points have been stressed, viz.,

1) It is the method for Nirguna and Nirākār God.

2) It is open to all without any discriminations of social status, caste, class or sex. One just requires intense love and full surrender and devotion to God.

Here we are going to discuss mainly, about the meditational methods used by Sant Kabir and his followers – The Kabirpanthis.

Meaning and Nature of Meditation

The repeated continuation or uninterrupted stream of that one point of focus is called absorption in meditation (dhyāna), and is the seventh of the eight steps. Meditation is sustained concentration, whereby the attention continues to hold or repeat the same object or place.

Meditation in Sant Kabir’s literature and terminology is also known as ‘Lōu laganā’ (लोू लगाना) ‘Lagan laganā’ (लगान लगाना) and also as ‘Surat laganā’ (सूरत लगाना). The meaning of meditation is given like this:

ली लगी तब जानिये, छूटि न कब्रहुं जाय। जीवत ली लगी रहै, पूरे तहां समाय॥

569 Patanjali, Yogasutra, 3.2 ‘tatra pratyaya ekatanata dhyanam’
570 Kabir, Kabir Šabdawali, Suksma Marag ko Anga – 2
1) Meditation is a continuous process. Life is a mediation. When life ends one merges with what one was meditating upon.

2) It does not require any posture, a special time, place or seat to meditate.

3) It does not depend on any criteria or piousness, holiness. One can meditate with or without open eyes, walking, doing work. Each and every action becomes meditation in this method.

4) The identity of the doer gets dissolved and only the action remains. It is the becoming of that with full surrender, devotion and without any particular identity.\textsuperscript{572}

5) In raag Gaudi, he says ‘without intense love and meditation upon the Guru’s word the soul is drawn into the destruction of the world.’\textsuperscript{573}

6) Sant Kabir uses a word ‘Lāgi’ (‘लागि’) which means ‘Anusandhān’ (‘अनुसंधान’) aiming at, or investigation for or rigorous search for God. When the Śabda of Guru passes through the heart of the devotee and make a hole in the heart; this is Lagan, the first requirement of meditation. It is ‘लगन लागि’.

7) With the help of metaphor Sant Kabir explains that when one is in meditation the worldly things do not affect one at all. He says, ‘In anticipation of the moon, the Chakor (a kind of partridge) swallows even a fireball but does not burn with it. One should meditate like Chakor such that whatever may come in its way one should accept with intense love.’\textsuperscript{574} This is real meditation says Sant Kabir.

\textbf{a) Bhakti-Yoga}

The term ‘Bhakti-Yoga’, is a combination of two words viz. “Bhakti” and “Yoga”, the latter which has been followed since ages, to which was added the term Bhakti by the saints. The term ‘Bhakti-Yoga’ creates a mystical combination bringing together the two flows of Bhakti and Yoga. Yoga works on the practice of the internal as well as the external world which is a basic

\textsuperscript{571} Kabir, Kabir Sākhī Granth, Lagani ko Anga – 1
\textsuperscript{572} ibid, Bhakti ko Anga - 34
\textsuperscript{573} Kabir, Mool Sandhyapath, Gaudi -1
\textsuperscript{574} Kabir, Kabir Sākhī Granth, Lagani ko Anga – 10
principle also found in Bhakti. Only difference between yoga and Bhakti is that internal practice in Bhakti means eternal and intense love for God whereas in yoga it is Dhāṛṇā, Dhyāṇ and Samādhi. Whereas Bhakti is fluid with the absence of any rigid rule or structure for the attainment of ultimate goal. The intense love brings about a natural transformation creating outflow from the heart, with an automatic turn into discipline and a process that is similar to one followed in yoga. In yoga, the process and discipline is a deliberate application for the attainment of the goal. Bhakti is an experience of extreme love and passion (अभिसारिका वृत्ति). However, in Yoga one is lost in the inner world and oblivious to the external. Yoga can be a support for Bhakti but not necessary as the yogic process starts automatically. Bhakti is open to everybody.

A yogi concentrates more on his practices and thus is attached to them for the attainment of ultimate goal. Thus Bhakti is not a matter of logical exposition in word and theories; it is merely a doing and experiencing. The extreme rational and dry yoga has been immersed in the juices of love and passion. While the yoga enables one to enhance and harness various powers. However attainment of the ultimate is not possible without ‘Love’. Bhakti is having love for Śabda which helps one to understand its essence. The door of Bhakti is subtle and once attained is not easy to leave. However only those who are of softer mind and in constant remembrance of Nām can attain Bhakti.

Bhakti continues to exist in favorable as well as adverse conditions. Bhakti is restricted to its doer. It does not entertain compromises and cannot be put on like a mask. It’s neither a matter of attire nor is it a necessary condition for Bhakti. The ‘Nām’ is essential to Bhakti. Bhakti naturally results in reducing suffering and brings stability in thought and action. It is eternal and it is outside the purview of time.

According to Sant Kabir the vital force is the root for Bhakti, while mind and emotions co-exist. It is an internal source without support and its power cannot be borne by everybody. It requires a stable mind and an unwavering attitude.
Once the seed of Bhakti is sowed it is imperishable and eternal. The saint sowed the seeds of Bhakti with lot of love and care in all directions however it takes root only in a few.

Bhakti is not for the coward. It requires courage, like in a war, the will to fight for it. It faces difficulties and require perseverance, commitment and sacrifice.

Bhakti is not commerce. It becomes so if it is without divine love. The attainment of Bhakti requires one to practice it without having a concern for returns.

Bhakti involves awareness, the last of which entails a state of continuous death even while living.

Bhakti necessarily includes the requirement of a Guru. Not only this, it is merging in the Guru’s principle and giving up of worldly attachment. To successfully attain Bhakti one has to be an avid worshipper with saintly attitude and a devout frame of mind.

Bhakti does not cater to ego. Bhakti dissolves the first and the second person and exists in unified form in mind and awareness. Bhakti is above class, caste, creed or sex.

A true Bhakta is essentially detached and although expresses love through his actions and teachings seems virtually dead detached internally. A Bhakta necessarily has humility, love, pity, equality, poor in materialism and a person of character. A disciple, who is a Bhakta, follows the path chopped out by the Guru and grows form strength to strength. A pure Bhakta will instantaneously and unquestioningly respond to the word of Guru. Bhakti-yoga is the tool for liberation.

b) Šabda Surati Yoga

In Sant Kabir’s philosophy the full phrase ‘Šabda Surati Yoga’ is never used. He talks about Šabda and Surati. Both these term have various meanings and have to be understood according to the context. Let us understand what Šabda and Surati are independent of the full phrase ‘Šabda Surati Yoga’.
Meaning of Śabda

In Sant Kabir’s philosophy Śabda means word\textsuperscript{575}, song, lyric, hymn, book and scripture. It’s a tool of awakening\textsuperscript{576}, seed of thought\textsuperscript{577}, the Brahman\textsuperscript{578}, ultimate element\textsuperscript{579}, the identity of limitlessness. It’s the only one which exists, the main source of creation, the essence of soul/self\textsuperscript{580}, the form of Self\textsuperscript{581}, Nām, the way, source and door of research/investigation, etc. In this way, though Śabda has many meanings, we shall concentrate more on the meaning which leads us to the process and practice of meditation. In the process Śabda plays various roles in a follower’s life.

Meaning of Surati

In the philosophy of Sant Kabir Surati means remembrance\textsuperscript{582}, the state of continuity with Nām\textsuperscript{583},\textsuperscript{584}, the intense love\textsuperscript{585}, Surati is the thread of continuous remembrance\textsuperscript{586}, it is a connection with Śabda\textsuperscript{587}, facing towards Guru (being a Gurumukha).

Śabda Surati Yoga is –

1) Śabda as a tool of awakening and wisdom

Sant Kabir in his Bāṇi says that the Śabda of Guru plays a very important role in the life of disciple. It is known as ‘Vivek’\textsuperscript{588} (the faculty of discrimination of the truth and false/ reasoning, rational thinking) and ‘Sāra Śabda’\textsuperscript{589}.\textsuperscript{590} To begin with the journey of Śabda Surati Mārga one needs to be wise enough to know what the essence is\textsuperscript{591}. Sant Kabir says ‘the difference between two

\textsuperscript{575} Kabir, \textit{Kabir Šabdawali, Šabda ko Anga} – 35 and 67
\textsuperscript{576} ibid, 30,29 and 32
\textsuperscript{577} Kabir, \textit{Bijak, Sākhi} – 125
\textsuperscript{578} Kabir, \textit{Kabir Šabdawali, Šabda ko Anga} – 7
\textsuperscript{579} ibid – 17
\textsuperscript{580} ibid – 3
\textsuperscript{581} ibid – 1
\textsuperscript{582} ibid, \textit{Lagani ko Anga} – 31
\textsuperscript{583} ibid, \textit{Sumiran ko Anga} – 54
\textsuperscript{584} ibid – 103
\textsuperscript{585} ibid, \textit{Pativrata ko Anga} – 39
\textsuperscript{586} ibid, \textit{Sumiran ko Anga} – 175
\textsuperscript{587} ibid – 156
\textsuperscript{588} ibid, Śabda ko Anga – 51
\textsuperscript{589} ibid – 54
\textsuperscript{590} ibid – 61
\textsuperscript{591} ibid – 3
Śabda is huge. One should concentrate only on the essential Śabda that is the Śabda with which one can attain God is the essential Śabda. Everyone talks about Śabda. One should think on that which gives calmness and peace of mind. It is possible only when one has the attitude of equality in all. This is the result of true Śabda. Śabda is that which is the treasure of bliss. Otherwise there are many Śabda which are just a heap of sorrows. The Śabda has the power to cut the knot which is tied to the nasty world. That is only the true Śabda which is given by Guru and which has never been let go in obliteration of a disciple. Śabda is like a magnet which can attract only positivity. Śabda is that which kills one’s ego and identity totally. It cannot be seen by looking at him from outside but actually the person is dead inside. Śabda makes one desire-less, without any attachment of doing or adding anything unnecessary. Sant Kabir says that Śabda is that which is clear and crushes the mountains of doubts and purifies and cleans the intellect.

2) Śabda and Surati is tool for meditation
Meditation on Śabda through Surati illuminates Nām. The soul gets merged with God forever. Śabda and Surati elevates the person to such a level where the world is rendered null and void. One who retain with true Nām will definitely reach to the ultimate goal. The way of meditation in Sant Kabir’s philosophy is one should meditate on Nām/Śabda in every breath. The key to meditate upon Nām is like a libidinous man loves lust in the same way one should love the Nām. Thus he will be enlightened. Sant Kabir says that one should meditate on inner self. The God dwells in our inner self. One
who meditates on inner self will find the treasure of \textit{Sabda} and \textit{Surati}.\footnote{Kabir, \textit{Kabir \textit{Sabdawali, Sumiran ko Anga – 105}}\footnote{ibid, – 104}} One should meditate through \textit{Sabda} and \textit{Surati} and be less talkative, in spite of exploring the world outside; the external/outer world should expose the world inside.\footnote{ibid, – 133} When \textit{Sabda} merges with \textit{Surati}, it enhances the person to that top level of meditation in which one can hear unstuck sound from inside at each and every moment.\footnote{ibid, \textit{Sabda ko Anga – 7}}

3) \textbf{\textit{Sabda} is the God (Knowing \textit{Sabda} means God Realization)}

Sant Kabir says that in \textit{Sabda, Brahman} dwells. We all are in the form of \textit{Sabda} and \textit{Sabda} is in our form. If one wants to achieve God Realization, one should know \textit{Sabda} correctly.\footnote{ibid, – 11} He says that one will discover God when he stays continuously in \textit{Sabda}. Only by knowing the \textit{Sabda} the person will know the ‘One’ and will discard duality.\footnote{ibid – 18} The bestowed saints are those who discover the true \textit{Sabda} and will attain God. They will never vanish.\footnote{ibid – 92}

4) \textbf{\textit{Sabda Surati Yoga} is neither Karmakānda nor does it mean Renunciation from the world or not performing house holder’s daily duty.}

\textit{Sabda Surati Yoga} is that type of the practice of meditation which does not demand isolation or renunciation from the world. Sant Kabir says that while performing every duty of householder’s life one can meditate and follow the pathway to God. He explains it with a metaphor of a woman who carries water on her head and walks on the way to home while gossiping, chatting and enjoying with her friends but her full concentration is on the pot full of water.\footnote{ibid – 170}

c) \textbf{\textit{Sahaja Yoga}}

In Sant Kabir’s philosophy the term ‘Sahaja yoga’ is mentioned often. Discussions and debates have been going on for a long time on this matter. The literal meaning of the word ‘Sahaja’ is with which we are born. We are born with not only our body but also with all five faculties of knowledge and
action. They are known as five sense organs (‘Gyanendriya’) and five action organs (‘Karmendriya’). These sets of fives are known as ‘Panča’ or ‘Pančendriya’ in Sant Kabir’s literature. Sant Kabir says that the word ‘Sahaja’ is uttered by many people without knowing its real meaning. Actually ‘Sahaja’ means one who has control over these fives.\(^{614}\) He says that it is ‘Sahaja’ which unite us with God.\(^{615}\) When we join the word ‘yoga’ with ‘Sahaja’ meaning of the full phrase is changes. It gives various meanings. In Sant Kabir’s literature we find the off use of the phrase ‘Sahaja yoga’. He says ‘Sahaja yoga’ is that where one gets the real ‘Śabda’ and has control over the mind. The real essence is ‘Śabda’ and not the body. Body is unreal.\(^{616}\) According to Puspal Singh, in his interpretation on Sant Kabir’s Sākhi, he says that with the guidance of supreme master, concentrating in inner world is known as ‘Sahaja Samādhi’. In this Samādhi there is no need of any Āsanas or Mudrā so also it is known as ‘Sahaja Samādhi’.\(^{617}\) Actually it is a practice of discovering the inner world, exploring and concentrating and meditating inside. And therefore it is a journey of the inner world and not the outer world.

**Concept of ‘Sevā’**

The pathway to self realization is a twofold path. The path of Simran with intense love is known as Śabda Surati Yoga in the philosophy of Sant Kabir. Other is the path of Sevā, or service to mankind. Love is inexpressible until it is exposed in action. A devotee cannot remain inactive. But one must engage him in the affairs of the world. At the same time he must follow the path of meditation. He must not leave any opportunity to help his fellow-beings without expecting returns. One can do this only if he is desire-less and unselfish. His mind must be free of all types of attachment. He must have a truly humble heart. He is Dāsa in Sant Kabir’s philosophy.

'Rendering service to the Guru is the supreme duty of the disciple, because it is through the Guru's teaching, blessing and grace that he obtains spiritual

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\(^{614}\) Kabir, Kabir Sākhi Granth, Sahaj ko Anga – 2

\(^{615}\) ibid

\(^{616}\) ibid, Śabda ko Anga – 12

\(^{617}\) Kabir, Kabir Granthāwali, Pushpal Singh (Commentary), Ashok Prakashan, Delhi, 1965, p. 152
wisdom and emancipation. Sant Kabir taught that worship of the Guru contains all other worship, just as when you water the root of a tree the branches, leaves, flowers and fruits become watered. Rendering service to Guru will give you the kingdom of the gods. It will release you from the strong and inaccessible fortress of the world.\[^{618}\] It should be like a daily routine. He says, 'The true cleansing bath is service to the Guru.'\[^{619}\] A person full of evil thinking cannot serve. Sant Kabir says, 'Until one has desires in the mind the worship of God is worthless. How one can meet that desirless God?'\[^{620}\] A Dāsa is truly a pure soul. 'Says Kabir, now I know that the Lord dwells within the hearts of His Saints; that servant performs the best service, whose heart is filled with the Lord.'\[^{621}\] Sant Kabir says, 'O Nath (Nath yogi)! How will you obtain liberation? Even now, you are full of evil thinking. What sort of service do you render, and what type of ritual and meditation do you do?'\[^{622}\] Service to God demands pure and full devoted mind.

Service to God means to serve His creation. According to Sant Kabir God is all pervading and thus He dwells in all. Service to mankind and taking care of nature is duty of a true devotee. Sant Kabir says, 'Brahma is in the leaves, Vishnu is in the branches, and Shiva is in the flowers. When you break these three gods, whose service are you performing?'\[^{623}\] Sant Kabir says, 'I do not pick leaves as offerings, and I do not worship idols. Without devotional worship of the Lord, service is useless. I worship the True Guru; forever and ever, I surrender to Him. By such service, I find peace in the Court of the Lord.'\[^{624}\] Sant Kabir says it is good to perform selfless service for two - the Saints and the Lord.\[^{625}\]

The person who is engaged in serving God and His creation has special qualities. He is very humble and brave, loves and takes care of all and never quarrels. Sant Kabir says, 'Your humble servant shall perform your devotional

\[^{618}\] Kabir, Bijak, Ramaini - 58
\[^{619}\] SGGS, p. 484
\[^{620}\] Kabir, Kabir Granthāwali, Nihkarmi pativrata ko Anga - 10
\[^{621}\] SGGS, p. 337
\[^{622}\] Kabir, Bijak, Šabda - 104
\[^{623}\] SGGS, p. 479
\[^{624}\] SGGS, p. 1158
\[^{625}\] SGGS, p. 1373
worship service with love. Sant Kabir says, 'He alone is a servant, whom the Lord enjoins to His service.' Actually man remains trapped in the quarrels of the world. If he recites God's name his poverty and suffering will vanish if he renders service to God. Quarrels in the world represent arguments, misunderstandings and all activities of the mind and senses that keep us away from God.

**Humility 'Dāsatva'**

'Humility is the best attribute. With humility everything becomes possible. Everyone bows down to such a person, just as they bow down to the moon in reverence on auspicious occasions.' No man can reach God if his heart is full of pride and ego. True humility is in being aware of one's own abilities and shortcomings; it lies in the knowledge that God alone is the Doer of all actions. Sant Kabir says, 'In this world, in the world beyond and everywhere, He alone is the Giver.' The humble beggar has found the Great Giver. It is only with the grace of God one can achieve four goals of life. 'Says Kabir, You are the All-powerful Lord, the Great Giver; in an instant, You bestow the four great blessings.' Ego and mine-ness are the major hurdles on the path of God realization. One has to give them up. Self-Surrender and faith is the way to the abode of love. There is no place for cowards. Hysteric emotions, argumentation and talkativeness are of no use. Start with humility and earnestness, and the Lord is before you, says Kabir. Sant Kabir says, 'I have nothing O Lord! Everything is Yours. Surrendering Yours to You is no loss to me.' He says, 'Greatness lies in humbleness. An ant can eat sugar but dust on the head of an elephant.' According to Sant Kabir without humility one cannot reach to God. He says, 'He remains spiritually ignorant and loses everything. Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva and Śakti searched for Him. Countless

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626 SGGS, p. 656  
627 SGGS, p. 1159  
629 Kabir, *Bijak*, Sākhi – 323  
630 SGGS, p. 337  
631 SGGS, p. 655  
632 SGGS, p. 856  
633 Arjundas, *Bijak*, Introduction, p. 15  
635 Kabir, *Sākhi Granth*, Māna ko Anga – 30
people, following countless ways of devotion, searched for Him. Scriptures and philosophies cannot be made ends in themselves. They are only stepping stones that should be used in conjunction with internal and external purity, simplicity, humility, nobility and other divine qualities, in order to reach the goal of God Realization.  

Sant Kabir uses special term for a humble devotee - 'Dāsa', means the servant of the God. And the body of devotee is termed as 'Dāsa-tan'. With Dāsatan a Dāsa serves the God with love, conviction, and a strong belief in God. Sant Kabir says that the greatness of a Dāsa is in ‘Sevā’ or service to Society. Without surrendering himself with the whole body, mind and wealth one cannot be a devotee, or a Harijan. Sant Kabir says till you have the hope of your body and bodily pleasure you cannot be a Dāsa. For being a Dāsa the devotee should be humble as a pebble on the path, which bears the foot of all who walks on it. He should not have any ego. Only after ego vanishes the devotee realizes God. Service to humanity is a prerequisite for liberation. This is possible only when we see God in all and become a Dāsa of all. Only by serving others one sheds one’s ego. If God is imminent in all I must serve all to reach God realization.

**Gratitude and Non-attachment**

The sense of humility brings the feeling of gratitude. It is most important to remember that all good things in life are the gifts of God and he should, therefore, praise and thank God for them. He should always make himself worthy of these. A devotee should learn to cut short wants and desires. And if he has more than needed should help the most needy. It is but obvious that if he desires worldly things for his own benefit, he will be less able to serve others. And therefore he must learn not to be attached to worldly things and not to regard anything as being wholly and completely his own. Sant Kabir says, 'Māyā and attachment have allured the world, and thus have stolen the diamond of knowledge.' Therefore he says, 'O foolish mind! Burn your attachment to the material world. Try to understand, it is your attachment that...

636 Kabir, Bijak, Ramaini - 25
637 ibid, Sabda - 60
causes your sorrows and sufferings. Sant Kabir says only due to attachment the soul is trapped into the birth and death. He says, 'Because of the mind, desires, and attachments, the soul takes on one body after another. When the mind is free of desires and passions, it merges into the inner being of the soul. This ends the cycle of births of one body being in another body.' According to Sant Kabir attachment will make one wander here and there, and one will lose your self-respect. Sant Kabir says that only he can be liberated in whom attachment to Māyā has vanished.

An attitude of non-attachment and a complete trust in God will naturally lead to contentment. This does not mean that we are entirely unconcerned about what happens to us or that we are necessarily satisfied with things as they are. God's will is that mankind should always diligently fight adversity and consistently strive to make things better than they are not only for himself, but for everybody. Contentment is the acceptance of good grace, of those conditions which are beyond our powers to change, and recognition that until God gives us the means to change them, He does not want us to worry too much about them.

Fearlessness

In the philosophy of Sant Kabir fearlessness is very important. As we walk on the path of devotion fear is slowly reduced. In Sant Kabir's philosophy true devotion lies in surrendering the self. Sant Kabir says “Now I will not frighten because now I know me and you, mine and yours. When a person leaves his ego then he becomes fearless. There are two types of fear in a man's mind, one fear of death and another is the fear of sorrow (dukh). The ultimate goal of a devotee is Jivanmukta avasthā. A Jivanmukta is the one who overcomes pleasures and pains (sukha and dukha).

The first sign of the quality in our character or personality which comes up is Bravery. Sant Kabir gives the example of a brave man - a soldier fighting in the war is real brave person. A soldier has no fear of death. He has so much

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638 Kabir, Bijak, Chanchar – B-1 and 2
639 ibid, Gyanchoutisa – 4
640 ibid, Kahara – G-5
641 ibid, Chanchar – A-25

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conviction about the cause for which he is fighting that he can even sacrifice the life. The path of devotion is not an easy path to follow. Sant Kabir says, the devotion is like the edge of a sword, it is like the burning fire, it is a war, and whoever is ready to cut the head can only meet the God.

**Concept of Good Society (Satsang/Sant Samāgam)**

'According to the company it keeps, so are the fruits it eats.' Choosing company is very essential and important especially for the one who wants to walk on pathway to God realization. Sant Kabir says, 'Man dies by bad company, just as the banana plant in the company of the plum tree. The banana leaves wave in the wind and are shredded by the thorns of the plum tree. The mind becomes corrupt by bad company.' And 'The banana plant was not observant when the plum tree was planted near it. If it realizes its position now, what can it do? It is surrounded by thorns. Choose your company carefully, before it's too late. It is foolish to dig a well when the house is on fire.'

In the philosophy of Sant Kabir great stress is on laid the company of good people. He uses the word *Satsanga*. The word Sat means truth and Sang means association with. So the full meaning of the word *Satsanga* is association with good people. He says, 'The *Sādha Sangata*, the Company of the Holy, is heaven.' And 'Blessed, blessed is the most fortunate servant of the Lord, who is imbued with the Lord's Love, in the *Sādha Sangata*, the Company of the Holy.'

**The Company of Saints**

Man needs the company of good people, the company of saints. Sant Kabir says, 'Keep the company of *Sādhus* (holy people) because they remove the troubles of others. The company of cruel people is bad, as it is the source of misery day and night.' He says, 'Keeping the company of noble people

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642 SGGS, p. 1369
643 Kabir, *Bijak*, Sākhi - 242
644 *ibid* - 243
645 SGGS, p. 325
646 SGGS, p. 792
647 Kabir, *Bijak*, Sākhi - 207

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brings happiness, and the company of evil people brings suffering.' By keeping company with good people (Sādhus) and with their example and guidance the mind turns to a true and righteous path. 'In the Sādha Sangata, the Company of the Holy, a faith wells up.' It makes us free from the baneful influence of evil desires and low thoughts. Sant Kabir says, 'By the grace of Guru, and the company of Sādhus, come through the door of liberation.' And 'Kabir, the mortal finds the Sādha Sangata, the Company of the Holy, if he has such destiny written upon his forehead.' Sant Kabir says, 'A devotee of God avoids the evil thoughts of the crow (eating carrion, being noisy) but they keep the company of pure souls. By developing their mind in this way, being close to God, they are able to discriminate between the good and the bad, and they walk on the righteous path.' The power of discrimination between good and bad can develop only with the company of Sādhu. Sant Kabir says, 'by the Grace of the Saints, her mind becomes pure; night and day, she remains awake and aware, singing the Kirtan of the Lord's Praises.'

Obedience

Sant Kabir valued the qualities of devotion and obedience. These help the devotee to have faith and to discipline his actions. Having obedience towards Guru or God is the best quality that sprouts out of intense love. It is true love and full faith in Guru/God. Sant Kabir says, 'Your Command is upon my head, and I no longer question it. You are the river, and You are the boatman; salvation comes from You. O human being, embrace the Lord's meditation, whether your Lord and Master is angry with you or in love with you. Your Name is my Support, like the flower blossoming in the water. Says Kabir, I am the slave of Your home; I live or die as You will.'

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648 SGGS, p. 343
649 Kabir, Bijak, Ṣākhi – 304
650 SGGS, p. 1376
651 SGGS, p. 1376
652 SGGS, p. 343
653 SGGS, p. 338
In the philosophy of Sant Kabir servility and blind faith are exceptionable. Obedience, on the other hand, is possible only when it inspires absolute trust and creates perfect love and understanding. Sant Kabir says, 'Now, the Lord, my King, has become my help and support. I have cut away birth and death, and attained the supreme status. He has united me with the Saadh Sangat, the Company of the Holy. He has rescued me from the five demons.... He has made me his own slave. The True Guru has blessed me with His generosity. I have fallen in love with His Lotus Feet.'

Man must live his life according to the will of God. Sant Kabir says, 'whoever realizes the Hukam of His Command, knows the One Lord. He alone is said to be the Lord's slave.'

Tolerance

The virtue of tolerance goes hand in hand with humility, since they both arise out of the same attitude of mind. The cause behind intolerance is having doubts due to ignorance and misconception of being great and treating others lower. Sant Kabir says, 'There are many strange religions, and it is difficult to describe them. Beguiled by Māyā, the people have forgotten God who dwells in every heart. O my brother! If you wish to awaken, then wake up, or else Yama will take your life.' The tolerant man may be convinced that his own religion is the best for himself, but he does not presume to criticize the beliefs and practices of others provided that they follow theirs sincerely.

Bravery

According to Sant Kabir a devotee must be a brave person. He says, 'a person who fights with the mind and wins all five sense organs and dispels all doubts is the real brave ones.' Only brave will be saved in this path. He says, 'The battle-drum beats in the sky of the mind; aim is taken, and the wound is inflicted. The spiritual warriors enter the field of battle; now is the time to

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654  SGGS, p. 331
655  SGGS, p. 1350
656  Kabir, Bijak, Ramaini – 18
657  Kabir, Kabir Granthawali, Sura tan ko Anga – 3
fight! He alone is known as a spiritual hero, who fights in defense of religion. He may be cut apart, piece by piece, but he never leaves the field of battle.\textsuperscript{658} On the field of God realization one should enter with the shield of knowledge. Sant Kabir says, 'He puts the shield of knowledge before him, and no one can budge his foot from its position. He is steadfast in knowledge.'\textsuperscript{659} A person who is selfish cannot go on battle field. Devotion demands bravery. It is not for the cowards. One has to be beheaded and then only can one walk on this path.\textsuperscript{660}

Conclusions

Thus, the teachings of Sant Kabir do not dogmatize, nor do they specify any permanently demarcated moral injunctions. The spiritual code of conduct is completely in the Bani of Sant Kabir. From all the sources of his Bani we can gather some simple fundamental ideas which are common to the entire human society. The main idea is Simran, to love God's Name and a union with Him. He is the Creator of all, ... this ideology naturally leads to the service of mankind.

Sant Kabir says "Sāhib Sevā māhi hai" (साहिब सेवा माहिं है). God dwells in the service (service to all). Instead of vrata, tiratha (अङ्क, गर्भ) (fasting and pilgrimage), he preferred the sahaja-sādhanā, (सहज-साधन) mind-control (manonigraha), (नरहन) self-control (atmasayam) (आत्मसंयम) and self-surrender and ātma-samarpana (आत्म-समर्पण) with ultimate devotion (annaya bhakti) (अन्नय भक्ति).

\textsuperscript{658} SGGS, p. 1105
\textsuperscript{659} Kabir, \textit{Bijak}, Chanchar – A 12
\textsuperscript{660} Kabir, \textit{Kabir Granthawali}, Sura tan ko Anga – 25