A liberal view and a revolutionary step was taken by Sant Kabir more than 600 years ago, against casteism, racism and inequalities to awaken the masses which were under the burden of blind following of religion and rituals. He stated five basic principles which lead humans towards a social and spiritual life. These are

1) Non-injury (Ahimsā)
2) The company of spiritual and holy people, (Satsang)
3) Desireless Karma, (Niśkāmkarma-yoga)
4) The worship of the Nam (simran)
5) Removal of casteism and Untouchability.

The words and preaching of Sant Kabir dealt with various social, philosophical and ethical questions that confronted humans. According to Sant Kabir’s philosophy the conflicts – Social and Religious can be overcome by humanity and humility i.e. Dāsatva.

A significant and outstanding contribution towards social transformation in the philosophy of Sant Kabir is the critical evaluation of the social strata of that period. This also drew attention towards the mal practices and social instability of that society. Even today the roots of casteism, racism have not been eradicated from the society. 65 years after the commencement of constitution of democratic India and various laws to remove unequal strata of the society, the mindset of the mass shows little improvement. Hence to create a liberal view and brotherhood in society and to develop the inner self of an individual, the path shown by Sant Kabir’s couplets and Šabdas need to be studied with an honest effort. This attempt of mine is a part of my social
responsibility as Kabirpanthi. It is also a contribution to link the different aspects of Dohās and Śabdās with today's fast growing but rigid society.

The whole philosophy of Sant Kabir is practical and life oriented, which treats the human with equal dignity in all walks of life. At the social level he was against casteism, classism, ritualism and fundamentalism. It was the fundamentalism as well as the presence of ego that led the upper class away from other humans as well as the Divine. In fact it was ignorance that led a particular group of people to develop ego. In reality they were away from the Divine, but projected themselves to be closest to it. Ego also led them far away from their own brethren.

At the physiological level of lower caste people developed a feeling of guilt within due to the misinterpretation of sin, karma and birth which technically had nothing to do with the status of life of a person in society. Sant Kabir in his philosophy gave importance to dignity and humanity rather than hypocrisy and double standard of life. He not only had a pragmatic approach while dealing with society but also he was quite rational in his dealing with social, religious, cultural and spiritual aspects of life.

There is a great impact of Sant Kabir's philosophy on the today's social life. Sant Kabir is considered as one of the most important saints in the Indian tradition. He combined Bhakti with service to society. He reached out to the masses, wrote in the language known to the masses and freed them from the clutches of casteism. His philosophy was the philosophy of Life.

According to Sant Kabir the root-cause of suffering is Ignorance. Sant Kabir says that just as a disease cannot be completely rooted out without the full knowledge of the disease, its cause its removal and its remedy, in the same way a man can never cross the unfathomable ocean of the worldly existence without the correct knowledge of suffering, its cause, its removal and its remedy. The sentient Self does not dawn without the correct thinking. Hence, it is necessary for one to have correct thinking for the attainment of knowledge.
Suffering is of two broad classes:- (1) Positive Suffering and 2) Negative Suffering.

Suffering in its positive sense provokes the sufferer to know and develop his/her potentialities to lead a great life. Western philosophy gives various answers to the problem of suffering such as pessimism, optimism etc.

In the philosophy of Sant Kabir, suffering is looked upon as,

5. Engagement with Unreal
6. Considering Non-profitable as profitable
7. Missing the tree for the wood
8. Lacking vision of Conscience

There are some positive aspects of suffering. They are as follows.

4. Will of God
5. Sense of Separation from God
6. Suffering changes the attitude towards worldly pleasure

When a philosophy gives an answer to the cause of suffering it has to develop theories like - theory of Karma, merits - demerits, soul, re-birth, death, sin, penances etc. If we connect suffering with God, problem arises specially in the philosophy of Sant Kabir, as God is considered to be without beginning and end and thus suffering also becomes endless and without beginning. Then how can we get rid of suffering? So we need to connect the concept of suffering with the imminence of time and it will cease with the cessation time.

In the philosophy of Sant Kabir the nature of thought regarding the Supreme Self is the kind of thought, "Who am I?" How did this universe come into being? Who is its creator? What is the material cause of the universe? This thought occurs repeatedly in Ramaini, Šabda, Gyānhoutisā and in Sākhi. There is a scope for systematizing further this epistemology. It is scattered in the Bani of Sant Kabir.

According to Sant Kabir a religion which is contrary to the sentient Self is no religion. According to him the worship of the Self and the satisfaction arising from that worship are real devotion and worship. He asserts that "there is no other deity who is equal in compassion to the living beings and worship of the
Self”. He has taught in a befitting way to follow the above-mentioned truth by making use of all sorts of words soft as well as severe ... keeping in view the prevailing circumstances and the persons concerned eg. "I will consider him as my grand-father, brother or a father who improves his birth as a human being. Moreover, I will become the servant at his feet. That person always lives blissfully who unfolds the warp of the actions while having the physical body i.e. one who realizes the true understanding by becoming free from all desires.\textsuperscript{661}

During this research, an interesting thing I noted was that Sant Kabir uses the same term and words of Indian philosophy and literature, he sometimes gives a totally new interpretation and sometimes a new shade of meaning to the words. For example the word 'Rama' suggests the qualified (the incarnated Rama) Rama at several places and the Unqualified Pure Nature (the Supreme Sentientcy) at most places. The same is the case with the words, viz., Hari, Jādavarāya, Govinda, Gopāl etc.

Sant Kabir has suggested the unqualified, pure sentient supreme Self as the final and the fundamental principle. He says that "O respected learned man! Your deliberations are false. There is no creation no creator in the state of the original nature of the Self (Nīja-pada). In the region of the Self, there does not exist the gross phenomenon and there does not exist the subtle phenomenon. .... That Ātma-deva has no mother, no father and no preceptor (guru). Well, then he alone who, on obtaining a human body, realizes Him is the preceptor while we are his disciples"\textsuperscript{662} He says the same principle in this way also "O respected learned man! Kindly think and realize that the Self (Hamsa-Ātman) is neither a man nor a woman which is the secret. It pervades all in the same measure. It alone speaks through each living being. Such is Its unique nature. Hence, how would I be called a Hindu or a Muslim? The reason is that the Self has no form of any kind."\textsuperscript{663}

\textsuperscript{661} Kabir, Bijāk, Sākhi – 322
\textsuperscript{662} ibid, Šabda – 43
\textsuperscript{663} ibid - 48

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Mâyâ is also without a beginning just as the supreme Self is without a beginning. In spite of both of them being without a beginning, the sentient supreme Self is without a beginning as well as without an end while Mâyâ is without beginning but has an end. Sant Kabir describes beginningless Mâyâ as "A completely different woman (Mâyâ) who has come to this mundane existence. She has neither a mother nor a father (i.e. she is without beginning). She has neither legs nor a head. She does not have a soul, the prop and pillar of her vital breaths. The entire mundane existence is misled by her. According to Sant Kabir, Prakriti or Mâyâ is not a separate ultimate reality. It has been created by God. It takes the individual away from God and thus leads him towards transmigration. Prakriti is the state of equipoise of Satva, Rajas and Tamas. Maya is also called Prakrati on account of its being the generator (mother) of the conglomeration in the form of cause and effect through the existence of the sentient. Moreover, that very 'Mâyâ' becomes 'Avidyâ' (nescience) on account of subordination of Satva (constituent). Though both are similar in respect of sentiency, a wide difference has resulted between the two as far as the qualities like omniscience, the state of having little knowledge and the like are concerned due to the respective purity and impurity of the limiting adjuncts." Sant Kabir says, 'One woman (Mâyâ) has manifested two male {Jiva and Īśvara). Brahma, Viṣṇu and Mahādeva have come into existence through this very Mâyâ on account of the predominance of Satva, Rajas and Tamas respectively. When the influence of Mâyâ vanishes, the jiva realizes Brahman. When Brahman comes into contact with Maya of three gunas (qualities), the process of creation begins. The unconscious matter and the finite selves, which exist in Brahman before the creation, join this process by a gracious act of His Will.

Sant Kabir describes Mâyâ in various ways and with many an analogy and metaphors. He says that Mâyâ is a hunter. Mâyâ is sweet. Mâyâ is lila, a swing; it is like a stealer, a serpent, a thug etc.

It is very important to note in this context that all the sectarian names such as Rama, Hari, Sarangpâni, Yâdavârâya, Gopâla and the like as well as the

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664 Kabir, Bijak, Ramaini - 72
names such as Saheb, Khasama and the like are employed in the present work in the sense of the above mentioned pure sentient supreme Self. This point of view is clearly stated in the following Ṣabda. 'The people generally understand the word "Rama' in the sense of the son of Dashratha but far more significant is the inner meaning of the word 'Rama' 'Dasaratha-sut tinhu lok bakhānā, Rama nām kā maram hai ānā.'

God exists without reference to the creation. He is the Creator of everything in the universe. He created all places. He exists without place. He existed before He created any of the places.

God does not change. Change is a sign of need and need is not befitting by an attribute of God. If a thing changes for the better then it was not perfect to begin with, and if it changes for the worse, then it is no longer perfect. God is assumed to be perfect. Therefore, God does not change. He does not occupy any space. He is not a body. God has no partner, no counterpart, no wife, and no offspring. Weakness is not an attribute of God. Therefore, only one God exists. For the same reason, the Devil does not have control over God. God has the attribute of Knowledge.

All saints in India especially those who belong to the 'Bhakti Movement' have never doubted the existence of God. They do not feel the need to prove the existence of God. In spite of the fact, that the existence of God is an assumption and a presupposition, Sant Kabir mainly relies on the inward belief. In the philosophy of Sant Kabir we find the development of idea of God is to realize God and for self-experience. There are certain presumptions which we have to make. They are – God Exists. In the Bani of Sant Kabir we can find an investigation in the existence of God. There are two aspects of existence of God. They are Sagunatva and Nirgunatva. Sagunatva is not acceptable because the true God is not incarnations of deities. Incarnation of deities has some problems like i) it is an icon of supremacy of Caste/Class, ii) humanization of God. Which further lead to a) rise of Untouchability and b) distinction on the bases of gender. Therefore in the philosophy of Sant Kabir the concept of God is Formlessness and God dwells in us and not outside.

665 Kabir, Bijak, Šabda - 109
Thus the concept of Social God developed which emphasizes that there is only 'One God' and He is the 'Creator of the World'. The Nirguna aspect of God has two forms, viz., Absolute Being (without any attributes) and Nam. The Realisation of God is through the grace of a Guru, total surrender and love.

'God exists' means we should have experiences either by seeing or by any other form. The question now arises is whether this experience is universal or personal. And how does one define it? Furthermore, the evidences of the existence of God are totally a private experience i.e. it is individualistic in nature. We cannot universalize it. Sant Kabir says that the one who has experience of God can be recognized by the other who has also experienced God. For that person Sant Kabir uses a term 'Bhedi' (बेदी) means one who knows the secret or one who has the direct experience of God. It is possible only after experience of God. The one who has experience is able to understand the supreme power of God.

God is not the totality of all things in the universe. That is, it is not that God is disintegrated or a sum total of the parts that we can see and feel in the universe. But God is the One, He manifests Himself in the universe and still He is not bounded by any part or the universe as a whole. He transcends the universe.

Even though God manifested Himself into particulars He remains One as whole. That God is non-dual, is only another way of saying that He is free absolutely; God is free to be One, not bound to be One. Even particulars are not full or not having fullness but they are the expressions of God.

God, when actualising such qualities, is called Karatāpurakh(u), when possessing them in their ideal form, differentiated from one another, it is called Satnāma or Śabda; when possessing them in their undifferentiated form which is the same thing as to say that he does not possess any qualities, it is called Satpuruṣa.

In the philosophy of Sant Kabir we find him making people more rational by putting questions directly on their beliefs and faith. He breaks through all misconceptions, mistaken beliefs and blind faiths. 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.

Nām is the immanent aspect of God. The Immanent aspect indicates God’s love for His creation. In Sant Kabir’s philosophy this aspect of God, which is called His Nām or Šabda, is of great importance. The Nām or Šabda gives direction and sanction to the entire moral and spiritual life of man.

In the philosophy of Sant Kabir it is said that before any creation there was nothing but that single existence. While explaining the concept of the world Sant Kabir talks about two realms of existence, viz., i) Ephemeral Realm (मृत्तिक) and ii) Immortal Realm (अमरलोक). One is the dual world in which we live and the other is the world of 'Satpuruṣa'.

In ephemeral realm all what we see is perishable, ever changing and bond by time and space. It is embroiled with Maya. It is unreal, illusory, perishable and a vain world, even though it seems to be real. It is the gross creation and made up of five major elements. The two realms of the world are each at different levels. One is for ignorant people and the other is for the seekers of the God's pathway. The only reality is God. The realm of Truth is the real world. In the Bani it is known as 'Satlok' or 'Amarlok' / Satlok.

In the Bāni of Sant Kabir at many places he talks about a different place than that of this world. In other words it is the realm of 'Truth'.

Sant Kabir talks about basic elements with which the world is constituent, viz., water, fire, air, earth and space and three gunas, viz., Sat, Raj and Tama. He talks about seven regions (सत लोक), fourteen abode (fourteen Bhuvan) (छत्ती पुरुष), Three worlds (तीन लोक), four genus (चार खानि), the world is like a woven cloth etc. He says like an artist God painted this world, the world is a big painting. He says like a potter, God created this world, like vessels of mud. He says from one egg, Omkār, the whole universe was created.
Who existed in the very beginning? Sant Kabir talks about one Creator who has created all living beings and He is thus the Father of all. Sant Kabir talks of the Creator making various forms of bodies, just as a potter makes various forms of pottery. In this way Sant Kabir talks about the state before the creation of the world and the starting of the creation of the world.

Sant Kabir describes the world like a dream, a virtual image, a big ocean, a cage, and from where we need to go beyond. It is not real, and it’s the place for performing actions and fruition in the form of consequences of our own actions. It is ever changing; it is something that has to be realized, the real being and reality. It is the place to gain true knowledge. Sant Kabir asks: For what purpose were you created and brought into the world? What rewards have you received in this life? In this way Sant Kabir talks about this world. In the philosophy of Sant Kabir we can see that he uses different terms for explaining and describing the concept of World, like Jagat, Jaga, Samsār, Khālaq, Tina-Loka, Triloka, Bhuvan, Bhava, Bhavasāgar, Bhavapinjarā, Duniyā etc.

Sant Kabir uses this metaphor of ocean for the world at many places. He describes the world as a terrifying ocean and one should get to the other shore of it. Sant Kabir says that there are three regions or three worlds. These are three realm created by Brahmā. They are space above the sky (आकाश), the earth (पृथ्वी) and the regions under the earth (परलोक) nether regions. In various places in Sant Kabir’s literature we can find the word ‘Trilok’ or ‘Tribhuvan’.

He describes it by its physical, mental, emotional, social, philosophical, religious, spiritual, aspects as a part of the whole world as well a part of the creator of the world. Sant Kabir talks about various concepts that are related to the concept of Man. They are the concept of human being (Mānuś), body (mānuś tana), soul (Jīva), devotee (bhakta), Gurumukha, as a seeker of the path of God (Sādhu or Avdhoota), Manmukha, as a fool (moođh or murakha), Self (Nija-pada), and so on.

According to Sant Kabir humans are a creation of God. The Truth (Brahman) is immanent in the universe. The human body is its repository. The body is
not merely a thing like other objects, it is an epitome of the universe. It is a microcosm, whereas the universe is macrocosm. Therefore, whatever exists in the universe also exists in the body of a human being. This implies that the same energy is in action, both in the human body and the vast cosmos. Sant Kabir describes the human body with the use of various terms/words viz. \textit{Tana, Ghata, Pinda, \textit{Sarir} etc}. The body is made of five elements, and is called human.\footnote{Kabir, \textit{Bijak, S\=akhi} – 23}

In the philosophy of Sant Kabir it is believed that there are five layers of a soul. It is five bodies known as \textit{‘panca-ko\=sa’}. They are 1) \textit{Annamaya}, 2) \textit{Manomaya}, 3) \textit{Gy\=anamaya}, 4) \textit{Vigy\=anamaya} and 5) \textit{\=Anandamaya}. These are also known as five \textit{\=Sarira} i.e. bodies. They are 1) \textit{Sthula \=Sarira}, 2) \textit{Suksma \=Sarira}, 3) \textit{K\=arana \=Sarira}, 4) \textit{Mah\=ak\=arana \=Sarira} and 5) \textit{Hansa \=Sarira}.

\textit{Jiva} is a miniature of Brahman. It should not be mistaken for Brahman Himself. It has its own individuality, but since it comes out of Brahman, it carries the qualities of Brahman. \textit{Jiva} is immortal. The physical body decays, but \textit{Jiva} continues for ever.\footnote{Kohali S. S., \textit{The Sikh Philosophy}, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 1992, p. 10} The concept of \textit{Jiva} in Sant Kabir's philosophy is the concept of drop and ocean.

Sant Kabir has often stated that human life is the highest in spiritual evolution. All the other forms of life are manifesting souls in a lower stage of spiritual evolution. In order to make this life worthwhile, people should know God in their own hearts.

Man lives in evil servile dependence upon society. He himself creates and strengthens his servile dependence on others by neglecting his spiritual development.

\textit{Gurumukha} is the ideal man. Sant Kabir gives plenty of examples of a \textit{Gurumukha} person. He is like the leaves of lotus. In progress from \textit{Manmukha} to \textit{Gurumukha} many ideas are intimately linked with this development. Man is unique among all living beings, for in him the quest which is part of life itself rises to consciousness. Man takes on his own
spiritual evolution. In man the thirst to live becomes a thirst for quality of life. Sant Kabir says that the life of man is desired even by the gods of heaven, since it is only through human incarnation that final liberation can be achieved.

The Perfect Man could be Videhamukta or Jivanmukta. The being that is liberated in life, has attained the state of elimination of all karmas and therefore has no cause for another incarnation. Rather a Jivanmukta dies only once in life and has no further death.

At the time of Sant Kabir, Indian women were severely degraded and oppressed by their society. Given no education or freedom to make decisions, their presence in religious, political, social, cultural, and economic affairs was virtually non-existent. Woman was referred to as "man's shoe, the root of all evil, a snare, and temptress." Her function was only to perpetuate the race, do household work, and serve the male members of society. Female infanticide was common and the practice of sati, the immolation of the wife on her husband's funeral pyre, was encouraged, and sometimes even forced.

In the philosophy of Sant Kabir we find a distinct and unique concept of 'Pativratā' or 'Suhāgan'. Pativrata means who is faithful to her spouse and Suhāgan means whose husband is alive. In Sant Kabir's point of view the 'Pativratā' is that woman who has only one husband669. And Suhāgan is who is Pativrata and who continuously whole day admires her husband670.

A drastic distinction between the roles of the male and female exists in all of history's modern human societies. Women have grown to accept, not without resentment though, the male-dominated atmosphere of the world. Because people use religious doctrine to define their life styles, religious scriptures in both the East and the West seem to condone, even encourage, the unequal treatment of women. In the 15th century, Sant Kabir advocated emphatically the equality of all people. In a continent characterized by severe degradation of women, this bold declaration, along with others, determined to erase the

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669 Kabir, Sākhi Granth, Pativrata ko Anag – 1
670 ibid - 10
impurities of the Indian society. However, prejudices and injustices based on
gender linger even today.

In certain periods of our history, education of women was sadly neglected, and
women lapsed into illiteracy and superstition. We have wasted, in our recent
past, women's gifts by failing to recognize them as human beings, able to act,
to achieve, and to engage in projects, given the right conditions. The position
of women in any society is a true index of its cultural and spiritual level.

The dignity of the human being as male or as female was affirmed in the
teachings of Sant Kabir. His vision of the immanence of the Creator in all of
His creation is the gospel of equality. Sant Kabir said that all creatures were
equal before God and that to make distinctions among them on the grounds of
birth or sex is sinful. Thus for Sant Kabir women should be treated as equals,
and gender discrimination is not allowed. To ensure equal status for women,
there is no distinction between the sexes in matters of initiation, instruction or
participation in Sangat, holy fellowship.

The concept of Love in Sant Kabir is a bride and a groom's concept. Husband
and wife or lover and beloved such analogies are used by Sant Kabir to show
the relationship between man and God. God is real Sājan, Piya beloved one
and all saints or jivas are Nāri, piyāri or wife of that God.

The state of widow was most pitiable in olden days. Polygamy was
permissible for man and a Hindu woman, could not remarry even after the
death of her husband. Therefore the Smritis allowed the practice of widow's
Sahamarana that is burning of herself on funeral pyre with her late husband.
Sometimes widow was allowed to live if she was pregnant or having infant
children to look after. But she was ousted from society and she had to undergo
rigorous discipline of self-denial.

In a stanza in Kabir Granthāwali, Sant Kabir rejects the prevalent superstition
of sutak, according to which a woman giving birth to a child remains
segregated for a given number of days, depending upon the caste to which she
belongs.
Indian culture has downgraded women in many ways for centuries. They have been deemed unworthy of education; restricted to being child bearers and housekeepers. In general, the male children have received preferential treatment in all areas of life. Women have been subjected to economic, social, cultural and judicial oppression from birth to death. They were regarded as a source of sin and obstruction to a man’s salvation; they were declared devoid of intelligence.

However, Sant Kabir's teachings of equality have never been fully realized, which is clearly evident in the treatment of women in the society even today. Due to male unwillingness to give up his dominant role, women continue to suffer prejudices. The Indian society discriminates against women in workplaces, and denies them the right to fight on the battlefield. People measure a woman's value by the size of her dowry, not necessarily by her character and integrity.

Sant Kabir is against discrimination among humans. He says, 'Kabir observes what is the use of saying one is a Hindu and the other is a Muslim, when they are both living on, and are nurtured by, the same earth. Their needs are all the same, as they are all human beings, and should not create artificial differences, and then create confusion.

No one is born great. An aristocrat behaving in an unethical way is same as an animal that has no ethical values or any concept of society. In the philosophy of Sant Kabir there is no place for asceticism and passivity. In Sant Kabir's ideology no religion and or no ritual is greater than that of Humanity. Being a human is more important than being a Brahman, wealthy, healthy, beautiful person worldly life. One should respect the other person of the society without any criteria attached to him i.e. his birth, wealth, sex etc.

In the philosophy of Sant Kabir fearlessness is very important. As we walk on the path of devotion fear slowly gets reduced. In Sant Kabir's philosophy true devotion lies in surrendering the self.

Sant Kabir uses special term for a humble devotee - 'Dasa', means the servant of the God. And the body of devotee is termed as 'Dāsātana'. With
'Dāsātana' a Dāsa serves God with love, conviction, and a strong belief in God. Sant Kabir's social philosophy was revolutionary. He rejected caste, class distinctions and distinctions based on religion or gender. Sant Kabir always preferred the way of Sadguru, (i.e. true spiritual guru or teacher) Sant Samāgama (company of devotees and saints) and Nam Simran. He made a beautiful combination of Cittāsvadhi (purity of heart), Sadacara (a good conduct of life or ethical way of life) and Nākama-karma (duty for duty's sake). Thus he awakened the society (Samaj-Jagruti). He stressed on Bhāva-Bhakti.

Man also needs the company of good people, so that by their example and guidance, he may be able to keep his mind steadfastly towards that which is true and righteous, and then be freed from the baneful influence of evil desires and low thoughts.

One can realise God only with the grace of Guru and total surrender and love for Him. 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 shows the path to liberation.

The relationship between Guru and disciple works on many levels. The Guru is like a bridge between disciple and God. 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.

- The Guru's presence in our life greatly expedites this process.
- When Guru accepts a disciple he takes the disciple as an extended part of his own consciousness.
• 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.

• Guru is the 'Word' of God, as spoken by the real seekers of the God, the enlightened persons, pious and religious ones, the persons who, in their ecstasy of love for God, sing about the nature of God and man.

• God, thus, is the primal Guru of the whole creation. Sant Kabir affirms that the Satguru is God.

Guru at empirical as well as transcendental and stands as a model of perfection. At the transcendental level, Guru as God is to be approached to attain perfection in life at all levels and even life here after.671 In fact an ordinary instructor has his own limitations but a real Guru or God has no limitation. 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.’672 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 without any explanations.

From a metaphysical point of view goodness and truth are both infinite and they 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.

The way to salvation is a twofold path: the path of love or simran, and the path of sevā, or service to mankind. Love means little until it is exposed in action, so the disciple cannot rightly remain inactive, but of necessity, he must engage himself in the affairs of the world, while also following the path of earnest meditation.

671 Kabir, Kabir Granthawali, Gurudev ko Anga - 2
672 ibid, Binti ko Anga - 7
No man can aspire to reach God if his own heart is full of pride and egotism. Man must always beware of the pitfalls of assumed or false humility. Even deliberate self-abasement can be a form of pride, since it arises out of egotism and self-esteem. True humility lies in being aware of one’s own abilities and shortcomings; it lies in the knowledge that God alone is the Doer of all actions; He alone is the Giver of all gifts; it is only by His favor that we enjoy riches, honor and achievement in this world. Without Him, we are nothing.

The virtue of tolerance goes hand in hand with humility, since they both arise out of the same attitude of mind. 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. Basic principles of all religion are universal and Sant Kabir recognized the goodness in all religious faiths. He therefore taught that people should fervently and sincerely practice their faiths in their daily lives.

The important thing for a person to remember is that while he is entitled to the good things of life, he should recognize that these are the gifts of God and he should, therefore, praise and thank God for them. He should always make himself worthy of these and if need be, he should learn to curtail his wants and help the needier.

The influences surrounding humanity are tinged with evil to a great extent. Therefore, if a person is to combat these evil influences of the world, he must learn to keep his own mind pure.

For a spiritual discipline, the 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. Sant Kabir says such a devotee is rare in the world. If your mind is not under your control then what is the use of being an ascetic man (a sanyāśī)673. To be a true seeker you should not be a vice ridden (vikā-r-rahit, nirvikāra). And for being a nirvikāra 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

673 Kabir, Kabir Granthāwali, pada – 300
qualities - truthful living, fearlessness, friendliness, love, purity, justice, generosity, graciousness, sweetness etc. which can make us godlike.

Sant Kabir advocates the path of *Ahimsā*. He says those who follow *Ahimsā* obey the natural rules and leave all out-world worldliness. Be just to all. If you believe in One God and that God dwells in all animals and creatures in the nature, then why are you killing them? Is it not indicating the dualism and is it not against the beliefs you have?

Idol worship is not acceptable in Sant Kabir's philosophy. He says that you are praying to a stone and offering it flowers and fruits that are alive and sensitive.

In fact, we are looking for reality and in some cases have common questions like from where have we come here? For what have we come here? Where are we going? And the like.

As you know science today has reached its own peak of greatness but both scientist and religious men accept that questions such as these can be answered by a Super natural power. The sheer incapacity of science to answer questions which come from the human spirit causes mankind to turn back to spirituality.

Sant Kabir was a social revolutionary. For the oppressed, Sant Kabir is a Mahatma, who spoke in their own tongue against untouchability. For a spiritual seeker, Sant Kabir is a great Yogi, a *Satpurusa*. For a man of letters, Sant Kabir is a poet par excellence.

During my research I found that spirituality and social life are interrelated and interlinked. A householder has spiritual authority. *Grihastashram* and *Sanyās* or *Sadhana* go hand in hand. Only an ethical person can be spiritually elevated. Such a spiritually elevated person dedicates his life to the service of humanity. Sant Kabir believes that the ultimate God is omnipresent and manifests through His creation, both human as well as non-human.