HINDU-MUSLIM RELIGIOUS INTERACTION CULMINATING IN KABIR
INTERACTION OF HINDU-MUSLIM IDEAS IN THE
FORMATION OF THE BHAKTI MOVEMENT WITH
SPECIAL REFERENCE TO KADIR, THE BHAKTA

BY

MUHAMMAD HEDAYETULLAH,
K. M. Dacca Board; B. A.
Honours, Dacca University;
M. A. Dacca University;
M. A. McGill University.

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AUTHOR: Muhammad Hedayetullah

SUPERVISOR: Professor J. G. Arapura

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The interaction between Indian ideas and those of Islam took place over a period of several centuries. The contacts between the two faiths were made both outside India and in India beginning from the Seventh Century of the Christian Era. The interaction between the Hindus and the Muslims took place on several levels, viz., intellectual, commercial, political and religious. In the present work, we made a special study of the last mentioned level.

With the coming of the Arab Muslim trader-missionaries to the Indian shores in the Seventh Century, the chapter of the interaction and assimilation in Hindu-Islamic interaction was opened, and as a result a popular religious movement called the Bhakti Movement began. This movement produced many great mystics both in Hinduism and Islam. In their highest spirituality, these bhaktas transcended religious differences between Hinduism and Islam. They professed and propagated a religion of devotion based on purity of heart, and bhakti directed to One God.

One of these bhaktas was Kabir, an illegitimate son of a Hindu woman, brought up by a Muslim weaver family of Banaras. He was a unique person by all means. He was the true product of the interaction of the Hindu-Muslim ideas. He propagated a new spirituality, a combination of some Hindu and some Muslim ideas, by which he attempted to resolve the historical tension between the Hindus and the Muslims in India. By propagating a new piety, Kabir wanted to unite the two communities.
For quite a long time, I have been interested in making a study of the Hindū-Muslim relation in India in its historical and religious perspectives. When I had the opportunity to peruse a few books on this subject, I became convinced that the history of the relationship between Indian ideas and those of Islām can be traced, even outside India, as far back as the seventh century of the Christian Era. I became especially interested in studying this subject in the Indian context. Having made further investigation, I discovered that at about the same time the process of interaction and assimilation between Hindū and Muslim ideas, customs, manners, etc. had started in South India. The process of the interaction between the two faiths and the two communities began with the coming of the Arab Muslim trader-missionaries to the West and the South-western coasts of India. This trend eventually led to the upsurge of a mass religious movement—the Bhakti Movement.

The Bhakti Movement—a religion of devotion—is a combination of the efforts of Hindū and Muslim mystics who, in their highest spirituality, transcended all distinctions between man and man religiously as well as socially. The religious message of these bhaktās or the great souls of God was characterised by such universality that their message was accepted by Hindūs and Muslims equally. Also, the rank and file of their disciples was swelled by Hindūs and Muslims indiscriminately. In other words, the Bhakti Movement created an atmosphere of harmony and concord in the religious life.
of medieval India.

One of these ṣābīds was Kabīr, a Muslim weaver of Banares. He was a unique person in every respect—in his upbringing, teaching and mission. He was not only a true product of the interaction of Hindū-Muslim ideas, but also a sincere ambassador of Hindū-Muslim unity. By preaching a new spirituality, he not only disregarded the formal religions of Hindūism and Islām, which he considered merely man-made, he also struggled to unite the two communities by a new piety which would not discriminate between them either religiously or socially.

Unfortunately, the teaching of this great sādhakā has not been appropriately dealt with. It has been misrepresented since his death, and many writers have not given proper treatment to its real significance. Some writers have tried to see him as a Hindū while others consider him exclusively as a Muslim. These are the results of careless study of Kabīr's teaching. Although on the basis of different parts of his teaching, one can take him as a Hindū or as a Muslim or a pure philosopher, the fact remains that, if we consider his teaching in its entirety and thoroughly examine its significance, we will find it impossible to place him exclusively in one category.

In this work, I have attempted to present the history of the Hindū-Muslim relationship in its religious perspective. Within this general context, I have also studied the life and teaching of Kabīr by emphasising his distinctive contribution.
to the religio-social life of medieval India. Kabir tried to combine Hindu monism with Islamic monotheism by discarding all the artificial barriers created by the two communities in the name of religion. Denouncing all religious formalisms, he preached a new religious universalism in an attempt to resolve the tensions that had prevailed between the two communities for so many centuries.

As for the sources, in completing this work, I relied primarily on Kabir's sayings as recorded in the Bījak and in the Adī-Granth. I have also collected information concerning Kabir's life and teaching from the writings of both medieval and modern writers. All information that I have gathered from different sources—primary as well as secondary—have been reinterpreted in an historical perspective.

For the present work, the first inspiration came from Professor J. G. Arapura. I am greatly indebted to him and to Professor Paul Younger for their assistance in bringing this work to completion within a reasonable time. Their comments and suggestions were very illuminating.

It is not possible to mention the names of all my friends who helped me in completing this work. I thank all of them. To my friend Peter Craigie, who has been particularly helpful, I express special gratitude. I also owe thanks to Patricia Huber, Howard Hanson and Christopher Harries. They helped me very much.
Finally, when I came to Canada having in mind the object of obtaining a Ph. D. degree, my mother was ambivalent: she was pleased that I was going abroad for higher studies, at the same time she feared that she would not be able to see me again, because of her ill health. She is still alive but has become chronically ill.

My mother allowed me to come to Canada to obtain a Doctoral degree. During the period of my studies in Canada, my mother's blessings have been a constant source of inspiration to me. I dedicate this work to both her and my father. They suffered so much in my absence.

Muhammad Hedayetullah,
McMaster University,
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Preface</td>
<td>iii-vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Introduction</td>
<td>1-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ch. I History of the Interaction of Hindu-Muslim Ideas</td>
<td>8-33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Ch. II The Interaction of Hindu-Muslim Ideas on the Mystical Level</td>
<td>34-78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Ch. III Interaction Through Bhakti Mysticism</td>
<td>79-149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Ch. IV The Life of Kabir</td>
<td>150-221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Ch. V The Teaching of Kabir</td>
<td>222-310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Conclusion</td>
<td>311-324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Notes</td>
<td>325-417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Bibliography</td>
<td>418-435</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The interaction between Hindu and Muslim ideas in India took place over a period of several centuries. The two cultures met on various levels, such as intellectual, commercial, political and religious. On each of these levels, the two religions influenced each other, sometimes peripherally, sometimes deeply. The most important of these levels for this study was the religious. In spite of their very basic differences, the two traditions were forced by circumstances into some kind of interaction even on orthodox level. However, the point at which the two religious traditions had something in common was mysticism, and both traditions produced non-orthodox mystics who could hardly be distinguished from one another. The system which expresses the culmination of their interaction is called Bhakti-Mysticism.

The interaction of Hindu-Muslim ideas through bhakti mysticism produced a number of great mystics in India during the medieval period. The characteristic feature of these bhaktā-mystics was that by no orthodox criterion could they be identified as purely Hindu or Muslim. They were the whole-hearted sādhakās of One God; they found no distinction between man and man, such as Hindu and Muslim; and they considered so-called religious observances, rites and ceremonies as useless for actual spiritual progress. In short, the type of bhakti mysticism which these sādhakās formulated and propagated was a simple religion of devotion (bhakti) to God which required
no outward performance of what are called religious duties, but needed only a pure heart and a sense of absolute surrender to a beloved God. As these bhaktas considered themselves whole-hearted lovers of God, the essence of their religion was love for God.

The greatest of all these mystics, who were products of an environment engendered by the interaction of the two faiths, was Kabir of Banaras, North India. Kabir occupies a unique position in the history of Indian national heroes, for he is one of the few figures to emerge from the history of Indian religion during the medieval period. Kabir's greatness lies primarily in his sustained efforts to unite the Hindus and the Muslims who had been antagonistic to one another for centuries. Kabir came to realise that the quarrels between Hindus and the Muslims were based fundamentally on religion. And it was religious prejudice and bias which prevented the two communities from developing a sense of unity and harmony, even though they were living together in the same society. Therefore, in order to achieve his mission, Kabir overtly denounced both Hindûism and Islâm. According to him, the traditional form of Hindûism as well as of Islâm was only a creation of Hindus and Muslims themselves, for, he maintained, the One God, Allāh or Rāma, has created only one human race without making any distinction between man and man. Correlative to this basic idea, Kabir argued that since there is One God, regardless of the different names used for Him, and one human race, there could not be many religions. By breaking
Introduction

I, down all denominational differences based on religion, Kabir tried to formulate a new religion, rather a new piety or a new spirituality, consisting of good elements from both Hinduism and Islam. That religion, primarily based on bhakti, Kabir hoped would be acceptable to both Hindus and Muslims.

In connection with Kabir's mission, the most significant point to remember is that in his striving to unite the Hindus and the Muslims under the fold of one religion, he consistently kept himself above all religious denominations. In this, he never identified himself as a Hindu or as a Muslim. The only available evidence of his identification is that of a 'weaver of Benares'. Thus, having kept himself above the level of Hindu-Muslim religious categories, Kabir found himself justified in denouncing both Hinduism and Islam with equal severity. He maintained perfect neutrality and showed no soft heart or preference to either religion. Kabir's distaste for sectarianism can also be seen in the fact that, unlike many bhaktas, he refused to organise any sect of his own followers. His understanding of one human race and a universal brotherhood of human beings prompted him not only to reject and denounce the Hindu caste system, and all sectarianism that was fostered by either Hindus or the Muslims, but also to refuse to constitute a sect of his own followers.

Kabir's effort to unite the Hindus and the Muslims on one religious-social platform was crowned with success, at least during his lifetime. But immediately after his death, his followers split up into two separate camps—Hindu and Muslim—
Introduction

thus pulling down the entire structure for which Kabir had
struggled so hard. The Kabir-panthis quickly departed from
the ideals of Kabir. The Kabir-panthis built up their own
sectarian tradition in spite of Kabir's warnings, and produced
a galaxy of literature in the name of Kabir. The history
of the Kabir-panthis falls outside the scope of this work.

In spite of his good intentions, Kabir was misunderstood
by people both during his lifetime and after his death. His
strange ideas puzzled people at home and created enemies
outside. His mother and his wife rebuked him for his involve-
ment in matters of religion, which, they thought, was the
business of Brāhmīns and Mullāhs. Being a member of a Muslim
family, his utterance of the name of the Hindū God, Rāma,
embarrassed his parents and his wife.

Outside his family, the Brāhmīns and the Mullāhs raised
a hue and cry against Kabir's ideas. First of all, his denun-
ciation of the sanctified position claimed by those so-called
guardians of religion engendered open hostility against him.
Second, both Hindū and Muslim religious personages found it
impossible to tolerate the authority of a low-caste man like
Kabir speaking on religious matters. Third, Kabir's overt
rejection of both traditional Hindūism and Islām, his preaching
of the idea of one religion for the people of India, and his
ignoring the distinction that is implied by names like Allāh
and Rāma, were considered sacrilege by orthodox Hindūs and
Muslims. According to the legends, these enemies tried to
get him penalised by the Muslim administration of that time.
Introduction

When Kabir died his Muslim and Hindu followers quarreled over his corpse and have continued to quarrel ever since. As a result the history of his life has been greatly distorted, with the record being so obscured that some writers have even doubted the existence of Kabir. Others, while not hesitating to accept the fact that Kabir was an actual human being, find it difficult to agree on what his true teaching was. Some of these writers try to treat Kabir as a Hindu, while others attempt to see him exclusively as a Muslim Sufi.

Where are we to find reliable information concerning Kabir's life and teaching? To begin with, the Rijāk (invocer) is taken as the treasurehouse for Kabir's teaching. However, it must be admitted that even the Rijāk does not contain every word of Kabir. It was compiled by his disciples long after his death. Naturally, the possibility of additions to Kabir's original sayings cannot be ruled out completely. Although facts and legends are mixed up through the ages, it is not altogether impossible to sift the genuine sayings of Kabir from the apocryphal within the Rijāk. By a study of Kabir's sayings as recorded in the Rijāk, we are able to see that there is a kind of single line of thought, though it is far from being logically consistent.

The second source for information concerning Kabir's life and teaching is the Adi-Granth, the religious scripture of Sikhism. The sayings of Kabir occupy a considerable portion of this scripture. The status given to Kabir's sayings in
Introduction

the Adī-Granth (or the Granth Sahib) is taken as a testimony to the authenticity of his sayings. However, as in the case of the Bijak, some additions and modifications can also be expected in the Adī-Granth. A small number of Kabir's sayings are found both in the Bijak and in the Adī-Granth, with slight difference in phrasing. This discrepancy is probably due to two oral traditions which served as kernel for the formation of the two scriptures.

In addition to these contemporary and near contemporary sources, the One Hundred Poems of Kabir by Rabindranath Tagore also provides some reflections of Kabir's teaching. Besides these, some information regarding Kabir's life and teaching can be gleaned from secular sources. These evidences are carefully collected in the Indian National Biography Series: Kabir, and other standard history books. In this work we will rely on both the scriptural and the secular sources. A careful study of all information as collected from these sources will help us to form a fairly correct view about Kabir's life and teaching.

On the basis of this historical information, we hope to find some keys by which to reinterpret Kabir's sayings in the light of their historical perspective. Our main objective will be not so much to give new information as to reinterpret the information already at our disposal and to argue that Kabir's thought was the product of the interaction of Hindu-Muslim ideas in bhakti mysticism. Secondly, we wish to show how Kabir tried to bind the Hindus and the Muslims together
with a single religio-social rope and thereby resolve the historical tension extant between them. We will argue that in order to achieve this goal he consistently kept himself above Hindū-Muslim sectarian identification.
(a) The Background of Interaction:

The interaction between Hinduism and Islam in India and outside India took place over a period of several centuries beginning from the early years of the seventh century of the Christian era. The interaction of faith and practice between the two religions was not only a lengthy but also a complicated process which demands careful investigation. Before dealing with the nature of the interaction as it was experienced by Hindus and Muslims in their practical life, it is necessary to analyse briefly the background of the interaction in broad outline.

A variety of factors make the study of this interaction exceedingly complex. Firstly, there is a dearth of evidence showing specific instances of either religion influencing the other, for the religious movements of medieval India have left few records in this respect. Secondly, there is the uncertainty as to whether a particular pattern of behaviour and belief found in both religions had a common origin in one, or grew up independently in both systems. The intricate question of the relation of Hindu and Muslim mystical movements is an example of this difficulty. Finally, one is confronted not only with the problem of identifying Islamic influences on Hinduism but also Hindu influences on Islam, for the process of interaction is complicated "by a double movement." Original Hindu influences, for instance, may have passed over into Islam; with the movement or process that resulted from this influence then, in turn, influencing Hinduism. Mysticism again provides a possible illustration.
The most obvious result of the religious impact of Islam on Hinduism, of course, is the existence of a large Muslim population in India. The view that Islam was propagated in India primarily through arms cannot be upheld historically. Aside from other evidence, the distribution of the Muslim population does not support it. It has been argued by different scholars that if the spread of Islam was due to the might of the Muslim kings, one would expect the largest proportion of Muslims in those areas which were the centres of Muslim political power. This, however, is not the case, as is shown by the actual distribution of the Muslim population in and around Delhi, Lucknow, Ahmadabad, Ahmadnagar, Bijapur, etc. On the other hand, Islam was never a political power in Malabar, "yet today Muslims form nearly 30 percent of its total population." The creation of the State of Pakistan in 1947 is another instance in point. These historical facts point to the fact that Muslim political authorities were not primarily instrumental in spreading Islam in India (cf. infra, p. 30), rather, it is fairly clear that most of the conversions was the work of the Sufis (Muslim mystics) and Muslim traders-missionaries who came to India beginning in the early seventh century of the Christian era (cf. ch. 11). It is these Muslim missionaries who were instrumental in facilitating the interaction and assimilation between Islam and Hinduism.

In south and south-western India, as early as the seventh century A.D. Arab Muslim traders, who were also missionaries, came and settled and carried out, unhindered and even encouraged by the Hindus (cf. infra, p. 23), both
their commercial and missionary activities. Some time later a number of influential Ṣūfīs went to these regions and converted large numbers to Islām (cf. ch. 11).

In the North and North-western regions of India (including Pākistān) the process of Muslim migration was augmented in the thirteenth century by the thousands of Muslim theologians and Ṣūfīs who fled to India to escape the Mongol terror. Thus Pīr Shaḥs Tabrīzī came to Multān, Khawājah Qūṭb-ud-Dīn Bakhtiyār came to Delhi and Sayyīd Jalāl settled in Uch, south of Multān. These Ṣūfīs apparently converted large number of Hindūs to Islām (cf. infra, pp. 54 ff.).

In Bengal, the Ṣūfīs found the widest response to their message among the outcastes and depressed classes. To them, the creed of Islām, with its emphasis on equality, must have come as a liberating force. The acceptance of Islām not only ensured free and equal entry into the great Islāmic brotherhood, but, also, exemption from the burdensome poll-tax (jīzāh). In Bengal the Ṣūfīs "very frequently transferred ancient Hindū and Buddhist stories of miracles to Muslim saints, fusing the old religion into the new on a level that could be accepted by the masses."

It may be pointed out here that although the contributions of the Muslim missionaries in spreading Islām in India should be emphasized, the role played by the Muslim rulers in this respect cannot be disregarded completely. Therefore, the respective parts played by both missionaries and the political authorities will be discussed in detail in the
next chapter.

According to the Muslim historian Ibn-ul-Athir, there had been Muslims in the Banaras area, the holy city of Hindūism, since the days of Māmūd b. Sabuktigin, in the beginning of the eleventh century A. D. A renowned Indian historian gives us more definite information in this respect. Speaking about the Muslim settlements in India, R. C. Majumdar tells us on the authority of Chach-nāma that before the Muslim conquest of Sindh in 712 A. D., King Dāhar of Sindh had a body of 500 Arab Muslim troops in his service. These Arab Muslims are said to have come to India and settled here and there. Some of them appear to have joined Dāhar's service. S. M. Ikrām tells us that there is a local tradition in certain old centres in the heart of Uttar Pradesh (probably Banaras) that Muslim families had settled there long before the conquest of the areas by Muḥammad Ghūrī (1192 A. D.). Although we have no definite evidence of the first Muslim settlement in India on a large scale, still the isolated facts mentioned in earlier chronicles and histories, such as the Chach-nāma and Balādūrī's account, enable us to form a general idea of its nature. In any case, by the end of the Fourteenth Century, Islām had permeated all parts of India, and the process which eventually led to the conversion of a large percentage of the population to Islām, and resulted in far-reaching cultural and religious changes, was fully underway.

The developments which resulted from this exchange in the cultural sphere—such as the development of regional
languages, the rise of Hindūstāni and the evolution of Indo-Muslim music, art and architecture—are beyond the scope of this work. The present work will examine the religious movements, more specifically the bhakti movements, and especially the bhakti religion advocated by Kabīr in Fifteenth Century, which seem to owe something to the interaction of Hindūism and Islām. Although the lack of the proper kind of historical records makes it impossible to determine the detailed process of interaction, what is certain is that the period under review witnessed developments of great importance in the religious life of people exposed to the radically different religious traditions of Hindūism and Islām.

Although as a religious concept bhakti, or the idea of a religion of devotion, may possibly be as old as Hindūism itself, a cultic movement based specifically on bhakti started in the Tamil land of South India in the early years of the Christian era. Śaivite and the Vaiṣṇavite saints were the originators of this Bhakti Movement (cf. ch. III). The cause of this bhakti cult was later championed by great philosophers like Rāmānuja, Mādhva, Vallabha and others (cf. ch. III). In the early fifteenth century a certain saint of great repute, called Rāmānanda, took this bhakti cult to North India where it swept through the entire religious life of the masses. The fifteenth century, it has been observed, "was marked by an extraordinary outburst of devotional poetry inspired by these religious movements, and this stands out as one of the great formative periods in the history of northern India, a period in which on the one hand the modern languages were firmly
established as vehicles of literary expression, and on the other the faith of the people was permeated by new ideas."

Kabir (1440-1518), one of the disciples of the saint Rāmānanda, who is considered by many to be the most interesting product of the interaction of Islam and Hinduism, is also one of the most outstanding of all bhakti reformers. As a true child of the two cultures, he was the first person to strive to break down some of the barriers that separated Hindus from Muslims and to introduce a synthesised religion or a piety acceptable to members of both religions.

The characteristic features of bhakti movements are: (1) a strong monotheistic tendency (in some bhakti schools this went so far as the rejection of the usual Hindu images); and (2) the equality of all men (in some bhakti schools this included even a rejection of the traditional Hindu caste prejudices).

The religious schools and movements which arose during this period (seventh to fifteenth century A.D.) are the results of mutual influences of Hindus and Muslims through bhakti mysticism. Some argue that the influence of Islam is the determining factor. This view, however, seems to be an oversimplification of a very complex phenomenon, for many of the elements associated with the bhakti movement of the period under examination had already been important elements in Hinduism for many centuries. It is reasonable to assume that the influence of Islam gave an impetus to the already existing bhakti ideas, such as monotheism, human equality, etc. This view has been corroborated
by scholars like Yusuf Husain and Sayyid 'Abid Husain. We have historical evidence showing that the Sufis had been directly or indirectly influenced by Hindu thought and institutions before the conquest of India by the Muslims (cf. ch. II). Then, during the period under investigation the Sufis in turn stimulated and revitalised, in conjunction with the bhakti reformers, those very elements of Hinduism which had originally influenced them. Thus Dr. S. Radhakrishnan observes: "The reform movements of Ramananda, Caitanya, Kabir, and Nanak show the stimulus of Islam." This view has been affirmed by Ikrām.

Because of the importance of great names such as Kabir and Nanak there is a tendency to regard, what was essentially a movement of interaction between two faiths, as being in the main the one-sided influence of Islam on Hinduism. This impression is probably misleading for the contact of cultures means an interchange of ideas and customs and does not usually lead to the complete domination of the one by the other. Hence Professor Radhakrishnan has justly said: "The clash of cults and the contact of cultures do not, as a rule, result in a complete domination of the one by the other. In all true contact there is an interchange of elements, though the foreign elements are given a new significance by those who accept them." Islamic ideas played a vital role in revitalising Indian bhakti ideas. However, Muslim society also was deeply influenced by its contact with Hinduism. Some of these contacts had been made even before Islamic rule was established in India, as we shall discuss later.
Another aspect of this interaction which is often mist
interpreted are the Hindu practices which are followed by
Indian Muslims. This may not be a simple case of Hindu influence
upon Muslims, but is probably more often an indication of an
incomplete change from the old way of life. Indian Muslims, it
should be remembered, did not start with orthodox Islam, but
began by accepting a few basic principles, which the Sufis
imparted to them, and only in the course of time have they
become more orthodox, and sometimes even fanatically dogmatic.
This process of conversion was less complete in the lower
classes, or those groups which, like the Khojahs, adopted a
somewhat composite form of religion.

The main influence of Hinduism on Islam is probably seen
not so much in specific instances of religious practice as in a
general softening of the original attitude of the Muslim
rulers in religious matters.

There is a general impression in many histories of this
period that there was never a genuine attempt to create under-
standing and a rapprochement between the two faiths except on
the part of Kabir (and Nānak); and there is an impression that
the contacts between the two religions were, on the whole,
superficial as far as the total life of the country was concerned.
Writing in 1030, before the full tide of conquest had begun,
Al-Biruni noticed how the Hindus differed from the Muslims in
every respect, and, because of the raids by Mahmūd of Ghazna;
"cherish the most inveterate aversion toward all Muslims."
Nearly three centuries later another Muslim traveller, Ibn
Battūtah remarked that Hindus and Muslims lived in entirely separate communities. For Hindus there could be no intermarriage with Muslims nor even interdining. "It is the custom among the heathens of the Malabar country", he remarked, "that no Muslim should enter their houses or use their vessels for eating purposes. If a Muslim is fed out of their vessels, they either break the vessels or give them away to the Muslims."

This observation is true to some extent. But the initial hostility between the two peoples was followed by a process of interaction and assimilation even among the orthodox sections of the two faiths. As for the radical mystics of the two religions, who considered themselves devotees of God, not strictly bound by the rules of any organised religious system and thus transcending all sectarian differences, they went far beyond the boundaries of the orthodox religions. The process of the interaction and assimilation fostered by these mystics touched even the fundamental principles of both religions. The bhakti mysticism of Kabir is the best example of this type.

It is against this background that we must see the greatness of the achievements of Kabir and, at the same time, we should realise the almost insurmountable barriers to an enduring rapprochement. Notwithstanding, Kabir's efforts attained a measure of success at least during his lifetime, and the impetus of his ideas continued for a long time.

(b) The Nature of the Interaction:

Hinduism and Islam are two very different religions. Dr. Radhakrishnan defines Hinduism in the following words:
To many it seems to be a name without any content. It is a museum of beliefs, a medley of rites, or a mere map, a geographical expression? Its content, if it has any, has altered from age to age, from community to community. It meant one thing in the Vedic period, another in the Brahmanical, and a third in the Buddhist. It means one thing to the Saivite, another to the Vaishnavite, a third to the Saka. 28

In short, Hinduism is not a religion of some fixed rites and rituals. It is a complex whole having root in the Vedas, the Epics, the Purāṇas and the Taṇtrās. Dogmatism is not a characteristic feature of Hinduism. The flexibility of its nature can be measured from the ease with which it has steadily absorbed the customs and ideas of people with whom it has come in contact. Radhakrishnan maintains:

Hinduism is the religion not only of the Vedas but of the Epics and the Purāṇas. By accepting the significance of the different institutions of reality and the different scriptures of the peoples living in India (guravāmanāmānāna), Hinduism has come to be a tapestry of the most variegated tissues and almost endless diversity of hues. Hinduism is therefore not a definite dogmatic creed, but a vast, complex, but subtly unified mass of spiritual thought and realization. Its tradition of the godward, endeavours of the human spirit has been continuously enlarging through the ages. 29

In contradistinction to this character of Hinduism, Islām, as a religio-cultural force, is in most respects the "very antithesis of Hinduism." Professor 'Azīz Ahmad describes the points of difference between Hinduism and Islām in the following way:

Hinduism is a large aggregate of belief, developed in the course of many centuries, evolving from the sacrificial hymns of the Vedas to the philosophical speculation of the Upaniṣads, the discipline of Yoga, the metaphysical subtleties of Vedānta and the passionate devotion of Bhakti. Islām, on the other hand, is bound by an austere central discipline, revolving round Qur'ān, the VOX DRÆ, and hadīth;
the VOX Prophetae;...

In line with the above statement a Western missionary-scholar, Murray T. Titus observes: "For twelve long centuries Islam has been in contact with Hindūism in India. For twelve centuries each community has been confronted by the other... Their differences of belief, together with communal aspirations on the one hand contending with an instinct for communal preservation on the other, have been the source of much friction which continues to the present day." Al-Bīrūnī, the first Muslim who wrote on this topic after having lived and studied in the Indian society for some time in the eleventh century, observes:

They (Hindus) totally differ from us in religion; as we believe in nothing in which they believe, and vice versa. On the whole, there is very little disputing about theological topics among themselves; at the utmost, they fight with words, but they will never stake their soul or body or their property on religious controversy. On the contrary, all their fanaticism is directed against those who do not belong to them—against all foreigners (evidently the reference is to the Muslims). They call them mleccha, i.e., impure, and forbid having any connection with them,... In all manners and usages they differ from us, to such a degree as to frighten their children with us, with our gods, and our ways and customs, and so to declare us to be devil's breed, and our doings as the very opposite of all that is good and proper.

There are innumerable early and recent writers who confirm this point. The mutual interaction of the two communities and the mutual influences in manners, ceremonies, superstitions, mysticism and a common economic life, "touched merely the fringe and external element" of their existence; "neither the Hindūs nor the Muslims imbibed, even to the least degree, the chief characteristic features of the other's culture which may be regarded as their greatest
contribution to human civilization"; and in the set pattern of their respective behaviour in India, "the Hindūs combined catholicity in religious outlook with bigotry in social ethics, while the Muslims displayed an equal bigotry in religious ideas with catholicity in social behaviour." But despite bigotry on the part of both religions, some kind of interaction was unavoidable. On the mystical level, especially the bhakti type of mysticism, some Hindū and Muslim mystics actively sought to remove those barriers which kept the two communities separated, and evolved a type of religion of devotion which was a blending of some elements taken from both religions. This as we shall see was the case with Ḥabīr.

Contacts between India and Islam were made on at least four grounds, viz., intellectual, commercial, political and religio-mystical.

(a) Intellectual: Professor P.K. Hitti remarks that "India acted as an early source of inspiration, especially in wisdom literature and mathematics." The earliest recorded Indo-Muslim intellectual contact took place in 771 A.D., when a Hindū astronomer and mathematician reached Baghdad bringing with him a Sanskrit book entitled Brahma-Siddhanta (by Brāhma-gupta) which he translated into Arabic (entitled Sindhind) with the help of an Arab scholar, named, al-Fazārī. It had the greatest influence in the development of Muslim astronomy. This same Indian traveller had also brought a treatise on mathematics by means of which the numerals (called in Europe Arabic, but by the Arabs al-rumūn al-Hindiyah, "Indian numerals")
were introduced to Muslim culture. Later, in the ninth century, India made another important contribution to Muslim mathematical science, the decimal system. Indian medicine received great patronage from the Caliphate of Baghdad. Many Sanskrit books (at least 15) on medicine were translated into Arabic. Indian doctors enjoyed great respect in Baghdad. One of these doctors was Mansa, who was specially sent to treat Caliph Harun al-Rashid (r. 786-809).

Sanskrit books on astrology, palmistry, logic, alchemy, magic, ethics, statecraft, etc. gained wide popularity in the Muslim world. Some of the stories of the Arabian Nights are attributed to Indian origin; an Arabic translation of the Panchatantra, namely Kalila wa Dimna, came to be very popular in Muslim countries. The Muslims also got the games of chess and chausar from India in the seventh century. An Arab Muslim writer named Jahiz (d. 869) mentions that Indian music influenced Arabs, and was popular in Baghdad in his day.

(b) Commercial: The first group of Arab Muslims who came to India were the trader-missionaries. R.C. Majumdar informs us that there was maritime intercourse from very early period between India and Persia and Arabia, and we have definite evidence that the relation continued even after the spread of Islam in those countries. That means, the Arab Muslims came to the coast of India in the wake of their pagan ancestors, who had carried on maritime trade between India and the West. In fact, the Arab traders were a commercial link between East and West since the dawn of history.
According to one account, the first Muslim fleet appeared in Indian waters in 636 A.D. during the Caliphate of 'Umar, when 'Uthmân Sakîfî, the Governor of Bahrayn and Umân, sent an army across the sea to Tanah. M. J. Rowlandson says that the Muslim Arabs first settled on the Kâlâbar coast about the end of the seventh century. This opinion has been confirmed by other writers. R.C. Majumdar, for example, speaking about India's trade relations with Persia and Arabia, says, "It is therefore highly probable that Muslim traders, who frequented the coastal regions, near the important ports, live there for long or short periods, and some of them might even have settled there on more or less permanent basis."

Another writer, namely, Sturrock, says:

> From the seventh century onwards it is well known that Persian and Arab traders settled in large numbers at the different ports on the western coast of India and married women of the country and these settlements were specially large and important in Kâlâbar where from the very early time it seems to have been the policy to afford every encouragement to traders of the ports.

Moreover, the Muslims were then living in those areas as may be inferred from Bâlânûrî's account of the immediate causes of the Muslim conquest of the Sindh in 712 A.D. He related that the king of Ceylon sent certain orphan Muslim girls, who had been born in that country to Hajjâj bin Yûsuf. But the Bawari (the piratic tribes of Kutch) attacked the ship and seized the girls. Hajjâj demanded their release from Dâhir, King of Dipāl, who did not, more likely, could not, comply with the demand. Upon this, Hajjâj sent the expedition led by Muhammad bin Qâsim which resulted in the conquest of Sindh.
According to another account, the first advance of Muslims in South India dates as far back as the early years of the eighth century, when a group of Muslim refugees, to whom the Kollas trace their descent, came from 'Iraq, and settled on the Malabar coast. The trade between India and Europe which was conducted by Arab and Persian Muslims caused a continual stream of Muslim influence to flow upon the West coast of Southern India. "From this constant influx of foreigners", says Arnold, "there resulted a mixed population, half Hindū and half Arab or Persia, in the trading centres along the coast." Friendly relations seem to have existed between these Muslim traders and the Hindūs; the Hindū rulers extended their protection and patronage to the Muslim traders, and the legend of conversion of a Hindū Rāja called Cherāman Perūmāl (Muslim name: 'Abdur Rāhān) indicates that they were allowed to propagate Islam.

The elaborate story of the first introduction of Islam into Malabar and the conversion of the Rāja is given by Zayn-ud-Dīn (15th cent.) in his book, Tuhfat al-Mufīdīn. In this connection, the names of three persons have been mentioned: they are Shaykh Sharaf bin Mālik, Mālik bin Jinnār and Mālik bin Ḥabīb. They are said to have constructed many mosques throughout Malabar and the surrounding areas. "So rapid was the process of conversion", remarks Titus, "that took place during the early centuries of the Muslim era, that, had the Portuguese not arrived on the scene when they did, it is claimed, the whole of the Malabar coast would have become solidly Muslimān."
On the authority of Ibn Baṭṭūṭah (1304–1377), Titus tells us that there were many rich Muslim merchants with whom the towns of Kāḷābar were crowded, and that five mosques stood as an ornament to Quilon.

Although some writers question the historicity of the whole narrative of Zayn-ud-Dīn, Arnold asserts: "But the legend certainly bears witness to the peaceful character of the proselytising influences that were at work on the Kāḷābar coast for centuries." Besides the Arab merchants at missionary work, Ibn Baṭṭūṭah makes mention of several theologians from Arabia and elsewhere whom he met in various towns of the Kāḷābar coast. At any rate, those Muslims intermarried with native women; some of them are reported to have joined service under Hindū princes; and at least one of them contributed financially to a Hindū temple. **Consequent to the preaching of Islam, and conversion to it, interaction and assimilation between the Hindūs and the Muslis took place; as a result several mixed communities, such as the Lōbbeq of the east Tamil coast, the Nāwāits of the Konkan, aside from the Kophīs, arose in the South. The Zamorin of Calicut, who was one of the chief patrons of Arab trade, is said to have encouraged conversion to Islam in order to man the Arab ships on which he was dependent for his economic prosperity, and to have ordered that in every family of fishermen in his domain one or more of the male members should be brought up as Muslin.**

Speaking about the influence of these Arab merchants, Yūsuf Ḫusain holds that their influence must have been very effective upon the people of the lower castes who entered their
service. "This must have certainly gone a long way in transforming the social and economic life of the lower castes." Mas'ūdī (d. 915), who travelled in western India, mentions that the Rājāh of Balhara, the Vallabhi ruler of western India, showed a great respect for Islām and protected the interests of Muslims in his domain. Ibn Hawqal (d. 943), Abū Zayd Hasan (d. 878) and Sulaymān at-Tājir (d. 910) all join in praising the Rājāh for his patronage and tolerance towards the Muslims. Mas'ūdī further informs us that in all ports of Gujrat the Muslims had built mosques where they said their daily prayers.

During the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the time of Rāmānuja, the Arab merchants were still preaching and making conversions on the western and eastern coasts of India. In other words, there were enough Muslims in the South from the Eighth Century on that South Indian bhaktas could have known of them, even though we have no positive evidence that they did. However, on the basis of the fact that there were many Muslims in the South during the time of Rāmānuja, some have suggested the influence of Islām on him. This, of course, is not to assert that Rāmānuja came under the direct influence of Islām. The question, however, is a debatable one, for the possibility that Rāmānuja influenced the Muslims could also be argued. In the absence of positive evidence of contact between Rāmānuja and Muslims we cannot draw any specific conclusions about possible influence, but we can draw attention to certain historical situations that created a general atmosphere of Hindū-Muslim interaction in South India prior to the Eleventh Century A. D.

Finally, on the authority of Baladhūri, Titus informs us
about the conversion of a King of 'Usayfān, between Multān and Kashmir. The conversion was made by a party of Muslim traders. In Sindh there were Arab merchants who were carrying out missionary work as late as the fourteenth century. "To the influence of such trading communities", suggests Arnold, "was most probably due the conversion of the Sammas, who ruled over Sindh from 1351-1521."

By narrating these stories we want to call attention to the fact that the Arab Muslim merchants made a contribution in preaching Islām and converting the Hindūs peacefully, and that as a result friendly relations existed between the Hindūs and the Muslims which must have facilitated interaction and assimilation between the two communities. One of the few records of those Muslim missionaries who preached Islām was that of the historian 'Abdur Razzāq, who has left an account of his unsuccessful mission to the court of the Zamorin of Calicut.

(c) Political Contact: The second wave of Muslims came to India through military expeditions and conquests. The first of these was the conquest of Sindh in 712 A.D. to which allusion has been made before. It seems reasonable to expect that the occupation of territory, after a decisive victory by the Muslims, would have resulted in a strong reaction amongst the Hindūs against the Islāmic conquerors. It is reasonable to assume that the Hindūs reacted sharply against this conquest and must have thought that though they could not resist the conquest itself, they could keep themselves aloof from the Muslims and remain securely entrenched in a stronghold of racial and religious separateness. "It seemed", observes 'Ābid Husain,
"that they would never mix with the Muslims."

As for the conquering Muslims, it is reasonable to assume that they must have considered themselves a superior power and would like to conquer perhaps the whole of India and bring the entire Hindu population under their religious-political sway by one means or another. But this did not work. Thus one writer has said:

During the early centuries of its residence in India, Islam made a determined struggle to maintain its purity and to extend the faith to the last man of the land. Both proved to be unsuccessful. The Qur'ān never really began to supplant the Vedas, but on the contrary, the very faith (Iran) and practices (Din) of Islam became modified to a serious extent among large sections of the ever-growing community. 70

It would, however, appear that for a considerable time no attempt was made by the Muslim rulers to bridge the gulf which separated the two communities. But in due time, Muhammad bin Qasim (d. 715), the conqueror of Sindh, took the first step in this direction by making a substantial modification in Islamic law. He granted the "polytheistic" and "idolatrous" Hindus the status of dual (those non-Muslims under protection of the Muslim state). For this action there is no provision in the Qur'ān, but he seems rather to have gone against the clear injunction of the Qur'ān: "And slay them (the polytheistic idolaters) wherever you come upon them,..." (2.191), and "no quarter for idolaters." In other words, by treating the Hindus as dual, Muhammad bin Qasim, in fact, elevated their status in the eyes of Islam to the rank of the Jews and the Christians whom the Qur'ān describes as All al-Kitāb (the People of the Book) and on whom the jizya (poll-tax) was originally permitted (cf. sura,
p. 3, n. 6). By making this concession to the Hindūs, the Muslim ruler of India, was able to levy a poll-tax on his Hindū subjects, and grant state protection to their life and property. This is referred to in the administrative arrangements which Muhammad b. Qasīm made with the Hindūs after his victory over Rāja Dāhir (712 A.D.). This treaty is known as "The Brahmānābād Charter." Commenting on this arrangement, Titus maintains: "This was in itself a marked concession, and marks the first change in Muslim practice, on a large scale, that of necessity came to be adopted in India as a regular policy."

R.C. Majumdar tells us that Muhammad's lenient policy towards the Hindūs was not only against the injunctions of the Qur'ān, but also in defiance to Hajjāj's orders which he sent to the former on his victory at Roor. Hajjāj's letter reads as following: "The Great God says in the Qur'ān: 'O true believers, when you encounter the unbelievers, strike off their heads.' The above command of the Great God is a great command and must be respected and followed. You should not be so fond of showing mercy, as to nullify the virtue of the act. Henceforth grant pardon to no one of the enemy and spare none of them, or else all will consider you a weak-minded man." After the conquest of the whole of Sindh, Muhammad allowed the Hindūs to repair their old temples and build new ones.

The second important step taken by Muhammad b. Qasīm toward understanding and amity between the Hindūs and the Muslims was the ban put on the killing of cows. "The reason may have been a simple desire to preserve the cattle wealth," remarks
a writer, "but regard for Hindu sentiments may also have been
partly responsible for this step." Muhammad's policy was,
however, approved of by a letter of Haj 'aj.

R.C. Majumdar is one of those historians who commend the
policy of Muhammad b. Qasim in India. Thus Majumdar says, "The
attitude of the Muslim conqueror of Sindh towards its people
serves as a general pattern of Muslim policy towards the subject
Hindus in subsequent ages." "Something no doubt", continues
the same historian, "depended upon individual rulers; some of
them adopted a more liberal, others a more cruel and intolerant
attitude." "The one redeeming feature of his policy", concludes Majumdar, "was the right given to the
Hindus to worship freely at their temples. This is all the more
noteworthy as very scant regard was paid to it by many Muslim
rulers of India in later ages."

The result of the conquest of Sindh was in the words of
Majumdar, "The defeat of Dahir and the conquest of Sindh by
Muhammad-ibn-Qasim in A.D. 712,... opened the floodgates of
Muslim colonisation in this remote corner of India." Muhammad
is reported to have settled 1,000 Muslim colonists in the city
of Debal and built a mosque there.

However, the actual interaction that took place between
the two communities in Sindh was witnessed by the Arab geog-
rapher-travellers, Mas 'udi, who visited Sindh in 915 A.D., and
Ibn Hawqal, who visited Sindh some years later, left for us
wonderful accounts of Hindu-Muslim relationships. They tell
us that the Muslims had mosques in all important places, such
as Manṣūra, Multān, Dehāl, Mirūn (modern Hāydarābād, Sindh), etc., and the non-Muslims (Dhimmīs) constituted the bulk of the population. The relations between them were cordial. Some Hindu chiefs showed an interest in Islam, "for in 886 a Hindu Rāja commissioned an Arab linguist from Manṣūra to translate the Qur'ān into the local language." According to Madīnī, the Arab ruler of Sindh used dress similar to that of the Hindu Rājas, and, like them, he wore earrings and kept his hair long.

The second wave of the Muslim conquest of India was begun by Sultān Maḥmūd of Ghazna at the opening of the eleventh century. The destructive policy which Maḥmūd followed in the course of his seventeen expeditions to India (1001–1030) is so well-known that it hardly needs any description here. Any standard history book of India testifies to it.

But one contemporary Muslim figure who disapproved of Maḥmūd's destructive expeditions was Al-Birānī (d. 1010). He was perhaps the first of a few pioneers of Hindu-Muslim amity and friendship at that time. He had no praise for Maḥmūd's expeditions, but rather spoke of him as having "utterly ruined the prosperity of the country, and performed there wonderful exploits, by which Hindus became like atoms of dust scattered in all directions." Since he was not much interested in the wars of Maḥmūd, he engaged himself in studying Hindu religion and philosophy, and tried to familiarise himself with their manners and customs. He seems to have studied Sanskrit thoroughly.

Reference has already been made, in the words of Jum'adar, to the general attitudes of the Muslim rulers of India towards
their Hindu subjects. Among the Muslim Sultans of India, Muhammad b. Tughluq (r. 1325-51) was the first who pursued a conciliatory policy towards the Hindus. During the 1st phase of the Delhi Sultanate, Sikandar Lodi (r. 1489-1517) ceased to discriminate between Hindu and Muslim in making appointments to state services.

Summing up the general policy of the Muslim Sultans of India, vis-a-vis their attitude to the question of proselytism, it may be mentioned that on the whole, partly for administrative reasons and partly as a matter of tolerance, they adopted a general attitude of neutrality to the problem of conversion; though some of them exercised political persuasion from time to time, such as the promise of immunity if an adversary was accepted Islam. Muhammad b. Tughluq, for example, though strongly opposed to forced conversions, yet considered the peaceful propagation of Islam by the Sufis as meritorious virtue. Firuz Shah Tughluq (r. 1351-88) was one of the very few Sultans who showed any interest in proselytism.

The Mughal period of India (1526-1858) falls outside the scope of this work. The contribution made by Emperor Akbar (r. 1556-1605) and Prince Dara Shikoh (d. 1659) in their efforts to make a fusion of Hindu and Muslim religion and culture is so well-known that it hardly needs any description. Any general introduction to Indian history testifies to this fact.

Since the religious contact is vitally important for this work, we propose to discuss it in detail in the next chapter. Summing up the three kinds of contacts, viz., inte-
llectual, commercial and political, that took place between India and Islām, we find that Indian ideas and sciences influenced the Muslims even outside India. Indian books were taken to the Muslim world, where they were translated into Muslim languages. Thus India made a significant contributions to the intellectual awakening of the early Muslims. When the Muslim trader-missionaries came to India they established cordial relations with the Hindūs. Many Muslims settled in India and peacefully carried out their business—commercial as well as religious. As a result of the preaching of Islām by the Muslim traders, many Hindūs accepted Islām. Intermarriage took place between the Hindūs and the Muslims. The presence of these Muslims alongside the Hindūs in the Indian society engendered a general atmosphere of amity and concord between them. Consequently there took place interaction and assimilation of ideas between the two communities. The Muslim missionaries stimulated and revitalised Indian bhakti ideas, the result was the bhakti movement.

The initial stage of the political contact between India and the Muslims was one of hostility and warfare. But after the establishment of Muslim rule, the initial stage of hostility was followed by a period of understanding and accommodation. However, the secular authorities did not make any big contribution to the preaching of Islām. By and large, for expediency, the Sulţāns adopted a policy of neutrality in respect to proselytism. Hence one writer remarks, "It is not in the cruelties of the persecutor or the fury of the fanatic that we should look for evidence of the missionary spirit of Islām,
any more than in the exploits of that mythical personage, 
the Muslim warrior with sword in one hand and Qur'ān in the
other—but in the quiet, inobtrusive labours of the preacher 
and the trader." The role of the Muslim rulers in preaching
Islam has been exaggerated beyond all proportions whereas 
the part played by the Muslim trader-missionaries and the
Sūfis was not properly recognised. It goes without saying 
that by the might of arms the Muslim rulers certainly conquered 
the land of India for themselves, but definitely not the heart 
of Indians for Islam. For Islam as a religio-social system the 
hearts of Indians were won by the Sūfis and missionaries who 
preached the doctrine of Sulh-kul (peace with all). Thus a 
renowned Indian writer says, "The might of Muslim arms certainly 
conquered, eventually, the whole of Indian territory, and even
many Hindus got converted to Islam for one reason or the other.
But the Muslim monarchs or the conquerors could never conquer 
the hearts of Indians. It needed the coming of Holy Muslim saints 
and šāhāds (fābid) for accomplishing such a piece of work."

Before dealing with the religious contact which took place 
between the two faiths on the mystical level, it may be mention-
ned here that the Sūfis did not come to India with Muslim armies, 
rather they migrated to India from other Muslim countries as 
individual preachers; they had little to do with those who 
were at the helm of political and military affairs. Having kept 
themselves aloof from the Muslim administration, these Sūfis 
devoted themselves to religious matters, and thus played the 
most vitally important role in spreading Islam in India peace-
fully, and in creating a favourable atmosphere which led to
an understanding, amity, assimilation and the interaction between the two communities of Hindūs and the Muslims. Their interaction stimulated the bhakti ideas, as a result the Bhakti Movement—a movement of devotional religion propagated by Hindū and Muslim mystics combinely—took place. Some of the bhakti leaders, such as Kabir, received special character.

Before concluding this chapter, we would emphasise that the interaction between Hindūism and Islām on the orthodox level did not take place as deeply as it did on the mystical level. On the former level, although some kind of interaction did take place, it was peripheral and more or less superficial as we have noticed. The gulf between the two faiths was still wide, and it was only the mystics of the two religions who made sincere and sustained efforts to bridge that gulf on the basis of bhakti. Hence Kṣitimation Sen contends:

Hindūism and Islām, strictly bound by the tenets of their own scriptures, had no points of contact[religiously] with each other. They were like the two banks of a river separated by the stream that flows between them. Who was to build the connecting bridge? The orthodox Hindūs as well as the orthodox Mohammedans were unfit for this task, and it was left to the free spirits and lovers of humanity from both these groups, the Hindū bhaktas and Mohammedan Sūfis, to devote their lives to the construction of this bridge. 97

And Kabir, the subject of our special study, was one of those Sūfī-bhaktas who made a genuine effort in bringing the two communities together by bridging the gulf. For these reasons, the following chapter is very important for understanding the nature of interaction.
Mysticism has been variously defined. But there is agreement that no matter to what religion or nationality a mystic belongs, mysticism as a religion of personal experience tends toward universality. Thus Evelyn Underhill writes:

Though mystical theologies of the East and the West differ widely—though the ideas of life which they hold out to the soul differ too—yet in the experience of the saint this conflict is seen to be transcended. When the love of God is reached, divergencies become impossible, for the soul has passed beyond the sphere of the manifold and is immersed in the one Reality. 1

The mysticism of all religions are essentially the same in their mystical quest. "One cannot honestly say", observes Underhill, "that there is any wide difference between the Brāhmīn, the Sūfī or the Christian mystics at their best." This view has been corroborated by many writers like R. C. Zaehner and A. J. Arberry. The latter says, "It has become a platitude to observe that mysticism is essentially one and the same, whatever may be the religion professed by the individual mystic: a constant and unvarying phenomenon of the universal yearning of the human spirit for personal communion with God." The fact that in certain mystical attitudes the mystics of all religions are agreed is fundamental. Hence, it is not surprising that the mystics of Hinduism and Islam should stand on the same ground and preach the same doctrine.

We propose to first discuss briefly Islamic mysticism (Sūfism), and then Hindu mysticism. But we do not intend to discuss either mysticism as such, rather, we will concentrate
on those elements of Sufism and Hindu mysticism which represented some expression of mysticism that seemed to have disregarded all orthodox religions and doctrines. That mystical attitude moved towards an atmosphere of freedom from orthodoxies and concurrently a commonly sharable community of mystical attitudes upon which a new kind of inter-mystical spirituality could be grounded. This discussion will help us to point out those elements which led to Kabir's supra-denominational mysticism as the culmination of the process of the interaction between the two mysticisms. While discussing Sufism, we shall draw attention to two things: (1) contact of Sufism with Indian ideas outside Indra and (2) the development of heretical, or to be precise, not-in-conformity-with-the-Islamic Sharifiah ideas among some individual Sufis. The same phenomenon, that is, the development of non-orthodox ideas among some Hindu mystic-bhaktas will also be examined. Finally, we will also try to point out that the Sufis at first borrowed some of the Indian mystical ideas and later contributed to Hindu mysticism through bhakti-mysticism.

Basically, Sufism (tasawwuf) is rooted in the Qur'an and the life of Muhammad. The Meccan Sūras (chaps.) are replete with a devotional feeling, and one of Allah's names is 'Abdul (Q. 85/14) which is suggestive of the relation of love between man and God. The Sufi practice of Dhikr (devotional recitation or remembrance of the names and attributes of God) is derived from the practice of the Qur'an recitation (qirā'āt), and probably not, as has been suggested, a borrowing from Christian or Buddhist sources. J. C. Archer suggests that the famous Persian Sufi
Jalāl-ud-Dīn Rūmī (d. 1273) may have had in mind some genuine Qur'ānic or Traditional passage when he says that God declared to Muhammad: "I am not contained in earth or sky, or even in highest heaven. Know this for surety, O, beloved. Yet am I contained in the believer's heart." The Śvetāvatara Upanishad contains a similar idea (cf. 1. 17).

The central core of Islamic teaching is the tawḥīd (unity of God), "that He has no partners or equals to share or contest His Omnicompetence, that He admits the right of none to vary His decrees or intercede with His judgments. Islam recognizes no incarnate God, no Saviour; the matter lies between Allāh, the one Lord (Rabb), and every man His creature and servant (nābī)."

Another conspicuous feature of Sūfism has been absolute trust in and dependence on God (tawakkul 'alā Allāh).

So far we have noted that the five most important features of Sūfism are: (1) unity of God, (2) the love affairs between God and devotee, (3) the dhikr, (4) absolute dependence on God's mercy, and (5) the God is contained nowhere but in the believer's heart. All these concepts are most oft-mentioned themes in Ḥabīr's teaching, as we shall see. But while the Sūfis regard the Qur'ān as the supreme authority to which they turn for guidance and justification, Ḥabīr rejects it as something useless. This is one of the reasons why Ḥabīr is seen by Muslims as different from the Sūfis even though he was one of them.

In its development, however, Sūfism seems to have come under Christian and Hindu-Buddhist influences. (Christian
influence falls outside the scope of this work).
But in the face of all external influences, early Sufism owed its firm obedience to Islamic Shari'ah (law of orthodox Islam), and remained strictly monotheistic throughout its history. Thus A. J. Arberry maintains, "... while mysticism is undoubtedly a universal constant, its variations can be observed to be very clearly and characteristically shaped by the several religious systems upon which they were based. In this varied company Sufism may be defined as the mystical movement of an uncompromising Monotheism."

During the earlier phase of Sufism, the Sufis were only individuals who dedicated their lives to devotion to God. However, Sufism gradually carved its own way (tariqat) for following religion, which is somewhat different from orthodox Islam (shari'ah). Eventually, Sufism came to be a movement not strictly bound by shari'ah. Its partial freedom from the obligation of shari'ah, in its later phase, allowed some Sufis to adopt a latitudinarian attitude towards Islam, on the one hand, and adopt a liberal attitude to other religions, on the other. Hence a western expert describes Sufism as something "which essentially is not a system based on authority and tradition, but a free movement assuming infinitely various forms in obedience to the inner light of the individual soul."
The two tendencies of Sufism mentioned above namely, liberal attitudes to Islam and to other religions, are the very keys, it may be pointed out here, which encouraged Labir to preach the theory of one religion for both Hindus and the Muslims.
It may be noted in passing that in the course of time (from the eleventh century onwards), Sufism was organised into different schools or orders, freely preaching and intermingling with the people of other religions, e.g., Hinduism and Buddhism in India, and developing divergent tendencies, and assimilating more and more alien ideas which the Sufis incorporated in their religious life. Orthodox Islam, and also orthodox Sufism, classify Sufism into Ṣā-ḥara (conforming to orthodox Islam) and Si-shāra (not conforming to orthodox Islam). Indian Sufism represents both the groups; and according to this standard of classification, Kabir belongs to the latter group, as we shall see later.

We have briefly traced above the fundamental features of Sufism. Now let us illustrate them by citing the life and teaching of some individual Sufis. This is important for our purpose, for it will help us to see how Sufism, having come in contact with Indian ideas, developed bi-shara or heterodox ideas; on the one hand, and gradually led to Kabir’s supra-denominational mysticism which advocated the unification of Hinduism and Islam on the basis of bhakti.

One of the earliest renowned Sufis (the first person to bear the title Sufi was Abū Ḫāshim of Ḫura (d. 773) was a famous woman of Bagh (Iraq), known as Rabia (d. 801). With her name is generally associated the first enunciation in Sufism of the doctrine of Divine Love, which later came to be a dominant feature of Sufism. She is reported to have said:
Two ways I love Thee: selfishly, and next, as worthy as of Thee.
'T is selfish love that I do naught
Save think on Thee with every thought.
'T is purest love when Thou dost raise
The veil to my adoring gaze.
Not mine the praise in that or this:
Thine is the praise in both, I wis. 14

Rabia was so absorbed in her love for God that she rejected all marriage offers declaring that she did not have any phenomenal existence but existed in God and was totally His.

Rabia was so overwhelmed by her consciousness of the near presence of God that when she was asked about the cause of her sickness, she replied: "By God, I know of no cause for my illness, except that paradise was displayed to me, and I yearned after it in my heart; and I think that my Lord was jealous for me, and so reproached me; and only He can make me happy." Her celebrated prayer is: "O God! if I worship Thee in fear of Hell, burn me in Hell; and if I worship Thee in hope of Paradise, exclude me from Paradise; but if I worship Thee for Thine own sake, withhold not Thine Everlasting Beauty."

This idea of Rabia that a Sufi does not worship God in the hope of either hell or heaven, but purely for the sake of God, came to be a recurrent theme in the teaching of all Sufis.

This doctrine of Divine Love is in an interesting way at the heart of the idea of bhakti. In the teachings of Kabir we will want to examine the concept of bhakti in the
light of this Sufi tradition.

Another early Sufi was Dhū-al-Nūn of Egypt (d. 246/861). In his poetry, we find the use of the same passionate language of the devoted lover as Rābi'ah had used before.

But orthodox Islam was no longer to remain heedless to these utterances of the Sufis. There is some truth in the opinion that Islam was not a congenial soil for the growth of mysticism as R. C. Zenoher argues. The hostility between Tarīqa and Ḥarīfa started at the very beginning of Sufism (9th cent.), and persisted until Al-Ghazzālī (d. 511) tried to patch up the differences and make them acceptable to each other. Thus a writer says, "Leaders of orthodoxy, both Shi'ah and Sunnah, were opposed to Sufism because of its eclectic doctrines, and it was only Ghazzālī's powerful personality and brilliant intellect which induced the orthodox to accept Sufism within its fold."

One of the first points on which the difference began between the two groups was the conception of God. According to Sufism, God can be felt and loved by any one who faithfully attends to His call with a loving heart and devotion; and the sincere and wholehearted loving devotion (bhakti) to God eventually leads to a union with Him which is the goal of Sufism and all mysticism. This contention of Sufism, of course, overlooked the transcendent understanding of God, which the Qur'ān advocates, and brought forth His immanence.

The orthodox theologians, on the contrary, maintain that God is transcendent: wholly other and totally different from any
created thing: "Like unto Him hath there never been anyone" (Q. 112.4). Naturally, there could be love and union only between like and like and not between God and man. The Qur'anic allusion to love (2.165; 3.31), however, means, according to orthodox Islam, no more than obedience. Therefore, to talk of love and union between God and man, according to Shari'ah, is to commit heresy. Consequently, Sufis like Dhū-al-Muḥāsin Misrī (Egyptian), Abū 'l-Ḥusayn al-Mūrī were arraigned before the Caliph of Baghdaḍ on suspicion of heresy; and for still bolder utterances Sufis like Nāṣūr al-Mallāj and Suhrawardi al-Maqtūl were summarily executed.

Now let us examine the case of some Sufis who seem to have come in contact with Indian ideas more closely. It has been previously indicated that Sufism came in contact with Hindu and Buddhist mystical ideas, after most of its principal ideas had been developed either in its original Islamic tradition or by the influx of neo-Platonic and Christian elements. The earliest contacts between Buddhism and Sufism seem to have taken place in the north-west Persian and Central Asian marches of the 'Abbāsid Caliphate. According to an Indian writer, prior to the impact of Islamic culture, the land of Persia was permeated with Vedāntic and Buddhist ideas. There is some historical truth in this statement as attested by the fact that King Ašoka sent his sons to propagate Buddhism in Kandahār, Afghanistān and Persia as well as in Ceylon. "In about 257 B. C." says Vincent A. Smith, "Ašoka took the momentous resolution of organizing a network of pre-china missions to spread the teaching of the Buddha, not only
throughout India, but in the distant regions of Western Asia,
Eastern Europe, and Northern Africa." R. C. Majumdar gives an
calightening account of India's cultural influence in Central
Asia which he calls "Ser-India." On the authority of the
accounts given by the Chinese travellers, such as Fa-hien and
Hiuen Tsang, the same historian tells us that there were many
3rāmanical and Buddhist families settled down in Kuchi, Balkh,
modern Afghanistan and other places of Central Asia. According
to Hiuen Tsang, there were hundreds of Buddhist monasteries and
Hindu temples in Iran. He also learned from Arab chronicles that
Khālid, the vāzir or the 'Abbāsid Caliph al-Mansūr, was the
son of a varṇa, i.e. chief priest in a Buddhist monastery in
Balkh called Nabhār.

The above view has been affirmed by writers like R. A.
Nicholson and I. Goldziher. Nicholson draws our attention to those
"flourishing Buddhist monasteries in Balkh, the metropolis of
ancient Bactria, a city famous for the number of Sūfis who
resided in it." Goldziher notices the significant circumstance
that the Sūfi ascetic Ibrāhīm ibn Adham, a prince of Balkh,
who abandoned his throne and became a wandering mendicant—
"the story of Buddhism over again", remarks the author. Goldziher
also calls attention to analogies between the "noble path" of
Buddhism and "path" (tanīth) of Sūfism, between the Sūf
"concentration" (murāq-bah) and the Buddhist ānāpān.
Goldziher also regards the Sūf interpretation of Divine Unity
(tawḥīd) as "fundamentally different from" the Islamic monotheistic
conception of God, and as borrowed from Indian theosophy. Sūf
robes and the use of rosaries are also considered to have been borrowing from Buddhism. Thus Nicholson maintains, "The Sufis learned the use of rosaries from Buddhist monks, and, without entering into details, it may be safely asserted that the method of Sufism, so far as it is one of ethical self-culture, ascetic meditation, and intellectual abstraction, owes a good deal to Buddhism."

It has already been indicated that the fundamental principles of Sufism are Islamic in origin. The Indian elements that we have just discussed were secondary elements adopted by some non-orthodox Sufis. According to the classification of Sufism into orthodox and heterodox schools, the latter were more than willing to adopt anything with which they came in contact. Hence it is our contention that the interaction between Sufism and Hinduism, and for that matter also Buddhism, took place more freely on the heterodox Sufi level than on the orthodox level.

However, the first person who seems to have been influenced by Hindu-Buddhist ideas, not peripherally but fundamentally, was Abu Yazid of Bistām (Persia, d.261/875), a Sufi of heterodox views. He is said to have learned some Indian ideas from his teacher, Abu 'Ali Siddīqī. There is a great deal of controversy among scholars about the historicity of Abu Yazid's contact with Indian ideas.

The conception of Divine Unity and Fana (annihilation or passing away), which appear in Abu Yazid's utterances, have been explained as of Vedāntic and Buddhist origin. Thus
Nicholson emphatically says, "The Sufi conception of the passing-away (fanâ) of the individual self in Universal Being is certainly, I think, Indian. Its first great exponent was the Persian mystic, Bâyzîd of Bistâm, who may have received it from his teacher, Abû 'Ali of Sind (scinde)." This view has been defended by Missigny, Zechner, and Goldziher but rejected recently by Anberry. He suggests that the Sufi got the idea of fanâ from the Qur'anic verse: "Everything upon the earth passeth away, save His face" (55:26). Abû Yazîd is reported to have said that he taught Sindî: "Qur'anic verses necessary for prayer, receiving in exchange instruction in the Divine Unity and the Realities."

The root of the controversy as to whether or not Abû Yazîd was affected by Indian ideas is the place-name of Abû 'Ali, "Sindî", the home of Abû 'Ali. Those who are in favour of Indian influence understand by it the province of Sind in India, whereas those who are against such influence take "Sindî" to be a village in Khurâsân for which Yânuqû is their authority. On this point nothing can be said conclusively. If we take "Sind" a village of Khurâsân as the home of Abû 'Ali, it is nearer to Abû-Yazîd's home, Bistâm. But if we take "Sind" the province of India there is nothing to prevent Abû 'Ali from travelling from Sind (India) to Bistâm (Persia) for mystics often travel too far from place to place. All the early Indian Sufis were non-Indian by birth, and the name Abû 'Ali sounds non-Indian. In any event, even if Abû 'Ali was not an Indian, the possibility of Indian influence on Bâyzîd cannot be summarily ruled out, for most historians agree that Persia and
Central Asia were permeated by Hindu-Buddhist ideas before the coming of Islam. Moreover, from Bāyḍīd’s writings themselves nothing definite can be decided.

But Zahnar seems to have gone too far in suggesting that Abū ‘Ali was possibly "A convert to Islam from another religion" since Abū Yazid is reported to have taught Abū ‘Ali "to perform the obligatory duties of Islam." First of all, the last part of the quote is a misinterpretation of what is recorded in Kitāb al-Inwar; secondly, in the case of his being a convert, one would expect to see some evidence in Abū Yazid’s own sayings, and also would like to know his pre-Conversion name. Zahnar has also suggested that Abū Yazid came under the influence of Śankara Vedānta, for in one of his sayings, as Sarrāj tells us, Abū Yazid is reported to have said that God told him: "O Abū Yazid, verily my creation longs to see thee."

And I said: "Adorn me with Thy unity and clothe me in Thine I-ness and raise me up into Thy oneness, so that when Thy creatures see me, they may say: "We have seen thee (i.e. God) and thou art that..." Undoubtedly, this is the famous Sanskrit phrase: tat tvam asī, found in the Chandogya Upanishad (c. 6.8.7; etc.) used as a synonym for Brahman; its Arabic equivalent is takānu nata dhālā. Zahnar is, of course, right in pointing out that in Arabic ḥāla is never used as a pronoun of Allāh (God), rather ḥum (He) is used.

This is a very important parallel between Abū Yazid’s saying and the Vedāntic understanding of Brahman. But from this to conclude that Abū Yazid was influenced by Śankara's ideas, say,
be too hazardous, for we have no historical evidence that by the Ninth century Sāṅkara's (d. 820) ideas had travelled as far as Kharāṣṭra. This position is also held by Professor ʿAzīz Ahmad. But, of course, Sāṅkara is not the originator of the concept: tat tvam āsi. This is a Vedic idea; Sāṅkara was only the interpreter of it. That is to say, if we do not attach Sāṅkara's name to this Upaniṣadic theory, there is nothing improbable in assuming that this ancient Indian idea was known in Persia long before Sāṅkara.

Bīstāmi may have been influenced by Buddhism, nonetheless ṛaṇā cannot be identified with Nirvāṇa. Although both terms imply the passing away of individuality, Nirvāṇa is purely negative, while ṛaṇā is accompanied by baddā, everlasting life in God.

Abū Yazīd is reported to have said: "Thirty years the high God was my mirror, now I am my own mirror." According to his biographer's explanation, the above statement means: "That which I was I am no more, for 'I' and 'God' is a denial of the unity of God. Since I am no more, the high God is His own mirror." Abū Yazīd once said, "I went from God to God, until they cried from me in me, 'O Thou Il!"

Commenting on the above verse, Nicholson says: "This, it would be observed, is not Buddhism, but the pantheism of the Vedānta." In concluding his observation, Nicholson further asserts: "I think we may conclude that the Sūra'I theory of ṛaṇā was influenced to some extent by Buddhism as well as by Perso-Indian Pantheism."
There are many verses in which Abū Yazīd describes his union with God and identifies himself with God. Judging from these narratives, it is reasonable to believe that Abū Yazīd must have passed through experiences in which he felt himself to be at one with God. And "it was this overpowering sensation of being rapt into the Godhead", says Arberry, "that caused him to utter such blasphemies, so detestable to the orthodox, as his notorious Subhān! Bā 'zīr, šā'ālī!" (Glory be to He! How great is My majesty!).

On account of the scandal to orthodox Islam caused by his ecstatic utterances, Abū Yazīd was banished from his homeland seven times. Notwithstanding his blasphemous sayings, he did not renounce Islam; in fact, he is said to have performed the pilgrimage to Mecca forty-five times. This account may be legendary, but all writers are in agreement that he interpreted some of the verses of the Qur'ān, (e.g. 53.4-17), and maintained that Muhammad had a vision of God, not Gabriel as the traditional interpretation holds.

However, having reached the highest stage of spiritual progress, Bistāmī, showed his negligence towards formal religion. Worship, prayers, devotion and all religious duties are for ordinary believers, and not for one who is completely absorbed in the love of God. He does not go to Mecca, rather Mecca comes to him.

Bayzīd's sayings have a striking similarity with those of Kabīr, though, as we shall see, the former was not as severe as the latter in rejecting formal Islam.
We have discussed Bistāmī at some length for an obvious reason. It seems fairly certain that Bistāmī was the first Sūfī to come under Hindū-Buddhist mystical influences and through him those Indian mystical ideas passed onto later Sūfīs. "Abū Yazīd had injected into the body of Sūfīs", says Zāehner, "a dose of the Indian Vedānta that was soon to transform the whole movement. It was now within the power of every Sūfī to realise himself as God, and this entitled him to live in total disregard of the Muslim religious law." Bāyzīd's sayings established in Sūfīs the Indic Vedāntic concept of absolute monism, as Romain Chaudhury emphasises. This monistic tendency is found in many later Sūfīs.

Another heterodox Sūfī of great repute was Kānsūr al-Hallāj (d. 399/921), who used much bolder language than Bistāmī and jolted the whole Musulmān world by his strange ideas. Thus a writer says, "The man who produced the greatest stir in the Islamic world by the boldness of his doctrines was Husayn bin Kānsūr al-Hallāj." His theories were later worked up by many renowned Sūfīs.

Hallāj visited Sindh (India) to study the subject of Indian magic, and is said to have written as many as forty-six books on it. He was treated as a heretic when he started preaching as an apostle of God. He was arrested, flogged, tortured and finally beheaded and burned to ashes by the Abūsīd authorities.

It is very important that we should examine Hallāj's ideas at some length, for they are not only the result of
Indian influence, they are also similar to those of Kabīr. This will help us in assessing the trend of interaction between Hindu and Muslim ideas which eventually led to Kabīr's non-denominational mysticism.

In his theory of creation, Hallāj holds that before creation God was in His unity holding ineffable discourse within Himself and contemplating the splendour of His own essence, and this radical simplicity of His admiration is Love "which in His essence is the essence of essences" without any attributes. In His perfect isolation (infirād) God was illuminated by Love, and from this illumination came the multiplicity of His attributes and names. Then in order to see His supreme joy, He projected out of the pre-eternal (azal) an image of Himself, this was Adam (or Purusa or Hiranyakarbash).

This creation theory of Hallāj has corresponding reference both in the Upaniṣad (cf. Aitareya, 1.1.1, 1.1.3) and in the Qur'ān (2.30; 4.1; 7.11; 59.24). Although there is a corresponding agreement in all of them as far as the process of creation and the concept of the First Person are concerned, Hallāj has given us a new element responsible for setting in motion the whole process of creation; that is the Love of God. This "Love of God" is the fundamental theory of all mysticism; the mystics try to explain everything in terms of this theory. In fact, they live by, and for, this love of God and nothing else. Kabīr was not an exception to this mystic theory.

According to Hallāj's theory of creation, the absolute God in His divinity (lāḥūt) became in Adam God in humanity (nāsūt).
Thus, considering Adam as the manifestation of God, Hallâj seems to have conceived of this relation of God with man as the infusion of the divine into the human—a reference to the mon-itory theory of creation as found in the Qur'ân (15:29) as well as in Brdh. Un. 1, 4, 7 and in many other passages of Hindu religious literature; in Sâkhyâ terms, the illumination of bu'dhi by purusa. Finally, it is a clear allusion to the birth of Jesus as a spirit of God infused into the womb of Mary as it is described in the Qur'ân (3:45, 47). In fact, Hallâj considers Jesus as the perfect type of deified man (insîn-ul-kâmil) who is the representative of God on earth.

The union of lâhût and násût is called hulul (incarnation). In other words, God incarnates Himself on earth through the perfect man. The incarnation is explained as the commixture (imtizâj) of the divine and human natures. The doctrine of commixture is clearly found in some poems of Hallâj. Thus he says:

I am He whom I love, and whom I love is I. 
We are two spirits dwelling in one body. 
If thou seest me, thou seest Him, and if thou seest Him, thou seest us both.

In his highest ecstasy, Hallâj declared: "Azâl'î-mang" (I am the Haqq or Truth, i.e. God). Kassigian renders it "I am the Creative Truth."). Apart from meaning Creator, al-mang is also applied to God when conceived pantheistically as the one permanent reality, thereby declaring that the "saint in his deification becomes the living and personal witness of God," says Nicholson.
Kānsūr Hallāj is considered the most radical of all Sūfis. He was so intoxicatingly absorbed in divine love that he recklessly uttered expressions that cost him his life. Nonetheless, he left behind him a valuable tradition which the later Sūfis incorporated into the body of Sūfism.

Hallāj appears to be first Sūfī to introduce the doctrines of incarnation, transmigration of spirits (masāh-i-rwāh) and commixture, which were so opposed to orthodox Islam, into Sūfism. This only indicates the strong Indian influence on him. He has expressed some vague Vedantic ideas. The ideas of Hallāj are found in Kābīr's teaching, but the latter categorically rejected the theory of incarnation. Hallāj does not seem to have rejected anything of Islam, and is reported to have performed pilgrimage to Mecca; whereas Kābīr discarded the usefulness of all the fundamentals of Islam with the exception of monotheism and egalitarianism.

Before Kābīr, the first Sūfī who overtly spoke against religious obligations was Abu Sā'īd ibn 'Abīl-Khayr (d. 375/987-988/1097) of Khorasan. He neglected the ritual prayer and refused to perform the Ḥajj (pilgrimage) to Mecca which other Sūfis did. As regards pilgrimage, he is reported to have said: "It is no great matter that thou shouldst tread under thy feet a thousand miles of ground in order to visit a stone-house. The true man of God sits where he is, and the Bāyt al-Insān (the Human) comes several times in a day and night to visit him, and perform the circumambulation (tawfīf) above his head. Look, and see!" The mystic's pilgrimage takes place within himself. "If God sets thine way to Mecca before any one," a Sūfī is quoted to
have said, "that person has been cast out of the way to the Truth." Much more bold was his saying:

Not until every mosque beneath the sun,
Is ruined will our holy work be done,
And never will true Islam appear,
Till faith and infidelity are one. 80

The rejection of formal religion on the part of Abū Sa‘īd shows that he did not attach any intrinsic value to the external forms of religion. To him, the essence of religion was not the formal act but the "passing away from self" which is attained in ecstasy. Formal religion is for those who are only beginners in the way to the Truth, and not for those saints who have reached the final stage of their long journey towards the Truth and now live in permanent communion with God. Thus Dr. Radhakrishnan says, "Those who have seen the radiant vision of the Divine protest against the exaggerated importance attached to outward forms." At this stage they are above law rather than against it.

We have examined the principal ideas of the Sūfis in order to show the Indian influence on them, on the one hand, and to draw attention to the similarities and dissimilarities of their ideas with those of Ḥāfiz, on the other. They are all Sūfis even though some are termed as heterodox or bi-shāra Sūfis by orthodox Islam. Since this was the situation with the heterodox Sūfis, Ḥāfiz’s rejection of formal Islam should not be construed as an act of a Hindu against Islam. However, though a heterodox Sūfī, he differed from heterodox Sūfis that we have discussed in the foregoing pages. This difference seems due mainly to the different mission which Ḥāfiz took
upon himself to perform, namely, the unification of two opposing religions—Hinduism and Islam. As a matter of fact, Kabir's mysticism was the climax of that mystical attitude which was born in Indo-Islamic mysticism as a result of the interaction that took place between Islam and Indian ideas. And that mystical attitude advocated a commonly shareable orthodox system in disregard of both orthodox Islam and Hinduism.

Now let us turn to the subject of Sufism in India, where it made a valuable contribution by creating an atmosphere for friendship and interaction between Hinduism and Islam. In this section we do not propose to discuss Indian Sufism as a whole, that is, its many-sided activity or its organisational history; rather we will confine our discussions to those individual Sufis who were instrumental in facilitating the process of interaction between Hinduism and Islam. In this respect we would emphasise that conversion was the most important means of opening the door to interaction as will be seen below. Our survey will be limited to the time of Kabir (c. 1518).

Throughout the history of Islam in India the Sufis have been a relatively important factor. Although some Muslim rulers exercised political authority to force conversions, as we have noted, the fact remains that Islam as a religion scored its greatest success through the Sufis and not through the help of the political rulers. It may also be remembered that many forced converts subsequently disowned their new religion, such as Harihara and Sukla. It was only the Sufi propagation of Islam that produced the "most lasting missionary triumphs."
But some writers ignore this fact, and instead stress the military and political aspects of Muslim life in Indian sub-continent. Sir T. W. Arnold was the first scholar who emphasised the contributions that the Sūfis made to the peaceful propagation of Islam in India and the creation of an atmosphere for interaction between Hindūism and Islam.

Sūfis came to India, as elsewhere, not as an organised party, or as the wards of the Muslim conquerors. Usually they have been individuals endowed with piety and religious zeal, some of them men of learning, who, through their personal interest in the spread of their religion, and often inspired with a divine call, were willing to wander from place to place and gather disciples.

The period of this individualistic missionary activity commences from the beginning of the eleventh century. One of the earliest Sūfis was Shaykh Ismā'īl who came to Lahore from Bukhārā about 1005 A.D. It is said that crowds "flocked to listen to his sermons, and that no unbeliever ever came into personal contact with him without being converted to the faith of Islam.

Multān was another place where vigorous Sūfī activities have been reported during the early years of the Muslim occupation of India. On the authority of geographer-historian Ḥalāshūrī, Arnold tells us that during the three centuries of Arab rule in Sind there were many Hindūs converted to Islam; and several Sindhist princes accepted Islam. Alongside the Sūfis, there were still some Arab merchants who were pursuig
missionary work. "To the influence of such trading communities", Arnold suggests, "was most probably due the conversion of the Samuks, who ruled over Sind from 1351-1521."

Sayyid Yusuf-ud-Din was the famous Sufi who conducted proselytising missions in Sindh. He came to Sindh in 1422 and worked there for ten years. He is reported to have converted as many as 700 families of the Lohana caste.

The Sufi who made the most valuable contribution towards the interaction between Hindus and the Muslims was an Isma'ili missionary, named Mir Sadr-ud-Din. He was head of the Ikhjah sect of Sindh about the year 1430. In keeping with the principles of accommodation that this sect went to practice, he took a Hindu name (which is not available) and made certain compromises with the Hindus whom he sought to convert to Islam. He wrote a book entitled Bhagavat (Tenth Incarnation) in which Khilafa Ali is made out to be the tenth Avatar of Vishnu. This book was accepted as the scripture of the Khoja sect; it assumes the nine incarnations of Vishnu to be true. Further, he is also reported to have identified Brahma with Muhammad, Vishnu with Ali, and Adam with Giva. He won most of his converts from the rural areas of Upper Sindh; then he preached in Cutch whence his doctrines spread southwards through Gujarat to Bombay. And at present, the Khoja communities are found in almost all trading towns of south and south-western India, especially in Bombay.

There were two other Isma'ili missionaries who worked in the southern ports of India. The first was 'Abdullah, who
came to India in 1667. He is said to have been a man of great learning and is credited with having performed many miracles. He converted to Islām a large number of Hindūs.

'Abdullāh is also believed to have been the founder of the Bohra sect of India—a Shi‘a community, mainly of Hindū origin, who are largely found in the chief commercial centres of the Bombay Presidency.

'Abdullāh was a contemporary of Rāmānuja. As a very successful preacher, his proselytising activity was quite widespread, and he converted great numbers of Hindūs to Islām. From the general atmosphere that his preaching produced in south India, Yūsuf Ḫusain has suggested the possible influence of his teaching on Rāmānuja.

The other Ḥaḍītha missionary was Ṣūr-ud-Dīn, generally known by his Hindū name, Ṣūr Satar, who came to Gujarat in the reign of Hindū Siyāh Rāj (1096–1143). He is said to have converted the Ḵonbīr, Ḫorwās, and Ḫoris, all from the low castes of Gujarat.

There were many other Sūfīs who preached in south India and the Deccan, but it is not necessary to describe their individual histories. The fact that we want to emphasise is that through the peaceful propagation and conversion of the Sūfīs many individual Hindūs as well as many tribes and sects were won over to Islām. This led to the process of interaction between the two religions in south India.
In north and north-western India (including Pakistan) the names of the outstanding Sufi preachers were 'Alî Hujwirî (11th cent.), Shaykh Bahâ-ud-Dîn Zakâriya Multânî (d. 1266), Bâbâ Faqîd-ud-Dîn Shakarganj of Pâkpâthân (d. 1265), Khawâjah Mu’în-ud-Dîn Chishti of Ajmîr (d. 1236), Nîzâm-ud-Dîn Awliyâ of Delhi (d. 1325), Nâsîr-ud-Dîn Chirâg-i-Delhi (d. 1356), Khawâjah Qutb-ud-Dîn Bakhtiyâr Kâkî of Delhi (d. 1236), Shaykh Jalâl-ud-Dîn Tabrizî (d. 1244), Shaykh Jalâl-ud-Dîn Surkhposh (d. 1291), Shârî-ud-Dîn Yahyâ Manerî (d. 1380), Shaykh Zain-ud-Dîn Dâwûd (d. 1370), Sayyîd Jalâl (popularly known Makhdum-i-Jahanîyan: 'served by all mankind', d. early 14th cent.), and many more. The life and activity of each of them would fill a volume. In short, it may be said that the preaching of these holy men represented a great spiritual force which did not differentiate men by caste or religion. As a result their disciples came from every walk of life.

The keys which these mystics used to open the door of interaction were the unity of God and love for Him; the equality of man and social justice; simplicity of religious practice. Nîzâm-ud-Dîn, for instance, put particular stress on the motive of love which leads to the realisation of God. The Shaykh is reported to have said, "O Muslims! I swear by God, that He holds dear those who love Him for the sake of human beings, and also those who love human beings for the sake of God. This is the only way to love and adore God."

Amir Khasraû, the most important disciple of the Shaykh tells us that he (Shaykh) said that "the entire knowledge of the learned is not equivalent to two virtues: (1) Reform of the
people and (2) detached service of men."

This is the type of message which the Sūfis delivered to the Indians, and the magic power of this message was such that the Sūfis actually won the hearts of the Indians in a way that the Muslim rulers were unable to.

The Sūfis spread a network of propagation throughout India. Their spiritual policy was sulh-i-kul (peace with all), and conversion was considered to be the most virtuous work; to this end, the Sūfis made many concessions to the Hindus whose conversion to Islam they sought. As in south India, in north India also the Sūfī preaching led to the process of interaction between the two communities, as a result, apart from immeasurable individuals, a number of sects arose which were in fact a blending of the two faiths. Thus an Indian writer says, "The period between 1200-1500 was remarkable for the permeation of Sūfis throughout India. New sects and movements arose midway between Hinduism and Islam. Orthodox Hinduism evolved new doctrines which gained importance and vitality. There were mass conversions to Islam under the spell of Sūfis. To make Islam emotionally satisfying they made several concession to the practices of other creeds." Professor Muhammad Iqbal has given a brilliant account of these mixed sects—their religious and social life. We do not intend to repeat all these details, but it may be emphasised that some of these sects, such as the Muslim jāhils of Panjab, the Muslim Brahmans of Rajputān were not merely converts to Islam, but had adopted such Islamic beliefs and practices as were
not deemed contrary to Hinduism. In this connection, mention may also be made of the Nārāyanavāna, a non-idolatrous Vaishnava sect, founded by Cakradhara-svāmī (d. 1272) of Avraṇgabād, on whom Sūfi influence has been suggested.

The Sūfis, like all other mystics, saw themselves to be the lovers of God; they are the seekers after God. Religious formalism was inconsistent with their spiritual quest. To them all-religions are true in essence. Shabistārī, for example, a Persian Sūfī, is reported to have said that Sūfis are ever ready to accept that which is good in other religions, like idol-worship, fire-worship, etc. These are good, according to him, for one who seeks to realize the essential unity of God. "Idol-worship," he says, "is essentially unification." That is to say, when a man worships an idol, that idol is taken by him as a manifestation of God, and God's manifestation cannot be evil.

Another famous Sūfī, Ibn al-'Arabī (1165-1240) declares that no religion is more sublime than a religion of love and longing for God. Love is the essence of all creeds: the true mystic welcomes it whatever guise it may assume. The following poem, attributed to this Sūfī, clearly illustrates the catholicity of Sūfī attitude to all religions:

My heart has become a temple of every form;
it is a pasture for gazelles and a grove for Christian loves.
And a temple for idols, and the temple of the Sūfī,
and the tablets of the Koran and the book of the Prophet.
I follow the religion of love, whichever way his camel takes; my religion and my faith is the true religion.
We have a pattern in Islam, the love of Hind;
on his throne, on his pillar, on his lyre, in his eyes and Luhān, and Hayya and Sa'ida. 169.
In India, Amir Khusrau who is by far the most powerful exponent of this attitude of the medieval Sufis, refers to Hindu customs and ceremonies in a spirit which must have been instrumental in discovering the principles of essential unity between Hinduism and Islam. Thus he declares:

Though Hindu is not faithful like me
He often believes in the same thing as I do. 106

This was the catholicism of the Sufis. Naturally, they did not find it improper to establish a cordial relationship with the Hindus by making some ideological concessions to them and adopting some of their customs and practices. Such divine personages were respected by people and remained sources of blessing during their life-time; when they died, their tombs became objects of worship and places of pilgrimage for both Hindus and Muslims. Thus, following the principles of accommodation and brotherliness, some Sufis in India adopted the Hindu ideas of ahimsa (non-injury); they extended its application to animals also. Shaykh Hamid-ud-Din Najarî, for example, did not like the idea that any living being should be deprived of its life. And it was his firm belief in ahimsa that made him a strict vegetarian. He also exhorted his disciples to develop vegetarian tastes.

The attitude of sympathy and understanding which the Sufis adopted toward the Hindus can be measured from one of their sayings:

You [Muslims] who sneer at the idolatry of the Hindu,
Learn also from him how worship is done. 107

This broad and cosmopolitan outlook helped in destroying those tendencies of prejudice and mistrust and isolation...
which characterised relations between the Hindus and the Muslims before the coming of the Sufis, and paved the way for reconciliation and interaction at all levels of their life, ideological and social in particular.

It has been indicated that the work of conversion was so widespread that in many cases the conversion itself was imperfect. It would appear that the Sufis were guided in their missionary work by a famous hadith attributed to Prophet Muhammad: "Whoever has said there is no god but Allah, he has entered the paradise." But the simple conversion allowed the neo-Muslims to retain their traditional caste distinctions. Thus was introduced into Islamic body politic an important feature of Hinduism. Ka' Ir belonged to one of the professional lower castes that of the weavers.

Besides this carry-over from Hinduism to Islam, we are also told that under the influence of Hinduism (and also following the pre-Muslim Iranian tradition) Indian Muslims considered society to consist of four main classes—"men of the pen, men of the sword, men of business and men of the soil." The first are guardians of religion and learning, the second are the guardians of these guardians, and the third and the fourth are the sustainers of the first two classes. Attempts at encroachment of any class by any other, it is believed, can only result in chaos and disorder.

The first book that deals with this matter of social classification was written by Muhammad ibn Asad Jalāl-ad-Dīn Al-Dawāni (1427-1561). Although the book was written in Persia,
it was quite popular in medieval India. Abū'l Fazal, the famous writer of *Ā'in-i-Akbarī*, is also reported to have made such divisions of the people.

It is to be noted here, especially, that in repugnance to Islamic ideals of egalitarianism, the Indian Muslim, under Hindu influence, accepted social stratification. It corresponds exactly to the four-caste division of Hindu society against which the Sufis and some bhaktas, especially Kabīr, waged a fierce crusade and won their greatest victory.

Some writers have also considered the feudal ideals in medieval Muslim India, which corresponds to the Kshatriya caste of Hinduism, to be a result of Hindu influence on Islamic society. This view, however, cannot be maintained, for feudalism was not a characteristic feature of medieval Muslim India as it was prevalent in the Ottoman Empire and in Europe.

Interruption was one of the sources of assimilation and interaction. By and large, the Sufis were not celibates. Most Sufis in India married Hindu girls, probably with simple acceptance of Islam by them which is in keeping with the injunction of the Qur'an (2.221). But the converted wife brought with her many Hindu customs and practices to her Sufi husband's house. These practices pertained mostly to family life, such as marriage, birth and death ceremonies. Ibn Battūtah gives a long description of Indian Muslim marriage in which Hindu practices played a major role.
There are no cases of divorce or the remarriage of widows recorded in Indian Sufi hagiology. This attitude on the part of the Indian Sufis would seem to be the result of Hindu influence on them. Hence we can assert that intermarriage was a very important source of interaction and assimilation. Kabir's daughter, Kamali, is reported to have been married to a Brähmin boy, although there must have been many Muslim boys in the society.

Interaction between the two faiths took place in another important matter. Although reverence and service to a teacher on the part of a student or a novice is an ancient Indian idea, the absorption in God through devotion to a spiritual preceptor (Hindu: gurū; Muslim: hurūf, Shaurkh, Murshid, Quth) on the part of a novice (Hindu: chela; Muslim: mur'd) seems to have been a particularly accepted practice among the Shi'ahs. It corresponds to the gurū-bhakti of the Hindus. But some writers think that the Sufis took it from Hinduism. In any case, it was an important point of interaction between the two systems. Now, although gurū-bhakti is a dominant feature of Kabir's teaching, yet unlike other bhaktas, he took special care not to elevate the gurū to any divine status, and this is a clear indication of his strong sense of monothelism.

We have noticed before that dhikr (devotional recitation or remembrance of God's names and attributes) is a typical Sufi practice originated in Islam (see Q. 76.5; 33.41, et al.). In another place the Qur'an says: "But he who turns away from remembrance of Me, his will be a narrow life, and I shall bring him blind to the assembly of the Day of Resurrec-
tion" (2C. 124). The process of dhikr, however, has similarity with the meditation and breathing exercises of Yoga. Probably for this reason yogis were attracted to some of the Sufis, like Sayyid Husayn Khangswar, Farid-ud-Din Ganj-i-Shakar, Nizam-ud-Din Awliya and others. However, it was not a one-sided attraction; it was a matter of interaction. The Shattari order of Sufis, considered to be orthodox, seems to have borrowed yogic elements directly. The Shattari Sufis used to live in forests like the yogis on a frugal diet of fruits and herbs, and subjected themselves to hard physical and spiritual exercises. Of all the Hindu and Muslim mystics of India, Habir probably represents the solitary instance of one who clearly rejected the usefulness of yoga for spiritual pursuits (cf. infra, p. 283). We are also told that the Sufis did not stop at the door of yoga; they proceeded farther and some of them accepted Tantric teachings.

In the fourteenth century another feature of Hindu-Buddhist mysticism, namely, wandering in the forest, accentuated the wandering habit of some Indian Sufis. Thus Sharf-ud-Din Abu 'Ali (d. 1323) came to be designated a "wandering" possibly because of his wanderings. Nizam-ud-Din Chishti-i-Delhi and his disciple, Jesudaraz (long curl; d. 1422), also lived as wanderers, Sufis. The most interesting case in this respect is that of Sharf-ud-Din Yahya Naneri who established the Pirdwisiya order of Sufis in India. After his long wanderings, he chose a place for his religious exercises close to a spring in Nandana, sacred to the Hindus and the Buddhists, which came to be known as Bakhdan Kund.
One of the characteristic features of Sufism since its inception has been the doctrine of tauwkalānā Allāh (absolute dependence on God’s mercy). Belief in fate or predetermination (qadr) is a part of the article of faith in Islam. Likewise, in the Qur’an we are told that every godly act of man is preceded by an act of God’s favour towards man. “Then He turned to them, what they might turn” (9. 119). Apart from this, there are other verses in the Qur’an to show God’s love for man and his nearness to man (e.g., 25: 59, 119; 50: 15), which allowed the Sufis to develop the conception of God not as a remote, indifferent, intangible of the Universe, but as a merciful Allāh ever taking the first step towards man to draw him unto Himself by the powerful cords of love.

These Sufi ideas of love for God, and absolute surrender to God’s mercy, which corresponds to Sanskrit pranati, came to be the basic foundation on which the Southern School of post-Śrāvastīya Vaishnava Bhakti stood. Kabir appears to have had strong affinity with that position. It may be urged that these two ideas are also found in the Gita. Krishna, for example, after giving a long lesson, tells Arjuna:

Be me-minded, devoted to Me;
Worshipping Me, revere Me;
And to Me alone shalt thou go;
truly to thee I promise it—
(because) thou art dear to Me.
Abandon all (other) duties,
Go to Me as thy sole refuge;
From all evils I thee shall rescue: be not grieved! (18. 65-66).

But the Gita did not have the boldness to make the doctrines of love and self-surrender universal, nor did it uphold these doctrines in disregard of all other traditional rituals and
ceremonies of Hinduism. The task seems to have been left to the Sufis who gave a new turn to the Indian mind in its spiritual quest. In fact, the Sufi influence stimulated those Indian ideas, as a result a new religious movement in the shape of bhakti cult took place in medieval India.

In Islam, from the theological point of view, there is no place for singing and dancing, at least for spiritual purposes. Some maintain that since singing has no place in Islam, the rhythmical recitation of the Qur'an compensates for it. Anyway, there has been much dispute among theologians as to the permissibility of music and dancing for religious exercises to produce mystic trance. Ghazzali speaks of them as novelties (bid'at) which had not been practised either by the Prophet or his immediate companions. But Ghazzali himself approves of them for by their means the Sufis "stir up in themselves greater love towards God." Besides some individual Sufis of India, at least two orthodox Indian Sufi orders, namely, Chishtiyya and Suhrawardiyya, practised them with all enthusiasm and vigour and called it tazalli. Thus it is generally maintained that sama (singing and dancing) has been incorporated in Indian Sufism under Hindu influence. "Sufism indeed was a religion of intense devotion," says Tara Chand, "love was its passion; poetry, song and dance its worship; and passion away in God its ideal."

However, no account of the interaction of Hindu-Muslim ideas will appear complete without noticing how the heterodox side of the two religious systems began to meet in worship. Popular legendary heroes of the Muslims, like Ghazi Miyan,
Sir Badr, and also Khawājah Khīzīr, whose Muslim title has been Hinduised into Nāja Kidr, began to be worshipped as Hindu-Muslim common gods. "This is a good instance of a fact," remarks a writer, "that the Hindus are always ready to annex the deities and beliefs of other races."

It has been emphasised before that as missionaries of Islam and as liberal leaders of its spirituality, the Sūfis were the first among the Muslims to come in contact with the Hindus, and thus also with Hindu mystics and saints. The meeting of Hindu and Muslim mysticism gave rise to some saints who were venerated by both communities alike. Some of these Hindu-Muslim saints had only Muslim names, but no connection with Islamic faith. One such saint was Gūgū Allah, or Zāhir Allah, who is said to have flourished toward the middle of the twelfth century. His devotees are found throughout northern and northwestern India. Another such ālī was Sātān Allah or Sātān Harāyana of Bengal. These deified ālīs enjoyed the veneration of the Hindus and the Muslims alike. There are numerous instances of this kind in Bengal, such as Baūl and Zāhir. The most widely known of this kind of ālī was a group of ālī called Panī or Panī Allah (Five Saints). They were popularly worshipped throughout North India. But the list of ālīs varies from place to place. W. Crooke tells us that there are at least five lists current in Benares alone. The ālī is regarded as the Muslim parallel to the Five Rishis who are equally popular among Hindus.
Undoubtedly, these aspects of religion are considered by the orthodox of Hinduism and Islam as pure heresies and superstitions. However, no organised protest was raised in either religion until the beginning of the nineteenth century. And curiously enough both religions launched puritanical movements first in Bengal—Farā'idī of Šāi Sharī'at Ulīf 139 (1781-1846) and 3rāgā Samāj of Šām Ḥobān Ḫoj (1772-1837); almost simultaneously to other such movements were initiated in Upper India, namely, Ḥujūhidī (or Wahhābī) by Sāyīd Ayīnā Shāhīd (1786-1830) and Áryā Samāj by Swāmī Dayānanda Saraswātī (1827-1903).

Turning to other aspects of Hindu-Muslim life in medieval India, we find some evidence of interaction between the two cultures in the realm of language. The eagerness of the Sūfis to establish close relation with the Hindus in order to understand their religious life and thought, and also to let them understand the teachings of the Sūfis, facilitated the evolution of a common medium for the exchange of ideas. Thus was born the Hindī or Hindūstānī language in North India, and habīr is regarded as the father of Hindī literature.

As for South India, we are told that the Sūfis learned Tamil and left valuable works in that language. Hence Ša'īf 3āthī, a Ṣūfī writer, "In Southern India, as pointed out by many scholars, the Hindu philosophy and religion attempted to discover the common elements and analogies in the philosophical ideas, dogma and ritual of Islam; "The Hindu and Muslim saints of Southern India", continues Šīrī, "have left behind them poetic l
compositions in the Tamil language. As a result of the synthesis between the two streams of religious thought emerged what is known as the Hindūstānī way in language and culture.

The Süfis also took interest in literary works on Hindū mysticism. Thus Ukhud-Dīn Samarqandī translated a book on Hindū mysticism entitled Anantarāka first into Arabic, then into Persian with the help of a brāhmin called Bībīn, from whom he learned Sanskrit and whom he claims to have converted to Islām during his visit to Lakhnauti in the early part of the thirteenth century. Similar literary works on Hindū religion, written by Süfis, have been mentioned by Ashītī ohan Sea. Of these, Ḥasan Nīāzī's Two Prophets of Hindū, Šāh and Ksμr, Peace be on Them, and Mīlīk Abū-Baydā Mūsāī's Th. 143 Padma-rā yi, are worth noticing. We do not intend to go beyond the time of Kābir. To be sure, the interactions between the two religions were multiplied during the centuries after Kābir.

In the foregoing pages we have presented a picture of the interactions that took place between Hindūism and Islām for many centuries, though our account by no means is exhaustive. One of the first things that we have shown is that the influence was mutual and by no means one-sided. Emphasising this point, Titus maintains: "If the Hindū environment has produced a profound effect on Islām during its long residence in the country, it is no less true that Islām has in turn reacted on Hindūism and Hindū life." It may be stressed that the Süfis were primarily responsible for creating the atmosphere of interaction and harmony between the two systems.
It may be asked: if the Sufis were important as a factor in establishing good relations with the Hindus and championed the cause of Islam in a peaceful way, why is there not more information about their manifold activities? The answer is not too far to seek. Firstly, the Sufis themselves did not write many things about their activities, for they were not interested in literary or theoretical things; their spiritual life was rather practical. Secondly, Indian Sufis did not evolve any new theory requiring literary explanation. Before the coming of the Sufis to India, the situation created by Muslim conquests was one of prejudice and apathy, if not enmity, between the two communities. Though the Muslims had established their military and political supremacy by virtue of their superior military organisation, it would appear that the Muslims' minority would not be able to continue their rule over the majority who differed from them in race, religion, culture and language. The conservative theologians who were fanatically dogmatic in their outlook rarely appreciated the change in the mores of the time and seldom tried to reconstruct their religious thought in accordance with the needs of the time.

The Sufis, however, "rose to the occasion and released syncretic forces which liquified social, ideological, and linguistic barriers" between the Hindus and the Muslims "and helped in the development of a common cultural outlook." Finally, the absence of information about the Sufis and their intense activities in India in the records of the historians of the kings and emperors may be explained by saying that these historians, who worked under royal patronage, tried to glorify the norms
of those Muslim monarchs who so frequently styled themselves defenders and propagators of their faith.

At any rate, the situation that arose out of this interaction was one of the most uncommon and spectacular in the history of mankind. A well-worded statement by Sir John Marshall describes the picture:

"Seldom in the history of mankind has the spectacle been witnessed of two civilizations, so vast and so strangely developed, yet so radically dissimilar, as the Mughal and the Hindu, meeting and mingling together. The very contrasts which existed between them, the wide divergence in their culture and their religions, make the history of their impact peculiarly instructive."

In the above pages we have tried to point out all the important features of Sufism. In a nutshell, they are: oneness, equality of man, love of God, purity of heart; devotion to God, longing for union with God, dependence on God's mercy, and, finally, disregard for formal religion. Now let us see at which level of Hindu mysticism the Sufi could meet it with their ideals as enumerated above.

People commonly speak of "mystic Indi." As against India, where mysticism developed against odds, India is the home of mysticism. It is "the very stuff and substance of religion" in India. Thus W. C. Brahm calls India the "high school of mystics." Sufi, as we have noticed before, is a mystics which is conditioned by a monotheistic creed, Hinduism, which is not so.

Professor C. M. Naqvi has distinguished
four different kinds of Hindu mysticism, viz., the sacrificial, the Upanishadic, the Yogic, and the Bhakti. Now let us see what are the common points among them and how far they are in agreement or disagreement with Sufi ideas.

To all varieties of Hindu mysticism, with the exception of Bhakti, the ascetic discipline, which means turning one's back on this world (vaipasa), is a common starting point. The purpose of all Indian mysticism is moksha (release or liberation) from the human and conditioned state called samsara. But that does not mean union or communion with God. Although it corresponds to the purity of heart of the Sufis, remarks Zechner, yet "does not carry with it the additional implication of nearness to God." In the Vedic religion sacrifice was offered not to achieve moksha but to appease the gods to grant the sacrificer safety against natural calamity. And, in the Vedic hymns though the idea of love or śraddha for gods is not completely absent but the idea of longing for union with the gods was lacking. Moreover, by no means can Vedic religion be regarded as monistic.

Dasgupta sums up the leading mystical ideas of the Upanisads as follows:

The chief feature of this Upanishadic mysticism are the earnest and sincere quest for this spiritual illumination, the purusha delight and force that characterizes the at once of the ages when they speak of the realization of this ineffable experience, the ultimate and absolute truth and reality, and the immortality of all mortal things. Yet this quest is not the quest of the God of the theists. This highest reality is no individual person
separate from us, or one whom we try to please, or whose law and commands we obey, or to whose will we submit with reverence and devotion. It is, rather, a totality of formless, simple and undifferentiated experience, and which is at once the ultimate essence of our Self and the highest principle of the universe, the Brahman or the Atman. 153

In other words, man sees his innermost essence as being fundamentally identical with the common source of all things, and he can, therefore, say, "I am this All" or "I am Brahman." This is usually called pantheism: the soul is regarded as coterminous with all that is and, therefore, with God. This absolute identity of the human soul (Atman) with the universal soul (Brahman) is the essence of the Upanisadic teaching. It is also basic to Shankara's Advaita Vedanta. But in this teaching of the Upanisadic mysticism there is no trace of what is called love for God and longing for a union with Him. In fact, Brahman cannot be regarded as God: It is an all-pervading principle, whereas the Sufis conceive of God as the Lord of the Universe with whom they think of having an intimate relationship and thus long for a personal communion. This is the essence of Sufi theosophy. In Sufism, however, are found monotheism, pantheism and even monism. The cases of Bishārī Abū Sa'īd ibn Abī'l Khayr and Iba' al-Arāfī are cases in point.

Quite different from Upanisadic mysticism is the Yoga. This is expressed in the words Vivekādītā (knowledge of difference), that is, to know the difference between eternal being (purusa(s), soul(s) and the eternal matter (aprānti). The problem in Yoga (also in Sādhyā) is stated thus: under the influence of Prakṛti, Purusa, which is completely different from the former, and inactive, conceives itself as one with
the former, and the activities of the former as its own. This is the cause of samsāra for the soul; and when it realises its absolute difference from the Prakṛti, the Puruṣa or the soul attains release from the bondage (samsāra).

Now if we compare the yogic mysticism with that of Islam, it will appear that they are poles apart. Although unlike the atheistic Sāṅkhya, the Yoga system conceives of the existence of a God, yet He is not the Creator God or the Lord of the universe, whereas the Sufi conception of God is the One eternal God, who is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe.

For the Yoga there are two eternals—Puruṣa and Prakṛti, whereas for the Sufi's God (Allāh) alone is eternal. In other words, Sufism is monotheistic and theistic, Yoga mysticism, on the contrary, is neither; it implies a non-theistic orientation. What is more important is that while the aim of the Yoga for Patanjali is discrimination between subject and object—Puruṣa and Prakṛti, that is, to attain the purity of the self by discriminating between Puruṣa and Prakṛti. In other words, it is a methodical isolation from the Nature, and consequent union with the Puruṣa. Unlike the Sufi's God, the Puruṣa does not give grace and the yogi does not have any passionate love for the union as the Sufi has.

According to the definitions of mysticism given by different writers, it is a "phenomenon of the universal yearning of the human spirit for personal communion with God." This is true of Sufism and other mysticism, but not a trace of love or longing for communion with God do we find in...
sacrificial, or Upanishadic or Yoga mysticism. If they have any
yearning at all, it was for moksha from our conditioned humanity
into our true immortal state, which is beyond time and space.

However, in the Gitâ, where God appears to be different
from both human soul and created universe, the elements
of love and God's grace, and a stronger tendency of monotheism
have appeared. Here we have the beginnings of bhakti mysticism,
and this is more nearly comparable to Sûfism which is essentially
a mysticism of love. Thus R. C. Majumdar has drawn the points
of similarity between Sûfism and bhakti mysticism in the following
words:

The striking similarities between them
are, in particular, the stress on the
approach to God through love, intellect,
and intellectual life being regarded not
only as valuable but almost a positive
hindrance. Among other similarities or
common features may be noted (1) physical
exercise like restraining of breath,
(2) service and submission to pir or pirâ,
(3) recitation of sacred word, (4) toleration
of other religions, and (5) belief in union
with the Supreme Being through love and Shakti.

The general liberal and unorthodox attitude
regarding rituals and ceremonies is also
another point common between them. It has
been pointed out that not only in ideology,
but also in the poetic representation of
the same, there is a general similarity between
the poetry of the medieval saints and Sûf
poets on the one hand and the Buddhist Sahajiyâs
on the other. It is therefore argued that
medieval mysticism is a product of the practice
of Sûfism against the Sahajiyâ background.

One may therefore reasonably believe in a
close contact between the two and their deep
influence on each other, resulting in the
evolution of what may be called medieval
saints of mysticism. Besides interaction,
which is indeterminable, we should not exclude
other factors, such as the normal evolution
of religious ideas, in order to explain the
rise and growth of bhakti movement which is
a mystical movement.
Let us now turn to bhākṭī mysticism. Before entering into discussions on bhākṭī, it should be made clear that although bhākṭī is expounded in the Gītā quite elaborately, yet we do not propose to begin our discussions of the bhākṭī mysticism with the Gītā for the following reasons. Firstly, the bhākṭī in the Gītā is more or less a sectarian religious matter for the Bhārāṇavāc sect; it did not become a religion of the masses. Secondly, although the Gītā represents the doctrine of the Bhārāṇavāc and of the Ekāntika Dharma, yet we cannot say that it contains that monotheism which the Sūfis stood for and which dominates the theme of all bhākṭi schools beginning in the Tamil land during the early years of the Christian era. Although the Gītā has introduced the warmth of bhākṭī and attached great value to the moral purpose of life, yet it could not present a pure monotheism as the bhākṭi implies. Thirdly, the Gītā-bhākṭi does not exclusively represent the ideal of brotherhood and equality of all men which was the characteristic feature of Sūfis, and all bhākṭis includin Ḫāfir. In the Gītā, on the contrary, is found the traditional classification of men into four castes. This shortcoming of the Gītā is explained by the fact that the author of the Gītā who believed in the Brahmnic tradition had no courage or intention to make a departure from that tradition. Moreover, in the Gītā no special weight is given to bhākṭi; it rather sees all the three paths, namely, Jīna, Purāṇa, and Bhākṭi, to be interrelated and thus equally important.

Another important Sanskrit work on bhākṭi, it may be mentioned here is the Bhārāṇavāc Purāṇa. Although it emphasizes
the superiority of bhakti, it does not deny the efficacy of the other methods, viz., Jñāna, Karma and Yoga. But neither does this book make a break with the older tradition. Speaking about these two works, Basuupta maintains: "Both the Gita and 3ha Ṣaiva Purānas criticise the older course of the Vedic sacrifices, but neither of them had the boldness to pass an unconditional condemnation." This meekness on the part of these works makes their kind of bhakti different from that of Šūris and the bhaktas; some of them gave absolute supremacy to bhakti in disregard to all other methods, on the other hand, and effected a complete departure from the age-old tradition. Finally, unlike the Gita and the other traditional works pertaining to bhakti, the Šūris and the bhaktas abandoned the Hindu and Muslim sacred languages, namely, Arabic and Sanskrit, and in their stead adopted vernacular language in order to make their message understandable and appealing to the general populace. Labîr is the best exponent of this kind of bhakti mysticism.

In the foregoing pages we have examined the principal ideas of Šūfism. In that, we have noticed that in the process of the interaction between the two faiths, bi-sîrûn Šūfîs at first borrowed some of the Indian ideas and then in turn stimulated and contributed some ideas to Indian mysticism. We have also tried to show that the non-orthodox wing of Šūfism could not in hands with the orthodox sections of Hindu mysticism. But the bhakti type of Hindu mysticism having similarity in ideas with the radical wing of Šūfism could interact freely.
We have emphasised that although Kabir was one of the Sufis he was different from all other Sufis; and we have indicated the points of difference and agreement between him and a few Sufis of his line. By doing so, we wanted to show how Kabir's mysticism was the culmination of that process of mystical attitude which established an inter-religious mysticism for following religious life in disregard to all formal religions. We also stress that while Kabir was one of the bhaktas, in many respects his system was different from all other bhaktas who preceded him. In order for us to substantiate this contention, it is necessary that we should briefly examine all the important bhaktas before him. As is well-known, the bhakti movements had two phases—the first phase arose and developed in South India while the second phase began in North India at the beginning of the fifteenth century. In the next chapter, we propose to discuss the first phase, beginning in the Tamil land up to the time of Ramananda, the great bhakta of the South who took the movement to the North. In discussing pre-Kabir bhakti movement, it may be mentioned here, we do not intend to go into the details of any particular individual bhakta and his doctrines; we would rather confine our examination to those principles that can be paralleled to Sufi ideals enumerated before. In doing so, we intend to assess how far the interaction of Hindu-Muslim ideas engendered the bhakti movement as a whole; on the one hand, and particularly helped the rise of Kabir's system, on the other.
INTERACTION THROUGH BHAKTI MYSTICISM

Religious terms are in many cases very complex and rich, owing to the fact that they have been influenced by diverse currents of thought. In the case of the term bhakti Aryan or Hindū, Dravidian, Islāmic, Christian, influences can all be seen and a simple definition would not suffice to bring out its real meaning. Moreover, we must not ignore the fact that words and concepts acquire new meaning, or at least new shades of meaning, in the various stages of their development and in particular contexts, and that they gain new force as they express the religious experience of a people. In view of this fact, we propose to investigate the etymological significance of the Sanskrit term bhakti and its Tamil equivalent anpu, and then try to focus attention on the doctrinal or religious context in which the term is usually used. As a symbol of the love of a religious man for his God, bhakti means far more than can be conveyed by its literary signification. However, the importance of literary usage cannot be overlooked since the term was not used in literature arbitrarily and at random.

ETYMOLOGY OF THE TERMS BHAKTI AND ANPU

Etymologically, the term bhakti is derived from the root bhēj which signifies resorting to and then loving the thing resorted to. Here the word love is used in relation to both persons and things or actions, and its employment for religious purposes is considered central to its meaning. However, the word has also a passive sense which means being resorted to, liked or loved. General and special prefixes
and terminations are often used with the root which indicate
the nature of the object to whom or from whom love is excha-
gen. Hence R. G. Bhandarkar says, "Thus the idea of love
was associated with the word in early times, though it then
signified loved instead of love."

N. Dhandrongy maintains that bhakti in religious use e
would convey the meaning o' choosing God as one's part,
or worshipping, adoring, loving God. It was used in the
Vedic literature in the sense of mechanical participation
in a sacrificial rite. In later literature, it was very often
used to express the personal relationship between a religious
man and God. Bhakti, therefore, expresses the idea of partici-
pation and sharing. The word, however, can have different
connotations according to context. It would express a personal
relation when used to explain interpersonal relations. It
can be charged with emotions of affection. It may take a
reverential and religious character, as it did in the religious
literature of India during the period of our investigation.

Bhakti in a religious context means man's love for
God and vice-versa. Bhakti in the first sense is used in the
Bhakti-yogadhyayana (2.27). In the second sense, it is
used by a devotee addressing his beloved godness: "Oh Mother
Lakshmi, show your love (favour) to no one else and do not
seek mine. Those who love for pleasure are in your power;
what can you do over those who have desire no more?"

These examples demonstrate that the idea implied in
bhakti and the religious usage of it suggests a god or a
personified God or a spiritual preceptor (guru) to whom personal reverence, love and devotion are directed.

As a technical religious term, bhakti is considered to be the most difficult word to translate. The term assumes different doctrinal connotations, yet the best rendering of it suggested is: "Eternal love in utter self-surrender." Nonetheless, "loving devotion" is used generally and that seems to be the most comprehensive rendering in the shortest form. At the same time, the idea of "participation" in the divine is also implied, not in the impersonal sense of causal determinism, but as L. Renou defines bhakti, in the personal sense of "participation ensouled" (effective participation of the soul in the divine). Therefore, we propose to use "loving devotion" as the most appropriate rendering of bhakti. It may be emphasized here that "bhakti always entails a theistic attitude with strong yearnings towards at least a practical monotheism."

Agwu in its general sense signifies love, attachment, piety, friendship, benevolence and devotion to those related to oneself. The etymology of the term agwu is uncertain, but the word anu, which means to approach or to love, has been suggested as the root whence agwu derives.

But when agwu is used in a religious context, it becomes charged with a deep religious sense. For example:

To those who love him, the Lord is love,
He is faithful.
The blissful, silent One, the gracious Master
placed His feet on my head—
Lo, I realized myself and died to my empirical thought. 

Tayumanavar thus proclaims that God is love for those who love Him, and that He is a faithful lover, who by His grace helps them to attain self-realization.

With hearts full of love if the devotees approach the temple of Mallur Perumam rich [with salvific grace] and worship the sacred feet of My Father blissful, and render service, they will not suffer [the pain of death].

It is clear that ānanda in religious contexts means love towards God or God personified in total self-surrender and self-dedication, who alone grants grace and thus salvation to the devotees.

The concept of bhakti or the idea of a religion of loving devotion is as old as the time of the Upanishads, as Chandrakar asserts. This idea, however, received a definite shape from the time of the Gītā and eventually led to the formation of an independent sect, namely, the Bhagavata or the Satvata. Thus the Gītā is construed as the earliest exposition of the bhakti system or the Ekāntīc Dharma (monotheistic religion). We have enumerated before the characteristic features of the Gītā-bhakti and explained how and why it differs from the bhakti cult that was initiated in south India probably under the influence of the Sūfis. We, therefore, propose to enter into the discussions of the bhakti cult in south India without including the Gītā-bhakti, though relevant references to the Gītā will be made whenever it is necessary. In this discussion we will draw attention to specific instances of probable Sūfi influence on bhakti leaders, rather than describing the bhakti movements as such.
DEFINITIONS OF BHAKTI

Bhakti has been defined by many writers, all of whom are in essential agreement. Let us at first cite some definitions given by the śūtra writers. The best account of bhakti is contained in the Añhohīra of Chandilya (late ninth and early tenth century). He defines bhakti as an "affection fixed on God, Iswara (Śūtra, 2). Bhakti has been clearly distinguished from knowledge (Jñāna), though it may be the result of knowledge (Śūtra, 27). Bhakti is not a worship in the sense of performing some outward acts. "It is simply and solely an affection directed to a person (a personal God), not a belief in a system." Chandilya makes another point clear, that bhakti can be practised by men of all castes including the Chandales or the Untouchables (Śūtra, 73). But the concession is not unqualified: the phrase "second-hand" in the śūtra implies that the author had in his mind the problem of the Chandales not being allowed to read the Vedas. In other words, the lower castes can learn about bhakti from others and not directly from the scriptures. This point brings us to another more important issue.

The Chandilya Śūtra advocates a kind of bhakti which is obviously based on the Veda, whereas the bhaktas of the Tamil land evolved bhakti out of their heart, that is, a mystical experience. And although they did not totally reject the Vedas, they valued their own compositions even higher than the Vedas. In fact, the Tamil Purāṇa is called the Tamil
Vedas. Moreover, the Tamil-bhakti became the religion of the outcastes. In the case of Kabir, however, the situation was different. He clearly rejected the Vedas, on the one hand, and threw the door of bhakti unequivocally open to the outcastes. In this respect, he differs from all bhaktas who preceded him, including his own guru, Ramananda, except possibly for the Vindasiva or the Lingayata sect.

Another sūtra writer was Narada (late ninth and early tenth cent.), His sutras fuse to connect bhakti with karma and jñāna at all. According to him, bhakti is all that matters, and everything else is of value only so far as it is auxiliary to bhakti. The path of bhakti should be followed to the exclusion of all others (Sūtra, 33). The superiority of bhakti lies in this, that it seeks no other reward but itself (Sūtra, 76). Bhakti is God-centred and God-intent (Sūtra, 57, 77). Bhakti can dispense with knowledge, for to the bhakta the Lord promptly reveals himself (sic) (Sūtra, 73-77).

As we see, bhakti, according to Narada, stands much closer to the attitude of the Tāpalkai or Southern schools of the school of Rāmānuja, which upholds the absolute superiority of bhakti and maintains that the bhakta has no obligations to perform except to remain in absolute dependence on God's mercy.

Many modern writers have proposed quite comprehensive definitions of bhakti. Although it is neither necessary nor possible to include all these definitions, yet citation of some of them would help us to understand the attitude of these
Modern writers towards bhakti. The one conspicuous feature that is discernible in all these definitions is that of the catholicity and universality of bhakti. Thus Juddh Singh writes, "Bhakti is free from desire, and is of the nature of inhibition of all desires (airodna) by which, however, is meant not the extinction of all desires, but the concentration of all desires and actions to God. Inhibition also means undivided or whole hearted devotion to God, indifference to all that is antagonistic to Him, and the giving up of all other supports."

"The need for liberation", continues the same writer, "leads one to devotion, the minimum qualification which entitles him to this way. The cult of bhakti is catholic, universal and open to all. Thus, the Bhagavata religion of devotion is perfectly democratic."

The above statement is an indication of what a modernist understands about bhakti, and what bhakti actually should have been from the very beginning. This attitude reflects what the bhakti movement was during the period under our examination. But as for the bhakti of the Bhagavata sect, it would appear difficult to defend the statement that bhakti was universal and democratic. Although the spirit of catholicity and universality was not lacking, and all the important features that we find in the bhakti movements of our period were present in the Bhagavata religion, yet the religion of devotion in the Bhagavata did not become a universal religion due to the overwhelming domination of the Brahmanic tradition.
on the whole society. The bhakti movements of our period, on the contrary, was actually a reaction against that Brahmanic tradition. Thus one writer says forcefully, "The whole movement is an impassioned cry against the ossified ceremonial religion of the Brahmins and the ideal of 'passionlessness' that they shared with the Buddhists and Jains. It was against these last that they launched their passionate crusade in the name of the One True God,..." And it was only under the new impulse given by the Sufis, who profess a religion supremely catholic and liberal in character, did the bhakti movements become a religious movement of the masses, and hence come to be called a democratic religion. This religion of devotion during the period under study transformed the whole face of Hindu religion and society. About the bhakti of this period, M. C. Zrenner observes: "Bhakti is the term used for a type of religion that seems to have originated in the Dravidian south; later it was to sweep the whole of India and utterly transform the face of Hinduism."

Under the influence of the Sufis, the features of bhakti religion present in the Gitā and other Hindu religious literature, were augmented, revitalised and stimulated, and thus awakened the consciousness of the masses about the existence of a loving God who takes care of his sincere devotees. "A response to divine love," says one writer, "was possible as soon as the people were awakened to the existence of loving qualities of the supreme deity..." The response from the people to the call of the saints was tremendous; the religion of devotion spread throughout the length and breadth of the country like
wildfire and became the most dominant religion during the period under study. In view of this fact a recent writer observes:

Seldom if ever in man's history has there been another tradition where the effective life of religion was sustained so consistently on such a lofty devotional plane. The devotee casts himself in absolute dependence upon the mercy and love of the supreme deity. The bhakti movement has remained the single most distinguishing characteristic of Hindūism from the opening centuries of the Christian era until the present day. 18

The movement not only caught hold of the popular minds but also affected the thought of the intellectuals like philosophers Rāmānuja, Kādha and others as we shall see in the following pages. "The characteristic feature of medieval Hindūism", says Wm. T. De Bary, "is the great upsurge and the spread of devotional movements. However intense was the activity in the domain of metaphysics, the worship of a personal God, in one form or another, became the dominant trend and influenced even the schools of philosophy in the direction of theism." 19

When the religion of devotion became democratic and universal, it became essentially a social religion, as it must be since it contains in it the element of love. Its poets all sing of the joy of the fellowship of God and His saints. Thus Kabīr is reported to have said: "Saith Kabīr, To whom shall I tell this, that heaven is in the company of the saints?"(Adī-Graṭh, Gaurī) 10.

The social character of bhakti tended to in flame its
ardour; its stress on emotions was mainly responsible for this. Thus some of the bhakti sects, like those of Chaitanya, Mira Bai and Vallabha developed to the extent of being erotic and hysterical: the devotees continuously singing, dancing, weeping and finally falling fainted. Undoubtedly, this kind of bhakti religion encouraged the influx of some of the aberrations that have brought discredit upon some bhakti sects. Hence a modern Bengalee scholar condemns bhakti as "inevitably disastrous in its consequences." "The body", he maintains, "is suddenly deprived of its guiding star"; it "wanders into the jungle of passions." "Headlong, unguided Bhakti makes for horrible degeneracy."

We have endeavoured to show in the foregoing pages that there was an ancient bhakti in India which goes back to the Vedic period, and there was a classical bhakti which can be dated to the time of the Gita. That means, all the ingredients of the bhakti religion are native to India; they are all present in the Gita implicitly or explicitly. Obviously, no outside influence was needed for the coming into being of the religion of devotion. But the new upsurge of the bhakti movement that took place first in south India and then in the North, which overwhelmed the whole country, is seen to be the result of foreign influences which stimulated the already existing ideas of bhakti. By and large, scholars are in agreement that it was the Sufi brotherhood, which had been exerting its influence on Hindu society since the seventh century of the Christian era, which was responsible
For the reawakening of the Indian mind; although some think that it was the Christian influence that caused the new bhakti movement. Let us examine briefly this dispute. While discussing this dispute, we have to remember that although the presence of a large number of Muslims and some Christians in the South is historically documented, their influence on the Hindus is hypothetical and speculative, for there is no clear evidence of such influence.

EXTERIOR INFLUENCE ON THE BHAKTI MOVEMENT

Here at first we have to recall the history of the coming of the Muslim traders to south India in the seventh century, and their missionary activity which we have described briefly in a previous chapter. We may notice how intense and widespread was the proselytizing activity of these Muslin traders. We have also noticed that as a result of the interaction between the Hindus and the Muslims, not only did a large numbers of individuals, including some Rajahs, accept Islam, but often a few mixed sects also arose. These Muslim traders-missionaries were followed by the Sufis, of whom also we have given a brief description in the previous chapter.

Apart from the possible Muslim influence on Hindu religion and society of the South, we may recall the religious-political unrest that was prevalent in the South in those days. Religious, Hinduism entered into conflict with Buddhism and Jainism, and Vaiñavism and the Saivism were taking form. Politically, it was a period of great upheaval; the Chalukyas and the Pallavas entered into a deadly struggle in which both of them were worn out; and the Cheras were
losing ascendency; on the ruins of these were to come up some new dynasties, like the Cholas, and at a later time the kingdom of Vijayanagar.

It was thus a period of revolutionary activity in both religion and politics of the South. The minds of the people were greatly perturbed: they felt themselves freed from the stamp of old tradition, and thus were prone to accept new ideas from other quarters. It would appear that it was an opportune moment when Islam appeared on the scene with new ideas: a simple formula of faith with minimum rites based on strict monotheism; social equality, loving devotion to God; etc. Hence Zaeher remarks, "... most conversions were voluntary particularly among the outcasts or untouchables who saw in conversion a way of escape from an intolerable social degradation. Further, Islam is a supremely simple religion and its uncompromising monotheism offered an attractive alternative to the complexities and imprecisions of the prevailing dharma."

It is against this background, Tara Chand asserts:

It may, therefore, be premised without overrating facts that if, in the development of the Hindu religions in the South, any foreign elements are found which make their appearance after the seventh century, and which cannot be accounted for by the natural development of Hinduism itself, they may with much probability be ascribed to the influence of Islam, provided, of course, they are not alien to its genius.

In the same tone, another writer says, "Now, it is precisely
in these parts [of south India] that, from the ninth to the twelfth century, those great religious movements took their rise which are connected with the names of Čākara, Rāmānuja, Amādatirtha, and Rāsaḷa, out of which the majority of the historical sects came, and to which Hindūstan presents nothing analogous till a much later period." And in this context some influence of Islam on even Čākara and Rāmānuja has been suggested by some writers.

However, some writers, such as A. C. Burnett, Max Weber, J. G. Bhushkar, think that it was the Christian influence which engendered the bhākta movement in south India. But A. Barth, Yusuf Husain, Tara Chaud, and others reject the thesis of Christian influence. These writers maintain that unlike the Muslims, the Christians are not reported in history to have carried out any widespread missionary programme. They also argue that in fact Islam was not the originator of bhākta in south India or India as a whole, rather Islam provided a fresh life to the already existing ideas pertaining to a religion of devotion. Hence Tara Chaud holds, "It is necessary to repeat that most of the elements in the southern schools of devotion and philosophy, taken singly, were derived from ancient systems; but the elements in their totality and in their peculiar emphasis betray a singular approximation to the Muslim faith and therefore make the arguments for Islamic influence probable."

As we see, there is a general agreement among the writers about the influence of Islam on Hindū religion and
society which possibly led to the flaring up of the bhatti
cult. The extent of this influence, however, cannot be deter-
mined for we do not possess any detailed records of the activ-
ities of the Muslim missionaries. One thing is certain.
that they lived in the society in large numbers alongside the
Hindus, and their very presence must have created the atmos-
phere for the interaction between the two communities. A. Barth
stresses the point that neither Christianity nor Islam had
exercised any significant influence on Hindu theology, which
appears sufficiently accounted for by reference to its own
resources: "but it is very possible that indirectly, and
merely as it were by their presence, they contributed
in some degree towards the budding and bursting forth of those
great religious reforms which, in the absence of doctrines
altogether new, introduced into Hinduism a new organization
and a new spirit..." Relying to those who maintain that
the idea of bhatti as a means and condition of salvation,
and monotheism were borrowed from Christianity, R. C. Rajumdar
says: "Islam is now substituted for Christianity as the source of
both the ideas." "The evidence of such a close contact
with Christianity", continues Rajumdar, "as may reasonably
support the idea of borrowing from each other is entirely
lacking. The question is more complicated in regard to Islam."
According to Rajumdar, the contact between Hinduism and Islam
before the twelfth century was not enough to prove permanent
influence or borrowing. The situation, however, thinks Rajumdar,
was different after the twelfth century when Islam established
itself in India and penetrated its roots more and more deeply.
as centuries passed. "There can be hardly any doubts", asserts Kajumdar, "that the impact of Islam was felt by the Hindus, and a class of Muslim thinkers was influenced by the rich heritage of thought in India." That is to say, it is certain that interaction between the two faiths took place.

Those who favour the indigenous origin of bhakti, such as A. Macnichol, Yusuf Husain and others, uphold the universality of bhakti and maintain that Islam (Sufism) only helped in creating the atmosphere for the upsurge that took place beginning in early medieval India. Thus Yusuf Husain emphasises, "Bhakti is not at all specifically Semitic. It is a sentiment everywhere diffused. It came to birth quite naturally in India when devotion turned to a single personal God. Bhakti, in the sense understood in India, is a devotion full of affection, and the traditions by which it is inspired belong to Aryan as much as to Semitic thought."

At any rate, we have no intention to assert that in its evolution and development bhakti cult never underwent any external influence. We have noticed before that after the arrival of Islam and its missionaries in India interaction and assimilation between Hinduism and Islam took place in many segments of their life; as a result both religions were modified at least on the mystical plane. Hence U. C. Bhattacharjee suggests that though the exact extent of Christian or Muslim influence on Hinduism is difficult to assess, there is definitely a "theistic urge" in Indian religion and philosophy in the period of early Muslim settlements in
the Deccan while "finds powerful expression in many Vedantic writers who came after Saṅkara."

The question of whether Christianity or Sūfism influenced bhakti cult is difficult to decide conclusively. One of the reasons for this difficulty is the fact that in its development Sūfism was influenced by Christian mysticism, as we have noticed before. Nevertheless, Sūfism retained its distinguishing marks, such as strict monotheism, egalitarianism, and the doctrine of divine love which are conspicuous in all bhakti sects. Hence George Grierson suggests that the Hindu "Bhagavats" whose youth had been passed in a Muslim atmosphere must have been influenced by the Sūfis. As for Christianity, Zaehner strikes a strong note and says that it is not a strictly monotheistic religion "because it introduces into a monotheistic system an idea that is wholly foreign to it, namely, the Incarnation of God in the person of Jesus Christ." Such an idea is repulsive to Sūfism as Rabīr represents it, though some heterodox Sūfis, e.g. Hallāj had earlier spoken of it. At any rate, striking similarities are found between some Sūfī ideas and some ideas of some bhakti leaders. This takes the possibility of mutual influence between them more reasonable.

Having discussed the question of the origin of bhakti, and possible Sūfī influence in revitalising it and thus making it a popular religious movement of the Indian masses which swept the entire land as a mighty flood, we propose to turn to the actual movement in the Tamil land.
THE ŚAIVITES OF THE SOUTH

It seems difficult to fix any chronology of the Śaivites and the Vaiṣṇavite bhaktas of the Dravidian Tamil lands who first set in motion the movement of the bhakti cult which subsequently engulfed the whole country. From all information, they seem to have appeared in the seventh century of the Christian era, the time when the Muslim traders were carrying out their vigorous missionary work. We propose, however, to examine at first the Śaivites. We do not intend to go into the details of the whole Śaivite system but will examine the principal points of the school. The teachers of this school are called by a generic name—the Nayanars or the Adiyār. At first there were three saints (called The Three), viz., Nārisambandharma, Appār, and Sundaravurti. They were poet-singers, filled with the emotion of bhakti towards Śiva. They wandered from temple to temple, singing their hymns and dancing in the court before the images of Śiva and Umā. Large crowds flocked around them. They did not show any dependence on the Śiva Aṣṭāvers, but used the Epics and the Purāṇas and expressed "the traditional piety and devotion of the community." Appār is considered to have been the most eloquent poet, "The Devout Prince of Song," whose hymns came to be sung in temples. His hymns in Tamil "contained the quintessence of the Vedas and were thus in substance one with them," remarks a writer. Let us illustrate some of his devotional songs. He considers every perfection in man and in nature as a sign of God's love and goodness towards mankind:

Clothe my bones with muscles and skin to give me a human form, making me happy by the removal of karma, dwelling in my heart as in a temple, showering me love, accepting me as his servant, he showers on me his grace.
God is the immense ocean of wisdom whose nature is goodness. To the faithful bhaktās he is true and loyal, i.e., he manifests his real nature; he is unattainable by people without bhakti, whose deeds are born of a mind like iron (are hard-hearted); i.e., he hides his real nature from them, so that they conclude that there is no God.

He is never hard to find, but he lives in the mind of good bhaktās; he is the innermost secret of all religion and of the sacred Scriptures; he is inseparable; he is honey and milk and shining light. He is the king of the gods; i.e., in Vigna, Brāhma, in flame, in wind, in the mountains, sea. 48

Aparā addresses God as father, mother and relatives:

You are my father, my mother, my teacher. You are my loving uncle and aunt; you are my fair lady, my rich treasure; you are my family, my relatives, my home. 49

Aparā had a profound sense of sin, and hence his bhakti was marked by a penitence and repentance that is characteristic of Sūfīsm's ḫāmṣ, and unusual in Hinduism. Like the Sūfīs, and also ḍabīs, he confesses that he has done many sinful deeds because he did not know the true nature of God and of himself. Again, like the Sūfīs, he begs pardon and forgiveness of God for his sins. He poetically expresses his sinful state and implores help. "I am on a raft in the sea of life, wrecked on the rock of lust and egoism. I cry for help." Then he says:

My race is evil, my character evil; my voice evil; my sin is great; even my God is evil; I am sinful and polluting; I do not know the company of the good; I am not befitting and yet I do not forsake the ways of the beasts. I talk blasphemy; I speak evil of the company of the good. I am a poor, sinful wretch that I am, I only beg and never give [to the needy]. 51

These verses give us a clear picture of the nature of bhakti teaching. Apart from the element of love and
devotion (bhakti), which, of course, is the basis of his teaching; we find a strong tendency to monotheism, which seems to be gnostic. Anurā directs his love and devotion to one God, Śiva, though he recognizes Brahmā and Viṣṇu as other manifestations. On this point his teaching differs from that of Sūfis in general and Habīr in particular, for they do not acknowledge any other gods or beings as manifestation of one God. But there are other similarities. Anurā calls Śiva "iliā" for which there is a clear reference in the Qur'ān (21:35). This is one of the verses of the Qur'ān that we have counted in our account for the Islamic origin of Sūfism. Then, like the Sūfis (including Habīr), Anurā considers one's heart as the dwelling-place of God, to which allusion has been made before. In expressing his intimate relations with God and addressin Him as Father, Mother, etc., Anurā stands within the fold of universal mysticism. "The idea of God as Father," says S. R. Decew, "is indeed as old as the Vedas." It is also expressed in several passages of the Gītā (3.17; 11.12, 14; 14.4), and elsewhere in Hindu religious literature. It is also as old as Christianity and Islam. But in the Śaiva cult this expression of God as Father or Creator and Supporter, etc., is subordinated to the conception of God as the nearest and the dearest. This conception of God in relation to men is mystical—Aryan as well as Semitic. What seems clear is that at the meeting of the two mysticisms—Hindu and Muslim—the conception which is characteristic of the Bhakti cult becomes intensified.

To Anurā, heart-felt love is all that matters in every
service or worship of God. This being his attitude, he openly
criticised the formalism of Hinduism. He says:

Why bathe in the Ganges or Kaveri?
Why go to Lalgulamari in the land
of Pancha? Why bathe in the waters of
the roaring sea? No release except to
those who call upon the Lord everywhere.

Why chant the Vedas, hear the Sutras' lore?
Why learn daily the books of right conduct?
Why know the six Vedantas again and again?
No release except to those who constantly
meditate on the Lord.

Why fast and starve, why do penance on mountaintops?
Why go to bathe in waters far and wide?
No release but for those who always call
on the Lord for help.

In this overt rejection of formal religion, Appar stands
as a predecessor to Kabir.

The immense output of mystical hymns by the Saivite
Nayanars which contributed to the rise and growth of Saivite,
form of bhakti religion and thus reviving Hinduism against
the currents of Buddhism and Jainism in the Tamil land,
reached its climax in the Tiru-Vichakar (The Sacred Utterance)
of Manicka-Vichakar, "whose utterances are rubies", the last
of the Tamil Saivite post-mystics. He lived about 966 A.D.,
possessed with a powerful intellect and with a genius for adminis-
tration. He became the prime minister of the Pandya King,
Anuradha-mir. But power and position could not delude him;
responding to an inner call, he renounced the world and became
a wandering devotee of Siva. In his lyrical poems, Manicka-
Vichakar freely uses the stories of the Epics, the Puranas
and the Agamas. He is generally recognised as the finest of
all Nayanars; only able to express the deepest religious
emotions of the human heart. Thus his *Tiru-Vedakam* is daily sung with devotion in temples and homes throughout the Tamil land. A common Tamil saying is that "He who is not melted by the *Tiru-Vedakam* must have a stone for a heart."

Manikka-Vedakar bases his belief on the following articles: (1) God is sovereign; the Lord of creation; the ruler of the universe; and indwells all creatures out of love for men, and (2) his love is perfect and un-failing. This conception of God is undoubtedly the Sufistic One God (Allah) who is omnipotent, omnipresent, omnipresent, and not the God of yoga who is a mere conception for one-pointed meditation. Like the Sufis, Manikka-Vedakar also holds that God's light fills the heaven and the earth, and the whole creation is bright with His light (1.23). This has obvious reference to the Quran (24.35). In one of his poems, Manikka depicts his love-tie with God who lives in his (Manikka's) heart all the time:

[God] does not quit my heart even for an instant! [He is] the one who soothes my soul's unrest, and made me his...

[He] is for removed from those who are without love... [He is] pleased with those who worship him with adoration, hands... [He is] the glorious one who uplifts those who bow their head to him... praise be to the feet of the stainless, who stands near in love (1.2-13).

In the above poems of Manikka-Vedakar we see some similarities with Sufi ideals. Apart from a strong sense of monothelism, and the mystic conception that God dwells in the devotee's or believer's heart, as we have seen in Sufi's saying, Manikka-Vedakar alludes to the Quranic conception of absolute submission (salat) to God, and God's nearness to
man (2:50, 15; 2:18). Of course, these ideas are not wanting in the \textit{Gita}, as we have noticed. But the fact still remains that they did not receive a popular currency in the form of a religion of the masses as they did in this bhati movement which arose after the meeting of Hindu and Muslim mysticism.

It may be noted here that although in Manikka-Vachakar's poems bhati is proposed as a free gift of God bestowed on devotees (cf. 4:2; 51:4), he constantly prays to God to grant him his grace (see 5:3, 11, 12). This is interpreted as Manikka-Vachakar not being intent to make bhati work automatically irrespective of man's longing for it. "It is abundantly clear", says Bhavshyam, "from the texts that he is for from proposing a doctrine of self-surrender (pranavati) according to which God does everything and man nothing." The doctrine of absolute self-surrender to God's grace (ures-grc) on the part of the devotee without the obligation of performing any religious duty was held by the Tenkalai or southern branch of Ramanuja's school to which Kabir belongs. In this respect Manikka-Vachakar takes a different position from Kabir.

Finally, like Appar, Manikka-Vachakar was conscious of his burden of guilt in life and this is very often expressed in his poems. He says:

\begin{quote}

\begin{verse}
Whether I praise or curse thee still I am stained with sin in sorrowing,
Yet, wilt thou leave me? Solely from thinking like the red-nosed king mount,
Loose, thou dreary poison black, the lamps for being blistering,
Shall I, thy neeget one, might find no poison,
in a nectar fount.
\end{verse}
\end{quote}

We can see the religious experience reflected in such
poets. There is a relationship of "intimacy, a confidence, a directness of a touch", a feeling, that God is deeply concerned with the smallest aspect of human life, "a feeling that nothing can take man from the divine presence", comments Perry.

The Sāivite mystic-poets sang the songs of their hearts, feeling—the feeling of love and devotion for their Lord Siva. In this, they were neither afraid nor ashamed of what they were saying in their bhakti rapture. To the bystanders who had not tasted the same divine experience, these bhaktis might have appeared as madness. But the very madness of bhakti was his pride.

At any rate, the type of spiritual awakening, they created among the masses who had little interest in cold philosophical speculations, was unprecedented in the whole religious history of India. Some writers are willing to weigh it; value even in terms of the world. "No cult in the world", thus says L. D. Barnett in reference to this Sāiva bhakti, "has produced a richer devotional literature or one more instinct with brilliance of imagination, fervour of feeling, and grace of expression."

In the tenth century a great Sāivite mystic-scholar-theologian, named, Nābi-andar-mābi, who was a contemporary of Vaiṣṇava Kṛṣṇamūrti (of whom we shall speak later), and of Kālidāsa, the great, the Cīhāra king (955-1018), collected the Cīhāra Hymn of the Three (cf. Śūra, p. 95), into one collection, named it the Āvarāṇam, i.e. Devarāṇ (the Divine
Garland), and with the help of Rājarāja had them set to
Dravidian music. They were sung in the shrines. "They gave
the worship a fresh interest and splendour", remarks Farquhar,
"without disturbing the ancient Sanskrit liturgy."

The doctrinal system with which the Tamil Śaivite devotional religion (bhakti) is associated is called the Śaiva-
Siddhānta (Reasoned Śaiva System), prepared during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries by a school of Tamil thinker-
poets of whom Meykanda Deva (the seer of of Truth; thirteenth
century) was the master mind, a Śūdra by birth. Although the
philosophy of the Śaiva-Siddhānta is based on the Śvetāsuṣvatara
Upanisad as well as on the writings of the Tamil saints,
"it was the influence of the latter", comments Zehner,
"that made the writers of the Śaiva-siddhānta attach such
enormous importance to the doctrine of "face freely given
and the impossibility of spiritual progress without love."

It may be noted here that there are indications that
whatever influence Śaivism may have exerted on these Tamil
Śaivite saints, and no matter how strong, has been the sense of
monothesian in their teachings, a complete departure from
the old Hindu tradition has not yet been effected. Their
use of the Vedic literature, the Erics and the Purāṇas are
examples in point. Hence the relation between the Vedas, Vai
Āgamas and the contributions of the different Śaivite saints
has been thus expressed by an anonymous author: "The Veda
is the Cow. The true Āgamas are its milk. The Tamil hymns of
the four great Śaiva deities are the butter in the milk."
and the taste of that butter is the Saiva-Hindu-bodhi of Heykendur... The Saiva baktis also practised temple and image worship. However, a clear break with the Hindu tradition is found in the system of Basava called Vira-Saiva (stalwart Saivas) or Lingayata (Linga-wearers). Let us now turn to this school.

THE LINGAYATA SYSTEM

The venerated songs to Shiva initiated in the Tamil land, as we have noticed, spread shortly afterward to the region of Kanyakura, where they were taken up by Basava in the twelfth century. In the twelfth century, there were both Saivas and Jains; the new sect seems to have been essentially a fresh formation meant to give Saivas a more definite theology and a new organization, and to win over the Jains to the worship of Shiva. The sect gained considerable proportions when Basava became the prime minister of Bijjala, the Kalachuri, who became king at Laliya (near modern Bombay) in 1156. Basava denounced both caste and image-worship (cf. v. 17). "As time went on," observes Ziehen, "they developed extreme puritanical and anti-Brahmanic tendencies. They rejected the authority of the Vedas and, for the first time since early Vedic times, the doctrine of transmigration; they objected to child marriages, and did not prevent the marriage of widows."

The doctrines of the Vira-Saiva are extremely interesting and important for our study, for they are in many respects similar to those of Harihara, though there are also dissimilarities. It is also interesting to note that in its rejection of the age-old Hindu doctrine of sahsara, the very fundamental
bondage of life, according to Hinduism, from which it seeks mokṣa—the ultimate religious quest of Hinduism—and its denunciation of child-marriage and its allowance of widow remarriage, the Lingayata system stands in line with the nineteenth-century puritanical Brāhma Samāj of Rāja Rām Mohan Roy (1772-1833), on whom the influence of Islam is universally acknowledged. The one great difference between Basava and Kabir is that while the former rejects the doctrine of metempsychosis, the latter accepts it as we shall see in the following chapter. We propose to examine Basava’s system at some length, for it has great similarities with Islam, on the one hand, and Kabir, on the other.

Although Farquhar is inclined to hold that the two features of the Lingayata, namely, the prominence of the monasteries and the large measure of religious and social equality, are probably in part imitations of Jainism, still there are many writers who think that the sect as a whole is an outcome of the influence of Islam. Farquhar ignores the fact that equality of man and monastic (khanda) life are also distinguishing features of Sufism, albeit the latter is considered to be the result of Buddhist influence in Sufism as Goldziher has suggested (cf. guuta, p. 42-43).

In his introduction to Devacarpa’s Vacharas or Brahvanas, Sri Shivakumara Shivacharya describes Basava thus: “The illuminating chapters in the history of man’s progress and development are really those that tell of the mighty souls who lead the race from darkness to light, from misery to happiness.
from ugliness to beauty, and above all, from death to deathlessness. Basavanna of laluyan is one such mighty soul."

It is said that when Basava was still a young boy he developed an aversion for the Brahmanical rites which involve the sacrifice of animals. Then the division of the society into several classes on the basis of birth did not convince him. He was unhappy that religious rites could not be performed by everybody in the society. A great social and religious brahmin-reformer as he was, Basava set to work with strong determination and religious zeal to eradicate the socio-religious inequality in the then Hindu society. He preached that all men are equal and thus brothers; "bad conduct is low caste, good conduct is high caste and religion is the birthright of everybody."  

Commenting on the doctrine of Basava, one writer says: "These doctrines of liberty, equality and brotherhood were quite new to the common man of the land. It was a great boon to them, particularly when they were thrown to the deep corner. This is the first[Indian] prophet, perhaps, to extol the dignity of human labour, since he advocated the equality of all possessions."

These saying of Basava are reminiscent of the Islamic ideology of equality and brotherhood. As is well-known, in the Islamic system there cannot be any distinction between men and men due to the accident of birth; the distinction is determined on the strength of taqwa (piety, virtue) an
The Qur'anic teaching on this point is found at v. 2. 177. In Muhammad's teaching, it is also found the dignity of human labour, as a corollary to this principle, he disapproved of the institution of slavery. At any rate, the influence of Islam on Basava seems to be more vivid than on any other Shākta that preceded him in the Tamil land.

In keeping with his ideology of equality of all, Basava welcomed to his sect men and women of every walk of life who became his disciples. But his disciples were in no way inferior to him; because he is reported to have said: "No one is smaller than myself." Then what was his position, it may be asked? "Basava was the great luminary in the centre," answers Sri Shivaratri, "absorbing the light and energy from others and ejecting the same in some other form in return."

Basava is said to have written hundreds of Vachana (hymns) in Kannada. They are of high literary and philosophical value. The subject-matter of these vachana is mainly the religious experiences of Basava. His longings for spiritual perfection, his zeal for religious and social reform, adoration and love of the Shiva saints who had preceded him; and, finally, his dialogues with Rudra-Saśāra (God) to whom he directs his love and devotion. Apart from these, his humility, straightforwardness, boldness in attack, what is wrong in the eyes of justice, his sincerity, love of humanity—all these characteristics also reveal themselves in the vachana.
Basava's idea of religion is expressed in many ways. "What sort of religion can it be without passion?... Compassion is the very root of all religions."

His objection to sacrifice is articulated in the following message which he addressed to a goat to be slaughtered:

Cry, cry, 0 goat
That you are slain
In accordance with the Vedas!
Cry, cry, before them
That read the Vedas
Cry, cry, before them
That listen to the Sāstras!
Lord Kudāla Śāgara
Will take a fit toll
For what you have wept! 77

Basava expresses his contempt of the Vedas and the Sāstras as follows: "I will gird myself with arms to fight the Vedas; I will put fetters on the Sāstras; I will raise welts on Logic's back—Look you, I will chop off the Āgama's nose!"

Basava argues that the soul can never progress without undivided full faith in one God. Inconsistency leads nowhere:

If you meet Shatrūs, you
Shave off your head;
If you meet Sāvatas, you
Strip yourself bare;
If you meet Brāhmaṇs, you
Intone their Hari's name;
Whoever you meet,
So you become;
I hate to see
Such mortal brood.
What shall I say of
The idiots who claim
To be devotees—
Who worship Lord Kudāla Śāgara
But bow to other gods? 78

In another place Basava is quoted to have said:

May I say Viṣṇu is great? He suffered much in his ten Avatāras. Is Brahmā great? He lost his
head. But is the Veda superior? It cannot realise the Linga though it is praised variously. May I hold the Sashtra to be best? But it is verbose. Is the Puranas ultimate? It deals with Karma in previous births. If I regard Agama as the be-all and end-all, it has gone with the wind. Therefore, God Kudala Sangam alone is real. The rest are false. BC

Basava expresses the joy of his union with the Lord in the following verse:

The outer and inner now are one.
Soul married into soul! Thou art, O Lord,
Beyond Nada, Bindu, Kala. Thou art
The ground and origin.
Lord Kudala Sangam alone the joy
Of union at the Height (v. 958).

When Basava denounced idolatry, he also denounced the priests who are responsible for leading people to idol-worship, and thus the guardians of all superstition in the society (cf. vs. 556-59). Criticising the custom of offering food to fire, Basava says that fire does not need food; it is needed to preserve human life (see v. 591). Continuing his criticism of fire-worship, Basava says that people think that fire is God and offer food to it. But when their houses catch fire, they are not elated that the God of fire has come to their houses; instead of prostrating to it, they throw all sorts of filthy stuff on it and shout and call others (cf. v. 584).

Basava denounced the efficacy of bathing in holy waters. He says that people take long journeys to go to bathe in a river like the Ganges with the hope of getting rid of their sins. They worship and go round the tree with the object of getting children. Water dries up. The tree withers. They cannot retain their very existence. How can they remove
the sins of the worshippers or bless them with children (v. 579).

Bhaskara also directed his criticism against temple worship. According to him, there is no sense in imprisoning God and religion in mutts and temples. They must be released from there and be established in the heart of man which is the abode of the individual soul; and the individual body is his temple. This theme has been made clear in the following vacana:

The rich build temples,
But poor as I am,
What can I do?
This, my body, is my temple—
My legs are its pillars,
My body is the sanctum
My head is truly the golden pinnacle—the Kalasa
O True Lord, Rudra Sanga,
Latter is perishable,
But not the spirit (v. 620).

The Vira-Saiva worship Siva as the only supreme God. The modes of their worship of Siva are two: each Vira-Saiva worships his own Jagannatha muru; and he worships the small linga, the emblem of Siva, which he wears in a reliquary hung round his neck (whence the name Lingayata). The Lingayatas worship privately twice a day before meals. There is a prescribed form of meditation and adoration. Meditation is done in accordance with the six sthalas.

We have surveyed the system of Brasa in some detail, though our survey is by no means complete. Without going into further details, it may be asserted that by his recreation of old Hindu tradition, customs, practices and literature, Brasa has made a clear departure from that tradition. Hence N. S. Weber says, "The denial of Vedic ritual by Brasa resulted
in breaking loose from the Brâhmans and splitting the caste order." In doctrine it was strictly "monotheistic", recognizing only Siva—the Lord Indra-Sangar—who alone deserves devotion and worship from the Vira-Sâivas, and denying the Brâhmanical-Brahmanic pantheon and the trinity of the highest gods." Whatever worship Basava has introduced into his system, such as Siva worship and that of his linga, they do not seem to have been based on any Brâhmanic-Hindu religious literature.

This radical change in Basava's attitude to a tradition and a society of which he was a product is seen as due mainly to some external influence. Shandeller finds the influence of Râmânuja in the philosophy of Lingayata. Pârabâr seems to be willing to agree with Shandeller. That may be so, but some scholars have conjectured influence of Islam on Râmânuja too (cf. Dharmarâja, pp. 37, 31). Some suggested that Basava's ideas were inspired by Christianity. This view has been rejected by T. C. Chaud and A. Barth: the latter asserts, "But perhaps they are more imbued with Sûfism than with Christian ideas."

"It is not in general the monotheism of the Christian religion which most strikes a Hindû;" continues Barth, "and these hymns profess a rigid monotheism, which reminds us rather of the Koran than of the somewhat modified religious beliefs of the Christians of St. Thomas."

It may be recalled here again that the whole of south and south-western India—-from Cambay to Quilon—was studied with Muslim settlements, as we have noticed before. We have
also noticed how intense their missionary activity was. In contrast to this, the Christians and their missionary work in those areas during the period of our study were insignificant. It is against this background, that Tara Chand asserts:

It is difficult to resist the inference that Lingayatism was a result of the influence which these Muslims exerted in those parts of India. No other hypothesis appears sufficient to explain the revolutionary character of its doctrines and customs. The abandonment of such a deep-rooted Hindu idea as that of excommunication and of such customs as cremation and purificatory death ceremonies, the abjuration of inequalities of caste and sex and the reform of marriage, ... the conception of their sanctified protector, and of God (Allah) whose very name is probably of Muslim origin point unmistakably to the source of inspiration, that is, Islam. 39

An Indian writer has made a comparative study of Lingayatism and Islam, and has come to the conclusion that the consistent monotheism of the former is nothing but an example of the rigorous monotheism of the latter. He further contends that the cry of Islam—one God, one humanity and its social toleration—was enthusiastically hailed by the distressed multitudes searching for the secure anchor of a simple faith in the stormy sea of social disintegration, intellectual bankruptcy and spiritual chaos." "Kakin; further comparison, the same writer says: "Like Islam, Lingayatism rose under the polytheistic firmament of Brahmanic Hinduism... Basava's mission as that of Muhammad was to coordinate and unify the disintegrating and degenerating forces of humanity pursuing them of their pestilence." Islam and Lingayatism are also seen as equal not only from the religious point of view, but
also social, economic and political points of view. Hence the above writer concludes, "There are no two opinions regarding the social, economic and political aspects of both Islam and Lingayatism. Basava, like Muhammad, had a message to give, of liberty, equality and fraternity of humanity. Indeed the Lingayata movement was a revolt against the Varnashrama-Dharma."

All these arguments in favour of finding the influence of Islam on Basava would appear to have a degree of probability as far as Basava's apparent intention to introduce in his system a pure monotheism, like Islam, is concerned. But in the final analysis it would appear that Basava fell just short of the absolute monotheism of Islam by the very fact that he allowed the worship of the linga—a symbol—which Islam does not brook.

Finally, before Kabir, aside from Saivism, Basava's system bears the clearest indications of the influence of the Sufis. Then, the points of difference between them are not too difficult to find. Firstly, in their rejection of Hinduism, the two bhaktas are equal with this exception that Kabir retained some Hindu ideas, such as Karma, Saivism, etc. Secondly, Kabir did not found any sect. Kabir's mission was different from Basava's. He was not only a bhakta, he was also a genuine reformer. In this respect, he undertook the task of breaking down all sectarian differences that had existed between Hinduism and Islam which kept them separated for centuries, and make a united religion acceptable to both.
the communities. Thirdly, in Basava's system, bhakti was accompanied by some prescribed worship and ritual, whereas Kabir had, in fact, accepted the doctrine of darśana, advocated complete self-surrender with bhakti to the grace of God which excludes the need of performing any religious rites.

Finally, Basava has not said anything against Islam, whereas Kabir rejected Islam as he did Hinduism. In this respect, Kabir is regarded as an eclectic. Notwithstanding his repudiation of some of the fundamentals of Islam, such as ritual prayer, fasting, pilgrimage, etc., Kabir, unlike any other bhakti, redefined the purest form of Islamic monotheism and egalitarianism. It may be emphasised here that for his particular mission of synthesis in Hinduism and Islam, Kabir stands unique among all Sufis as well as all bhaktas.

**THE SIDDHARS**

Like the Vira-Salis, there were the Siddhars in the Tamil land. The Siddhars were followers of the path of devotion and love. Patirkiriyar was the most outstanding teacher of the Siddhars. Like the Sufis, he identified God with love. In accordance with his principle of strict monotheism, Patirkiriyar rejected all kinds of image and idol worship.

Thus he is quoted to have said:

> True worship does not consist in bowing To idols made of clay, or mud Bakered in fire. No idol's made Of stone or wood, nor Idam stump, Built of earth and made by hand, Could ever seem divine to one Who knew he came from God.

The Siddhars did not believe in caste distinctions.

Thus Patirkiriyar asks the Brāhmans:

> O Brāhmans, listen to me
And answer if you can.
Do rain and wind avoid
Some men among the rest
Because their caste is low?
Then such men tend the earth
Has seen it quake with rage?
O does the brilliant sun
Refuse to them its rays? 95

Patirakiriyar is reported to have deeply yearned for
the coming of the brotherhood of men:
When shall our race be one great brotherhood
Unbroken by the tyranny of caste? 95

He further asks:
O Brâhmans list to me!
In all this blessed land
There is but one great caste,
One tribe and brotherhood.
One God doth dwell above;
And He both made us one
In birth and frame and tongue. 97

From these quotations it would appear that the Siddhârs
were probably influenced by the Sûfis. "The hymns of the
Siddhârs", contends Tarn Ghod, "remind one of the uncompro-
mising severity of Islam. Their conception of God and absorp-
tion in Him are reminiscent of the teachings of the Sûfis,
for both describe the ultimate reality as Light and both
give to Love a dominant position amid universal forces."
But for some reason, it appears, the Siddhârs did not become
as popular as the Vira-Saivas.

The Saivas and the Siddhârs did not have the field of
bhakti alone in south India, for we find that parallel
to the Saiva bhaktas, the Vaishnava bhaktas, who are called
the Alvars (men who have intuitive knowledge of God) also
developed their bhakti cult directed to Vishnu and his human
incarnations, such as Rama and Kârttikeya. There were twelve Alvars.
of whom we will discuss here only the most important one.

THE VAISHNAVITES OF THE SOUTH

The Alvars are said to have sprung from a section of the Dravidian population which had remained hitherto unaffected by the monotheism of the Upanishads. Jagguraj contends that in their poems the influence of the Bhics and early Purusas is discernible. The Alvars have been regarded as the teachers of the Sri-Vaishnava sect.

The poems of Alvars with which they are said to have sung Buddhism and Jainism out of the Tamil lands, are full of devotion (bhakti). They developed a strong sense of monotheism by directing their bhakti to one God (Vishnu). Their chief joy was to lose continuously into the eyes of a favourite image and to pour out their praises in music and song. Sometimes, the devotee, overwhelmed by his feelings and emotion, would fall unconscious in mystic ecstasy before the image in a temple.

The Alvars taught the people from every walk of life, without any distinction between male and female, high and low, and some of the Alvars are said to have been outcastes.

Among the Alvars, Ramanuja was the outstanding figure. He left a systematic account of their beliefs in Tamil. With reference to Srim Alvar, S. Covindasamy says:

Briefly, Saint Namm Alvar declares that when one is overcome by bhakti devotion, trembling in every cell of his body, he must freely and acceptively allow this influence to penetrate his being, and carry him beyond all known states of consciousness. Even fear or terror that mystically purifies him for a samadhi, or the exhibition of this
bhakti-rapture that deluges his being, to be suppressed. The very madness is the means of distinguishing him from the ordinary mortals to whom such beatific vision is necessarily denied. The very madness is bhakta's pride. In that very madness, the saint exhort, 'run, jump, cry, laugh and sing, and let every man witness it!' 103

This was the type of bhakti-madness that Nammalvar experienced. To him, loveless technique which the yoga teaches has no meaning; and man's highest goal is not nōman; nōsurē, but to realise his unity with God in love. Describing his insatiable love of God, Nammalvar says:

As I do on the Lord of Kalkiri(God) whose streets with saucer lily are perfumed my heart for thy wonderful graces melts
How then can I, my restless love suppress? 104

In another verse Nammalvar says:

My Lord of the Celestials!
Thou hast made my heart Thy thornacle;
So intimate and close is Thy union with me,
That I beseech Thee never more to leave me,
I'm so lovingly clinging to Thee. 105

Another aspect of Alvar's bhakti to God is their expression of a relation as between husband and wife. Let us illustrate with Nammalvar's saying:

Thou hast not yet been gracious enough to extend Thy sympathy towards Thy consort(Alvar).
Before she gives up her ghost in despair owing to Thy indifference,
Show so much at least of Thy mercy as to send word to Thy consort
Through Thy messenger and vehicle varada the storehouse of kindness,
Not to pine away, but to take courage a little,
till Thou, Lord and Master, returnest as expected,
Which will surely take place soon. 106

The above passage illustrates what may be called Nammalvar's love affair with the Divine in which he sees himself
as a newly veiled virgin who has not yet been touched by her husband. In her longing to receive her husband, she grows impatient and feels disappointed. Commenting on Nammalvar's love affair, Dasgupta says: "...how, through cessation of all inclination to other things and the increase of longing for God in a timeless and ceaseless manner, and through the songs of separation in not realizing him constantly, he considers himself as a woman, and through the songs of love loses his consciousness."

This is a cry hitherto unknown in the Hindu tradition.

In the Gita we have seen the aspect of divine love; but it did not acquire there that dimension and intensity which it had in the case of Nammalvar. In its magnitude, the mysticism of the Alvars is considered totally different from that of yoga and the Vedanta.

Another aspect of the Alvar-bhakti is the intimate relationship in which the bhakta talks to God. The bhakta talks to his beloved God in extreme frankness and confidence; God is not conceived as the powerful Potentate of the world, but as a lover and beloved with whom the bhakta converses freely without any fear of being unheard and unattended.

This novelty in the bhakti mysticism of the Alvars is seen as a result of Muslim missionary influence which had been there since the seventh century of the Christian era. However, in the absence of specific evidence to show any direct influence of Islam, particularly of the Sufis, on the Alvars, the possibility of Islamic influence may be regarded.
as a valuable hypothesis. Nevertheless, it is very significant to notice the incidence of similar ideas between them. It needs further study to unearth specific evidence of their mutual influence.

It may be mentioned here that there were two kinds of bhuta among the Vaishnavas, viz., the Álvérs of whom we have just reported, and Ácháryas, of whom Jothamuni (a thirteenth-century poet) was the first. He gathered the hymns of the Álvérs and arranged them in four groups (thousand stanzas in each group), collectively called Álvéru Prabandham (Book of Four Thousand Hymns). Jothamuni also set these hymns to devotional music and arranged for their regular singing by them in the great temple of Sríman at Trichinopoly. The introduction of the singing of these devotional lyrics into the temple service was of immense value, for “the use of Tamil in the worship,” says Peruppan, “brought the cult nearer to the people, and the rich and passionate devotion of the hymns made the bhakti of the sect more vivid and real.” As a result the practice eventually spread to all other shrines. This Prabandham is called the Deva Prabandham and is honored as high as the Vedas.

The Ácháryas were both great theologians and philosophers. Jothamuni succeeded by Yumarthayya or Yumamuná, a celebrated scholar and a saint. Jothamuni succeeded him at Sríman.

Before entering into a discussion on Jothamuni, it is necessary to have a clear idea of the points of difference and common ground between the Álvérs and Kabírs. Although the Álvérs
professed a highly developed monotheistic system, and established equality at least in the realm of religion, and made bhakti cult a religion of the masses by employing the native language for singing their devotional hymns, still they clung to the old Hindū tradition, in that they practiced temple and image worship; accepted the doctrine of the incarnation of God; and used Hindū religious literature, such as the Vedas, the Bhāṣya and the Purāṇas. Kabīr, on the other hand, repudiated all these elements of Hindūism, and unlike the Alvars accepted the oneness of all for all purposes—religious as well as social—and practised a monotheism purer than that of the Alvars, and of all of the bhaktas. For this reason Kabīr is universally recognized as the best representative of Islamic monothelism save the bhaktas. It may be mentioned again that Kabīr had a different mission to perform—uniting of the Hindūs and the Muslims on a single platform—religious as well as social. And in this sense, he is also looked as the best representative of Hindū-Muslim unity. Hence, by necessity, he had to be above the sectarian level.

RĀMĀNUJA'S BHAKTI

Turning back to Rāmānuja (1017-1137), we are told that the Alvars paved the way for his rise in the same way as Śaṅkara-Vedānta did for Basava. That may be, but the two persons are poles apart as far as their attitude to bhakti and the Hindū tradition. Having already seen Basava, let us now study Rāmānuja in some detail. Rāmānuja occupies the most important position in the bhakti cult for being the first person to give a philosophical basis to this cult.
Ramanuja received his early philosophical training from Nârâyaṇa Brâhmanâ, who belonged to the Advaita Vedânta school of Sankara. But he seems to have grown dissatisfied with that system and, having left his teacher, he adhered to Srîrâma, where he drank deep from the nectar of the Álvar's Prabandham. He was still a young boy when he succeeded Yamunâchârya, one of whose last directions, Bhandarkar tells us, to his successor was to compose a commentary of Sûtras.

The necessity for such a work was felt by the Vaiṣṇavas, according to Bhandarkar, since they found it impossible to maintain the doctrine of bhakti in the face of the Advaîta Vedânta (monism of spirit) of Sankara, as based on the Vedânta Sûtras (Brahmasûtras) and the Upaniṣads. Commenting on Sankara's monism and his doctrine of Maya (the world only an illusion and thus unreal), Bhandarkar says that this doctrine left no room for the exercise of love and piety in the world of reality. In fact, "it laid the axe at the root of Vaiṣṇavism."

Ramanuja is said to have been most successful as a teacher and disputant. For about twenty years he lectured, held discussions and wrote books.

It appears clear that Ramanuja undertook the task of refuting Álvar's illusory monism, which he did with enormous skill and thoroughness. The system Ramanuja established is called Viśistadvaita (qualified monism). According to this system, which provides scope for the feeling of bhakti or love for God, and the spirit of worship, there are three eternal principles, viz., the individual or animal soul (cit),
the insen-sate world (Atit) and the Supreme Soul (Isvara) (cf. Svetasvatara Upaniṣad, 1.12). In other words, Rāmānuja's qualified ānīṣvāda ndaśa śruti states that the individual soul and the insen-sate world are the attributes of the Supreme Soul (Isvara, Isvara). That are necessary for the efficacy of the notion of Bhakti, are Jñāna and Kāma; the former leads to the latter; and the latter leads to Bhakti; in
when Bhakti reaches its consummation, it assumes the form of
actually seeing (God) and produces the final mental perception.

The first thing we notice in Rāmānuja's system is
that Bhakti has not been given an exclusive weight; it is
rather interrelated with the two other paths of Jñāna and
Karma. Since Rāmānuja's exposition of Bhakti cult is regarded
as the best explanation of the philosophical significance of
Bhakti, and because his position stood as a model within the
Hindu tradition and among other Bhaktas, we will discuss his
position in detail. In this discussion we will follow closely
the presentation of Rāmānuja's position made by Bhandārkar.

According to Rāmānuja, the souls are many and are
divided into: (1) Baddha (tied down to the circle of existence
from Brahma to the vilest form, as well as the vegetable
souls; (2) Atman (finally delivered); and (3) Māyā (eternal).

Of the first class, those that are rational, are of two
kinds: (1) desirous of enjoyment; and (2) desirous of final
deliverance. Some of those who desire final deliverance seek
the consciousness of their pure soul only (Jñāna), and others
seek this bliss. Of these latter, some are Brāhmaṇas, who seek
to attain God by resorting to bhakti, having first studied
the Vedas and acquainted themselves with the Vedânta and the
philosophy of rites(Karman). The three upper orders(twice-
born) alone can practise bhakti, but not the Sudras. These
latter are Prapannas; i.e. those who take refuge in God,
feeling themselves poor and helpless. Of Prapannas, some seek
the first three objects of life(dharma, artha and kama),
while the rest, finding no pleasure in these, renounce the
world, desire eternal bliss(moksa) alone and, seeking the
advice of a guru, acquire from him the impulse to action,
plunge themselves into the will of God, not having the capacity
of doing through the process of bhakti. This Prapatti(self-
surrender to God's Grace) can be practised by all including
the Sudras.

Laxmavara, which is the first step towards bhakti(through
Jñnahara), according to Ramanuja, is the performance of all
acts, rites and ceremonies without regard for the fruit
resulting from them. These are the worship of the deity,
practice of austerity, pilgrimage to holy places, giving in
charity and sacrifices.

As regards the method of bhakti(Prapatti), according
to Ramanuja, it consists in continuous meditation accompanied
by the practice of the eight yoga processes. This is to be
attained by following another sevenfold rite. Bhakti, as
promoted by these seven means, assumes the form of actually
seeing God and produces the final mental perfection.

As we see from the above description of bhakti...
Rāmānuja set it forth, there is not that passionate and impassioned love for God which the bhaktās directed to their beloved God. And there is no yearning on the part of the bhaktā for a union or communion with the Lord, who is considered to be an intimate and friendly loving God. Rāmānuja’s bhakti is very mechanical; it is not spontaneous, coming from the core of the bhakta’s heart which is the abode of that loving God. Moreover, in his system, Rāmānuja has prescribed for the attainment of bhakti all those Brāhmaṇical rites, rituals and ceremonies against which the Bhaktās waged their life-long crusade, as we have seen in the case of Bāṣyā, and we will see in the system of Kabir. Furthermore, while the bhaktās strove to break down all social stratification, and welcomed to their circles men and women from every walk of life, Rāmānuja still retained the caste distinction of the Gītā. It would appear difficult to assert that Rāmānuja’s bhakti has effected a departure from the type of bhakti that is found in the Gītā and the Pāncaśātra system. Thus, commenting on the Rāmānuja’s system, Bhāndarkar maintains:

Rāmānuja’s vaishnavism is the Vāsudevism of the old Pāncaśātra system combined with the Brahma and Vaisnava elements. Rāmānuja’s doctrines as to the way of reaching the Supreme Soul, are the same as, or amplified forms of, those in the Bāṣyā-dīpikā. But in this system Bhakti is reduced to the form of a continuous meditation on the Supreme Soul. It thus corresponds to the Upanisads, or meditations, described by Bṛhaṭa-prāna, and does not mean a boundless love for God, as the word is commonly understood, though the meditation that is enjoined implies truly a fulness of love. 119

The tendency of Rāmānuja’s system appears to be to give an exclusive Brāhmaṇical form to the traditional method of
bhakti, and this is distinctly seen in the doctrines of the
Vedaśāstras, while the Tattvāni (to these schools we will return
soon) is more liberal and so shapes the doctrines of the
bhakta so that make them applicable to the Sūdras also. Rāmānuja
was a traditional orthodox Brāhmaṇa. Although his attitude
towards Hindū tradition, and particularly the caste system,
was more liberal than many orthodox Hindūs of his rank, yet
he did not make radical departure from that tradition. Thus,
it was not possible for him to allow people into his circle
from all strata of society, and so he could not prescribe
bhakta for all. Unlike other bhaktās, Rāmānuja used the tra-
ditional language, Sanskrit. By using vernacular for reli-
gious expression, the bhaktās were able to bring the religion
of devotion to the hearts of the masses, whereas Rāmānuja
kept it within his Brāhmaṇical circle. Hence another writer
comments:

Rāmānuja was an orthodox Brāhmaṇa, never
showed any disregard to the authorities of
the Vedas, and the Brāhmaṇic tradition;
nor did he allow any relaxation in the
caste rule. He attached much importance
to the observance of religious rituals.
His official language was Sanskrit, and
the teaching was strictly confined to the
higher classes of Hindū society. The Sūdras
had no access to his system. Only the Brāhmaṇins
could be initiated. Etc

Rāmānuja was a philosopher, a mystic and theologian, but
not a bhakta purāṇa simple like other bhaktās. Bhakti
constitute only a part of his philosophy, whereas bhakti
was all in all for the bhaktās. The only element of libera-
lism, which is said to have been engendered in him by the
bhaktī cult of the Ālvārs, is his allowance granted to the
Śūdras to worship in certain temples on certain specific days. Thus Farquhar remarks:

While he held strictly by the ancient rule that none but the twice-born may read the Upanishads, he was most eager to teach both Śūdras and Outcastes the doctrines of Viṣṇu-bhakti. In certain places he arranged that the Outcastes should have the privilege of visiting the temple one day in the year. But there is no reliable evidence for the statement, as often made, that he ate with Outcastes, or that he took any step to alter their social position. He maintained the ancient Hindu restrictions in all their fullness. 121

Rāmānuja's position is clearly revealed in the use of the prātim (thread of purity), with which Śūdra and Outcaste adherents of the sect are invested. "Acknowledgment is thus made," comments Farquhar, "that they are capable of receiving spiritual religion; yet they are kept rigorously apart from the twice-born." The Śatānis, for instance, are a group of people of Śūdra caste whom he taught and connected with the sect, but no suggestion was made that their caste status should be altered.

In the later years of his life Rāmānuja was subjected to persecution by the Choli king, Kulottunga, who wanted him to abandon Viṣṇuism for Śivaism. Consequently, in 1096 ad he took refuge in the dominions of the Hoysala Yādavas, who ruled in Belur (with Kumbakonam as capital). There he converted into Viṣṇuism the Crown Prince Vithala Deva (usually called Śrī Śrī Deva) from Jainism (who took the name Vikramadeva). Vithala was in charge of the frontier provinces in the name of his brother Allaha, who was on the throne.
In this connection we may draw attention to an important historical event. It has been mentioned before that there were large Muslim settlements in the Trichinopoly country. Ibn Battûta, who travelled in these parts of India in the early years of the fourteenth century, tells us that Râja Vir Sallâl had a contingent of 20,000 Muslims. It is true, the gap between the time when Râmañjula lived there (1096–1122), and Ibn Battûta travelled there, is a matter of about two hundred years. But it would be unlikely that all these Muslims would go there at one time. The Muslims had settled there since the seventh century of the Christian era, and by the time of Râmañjula they must have increased greatly in numbers and assumed major role in the culture.

Whether or not Râmañjula came under outside influence has been disputed by different writers. There is a general agreement that his intellectuality was moulded by the direct influence of the Alvars or whom Sûfî influence has been subjected by many a writer. As regards other influences, George Grierson believes that his monotheistic tendencies were inspired from Christianity. Speaking about the missionary activity of St. Thomas, Grierson contends that undoubtedly Râmañjula and his followers imbibe much of this teaching. "Owing to the similarity of the great ideas of 'faith' and 'truth,'" Grierson goes on to say, "it would indeed be extraordinary if the two religions, once brought into contact, had not influenced each other." Grierson also suggests that Râmañjula must have made the acquaintance of the Christian monks at Mylapore, where there was a Syrian Christian Church.
Grierson's view does not appear to be based on sufficient data. Firstly, all information we have tells us that Rāmānuja was a student of the Advaita Vedānta school; having deserted it, he went to Śrīraṅgam, where he studied the Ālvārs' Prabandham. He spent most of his life there, and later on developed his philosophical basis for the doctrine of bhakti to God which was presented in the Prabandham of the Ālvārs. In his later life, he is reported to have gone to Upper India, whence he returned to Kṣera in 1196 and lived there until 1122; then went back to Śrīraṅgam, Trichinopoly, where he died in 1137. In this short history of his life we have no indication that he had any opportunity to meet any Christian monks anywhere.

Secondly, there is considerable uncertainty about the spread of Christianity in South India in the early centuries of the Christian era and the missionaries that took part in it, as C.B. Abraham tells us. Even the identity of the country of India in which early missionaries are supposed to have worked is not certain. "The claim of tradition," says Rev. Abraham, "that St. Thomas, one of the apostles of Jesus Christ, came to South India in 52 A.D. and established several churches on the Malabar coast and converted many Hindus to Christianity, is a highly disputed matter among the modern scholars."

However, there is some evidence for the arrival in Malabar of a body of the Christian immigrants from Asia. Their leader is generally known among Malabar Christians as Kanne Thommen (Thomas the Merchant). But there is no unanimity of opinion about the date of this migration. Some put it in
345 A.D. while others suggest about four centuries or more later.

At any rate, the earliest historical evidence for the existence of a church in South India dates from the sixth century. This small Christian community is described as poor, destitute and so weak and insignificant that it had hardly anything to influence Hindu thought. In fact, Abraham opines that the fact that the caste system in the Christian community of South India has been as widely prevalent as among the Hindus, shows that "Christianity was more absorbed by Hinduism than it really altered the pattern of social structure." It can be asserted with reasonable certainty that the Christian community in South India in Ramanuja's day was not as influential as the Muslim community.

Yusuf Husain, rejecting Grierson's contention, reminds us the Saiva Adiśa and the Vaishnava Alvars, on whom the influence of Sufism has been suggested by many, and that it is an accepted fact that the Alvars paved the way for the rise of Ramanuja. However, in the absence of any clear evidence one way or the other, we cannot commit ourselves to either position. Ramanuja may have been influenced by either Christianity or by Islam, or by both. But one may also argue with equal force another thesis, that Ramanuja was not influenced by any non-Hindu ideas, but rather that Islam and Christianity as practised in South India were influenced by his ideas. Of course, there is no evidence for this position either. The crux of the problem lies in the fact that records of medieval
Indian religious movements were not carefully preserved.

At any rate, whatever ideas Rāmānuja might have imbibed from the Sūfis, Zaeheer seems to have gone far afield in saying: "In admitting a plurality of souls Rāmānuja, of course, stands much nearer to Muslim orthodoxy than to any of his predecessors." This contention is untenable from the historical point of view, for both Sāṅkhya-Yoga and Jainism accept the doctrine of a plurality of souls. Zaeheer further states that "Rāmānuja's interpretation of Brahman as the sum-total of individual souls is parallel in Sūfism." That may be, but the fact remains that neither the Qur'ān nor the Indian Sūfis talk much about the metaphysical subtleties of the soul. The Indian Sūfis were primarily propagators of a simple religion flavoured with love and devotion for Allāh; and it was for this simplicity that the Hindu masses were impressed by Sūfi teachings and were attracted to Islam. Therefore, if we are to look for any Sūfī influence of Rāmānuja, we should do so in the domain of simple religion, i.e. there is one God, who deserves love and affection from us for He loves us; there is one humanity; in the eyes of God we are all equal; because He has created us all equal; the believers are all brothers; etc., and not in subtle metaphysical and philosophical problems, such as the nature of the soul. There is a great controversy among Muslim philosophers and Sūfī-philosophers on this problem, which is beyond our scope to discuss here.

Before we conclude our discussions on Rāmānuja, we must return to the doctrine of Prapatti to which Rāmānuja has
made allusion, but which in later times became the fundamental point of difference between two schools of bhakti, and one of the bases of Kabir's thought.

THE DOCTRINE OF PRAPATTI

The relation between bhakti and prapatti was left obscure in Ramanuja's teaching, for it immediately formed a subject of bitter division between the two schools which claim to follow his teaching—the Vadegai (northern school) which uses Sanskrit as its medium of teaching; and the Teppalai (southern school), which re-orted to the vernacular, thus continuing the tradition of the Alvars. The Northern School reflects more closely the temper of Ramanuja in its conservatism and restraint.

Prapatti consists in the resolution to submit, to yield; the avoidance of opposition, a faith that God will protect; the choosing of God as the saviour or prayin, to Him to save; and the sense of helplessness resulting in placing oneself at His disposal and the consciousness of utter baseness. 134

Thus there are six constituents of prapatti. In other words, prapatti means self-surrender to God's protection and grace, which precludes all kinds of religious obligations on the part of a prapatta.

The essential difference between the two schools is brought out by the different illustrations that they give of the connection between God's grace and man's effort in bringing about final deliverance. The illustration given by the former school (Vadegai) is that of a mother and her cub(calls).
the Monkey doctrine=MARKATAKISORANYAYA). The idea is that the cub is to hold fast to its mother to be carried to a safe place. The latter school (Tenkalai) uses the illustration of the cat and its kitten (called the Cat theory=MARKALETARANYAYA). The idea is that the female cat catches hold of the kitten, without any effort on its part, and takes it to a place of safety.

In the first school the doctrine is that the process of deliverance must be in with an act of a person seeking it. According to the second school, on the other hand, the process begins with God Himself. In keeping with this distinction is the idea of pranāti held by the two schools.

The first maintains that pranāti is one of the ways, not the only way, and that it should be resorted to by the devotee only when it was found impossible to attain the desired result by the other modes. Moreover, they found in it essentially an element of human action in that it demanded a distinct effort on the part of the pranāti, resulting from the effect of his sense of submission. The southern school, on the contrary, holds that pranāti was the only way of salvation, that it is a frame of mind which characterises all those who seek absolution and reject all other ways in favour of this; that it excludes any action on the part of the devoted; that action consisting from God alone, and that the sense of yielding was the outcome of pranāti, not the means of producing it. Those who refer to other ways have not arrived at the right mood which leads to God. In contradistinction to Tenkalai,
Tarka\textsuperscript{a} holds that \\textit{pratiti} is necessary for all, whether able or not, to follow the other ways. "Self-assertiveness is the characteristic of the first;" says Dhāndākara, "but it is forbidden by the second; and self-abandonment is enjoined."

Similarly, the two schools differ in their treatment of \textit{śudras}. The northern school teaches that a person belonging to an inferior caste should be treated well only so far as conversation by words is concerned. The southern school says that they should be admitted to an equal treatment in all aspects and no distinction be made. The former school was led by an orthodox Brāhma\textsuperscript{a} called Vedānta Śiṅkara, while the latter was headed by Śiṅgili Lokāśāstra.

Since Jaina accepted the doctrine of the Tarka\textsuperscript{a}, there cannot be any comparison between him and Nāma\textsuperscript{a}a, whose \textit{pratiti} is based on the model of the \textit{śudra} about which we have already commented.

**Bhakti in the Bhagavata Pur\textsuperscript{a}a**

After Nāma\textsuperscript{a}a, almost all the Bhāṣa\textsuperscript{a}, with the sole exception of Śiṅkara, were perverted by the influence of the Bhagavata Pur\textsuperscript{a}a, the most important bhakti literature after the \textit{śiṅkara}. Pārākrama tells us that much of the peculiar fervour and attractive power of the Bhagavata Pur\textsuperscript{a}a comes from the devotion of the \textit{śiṅkara}. According to the same writer, this Pur\textsuperscript{a}a was written by some Bhagavata-Veṣṭiāstra ascetic of the 11th century in about 700 C.E.

The distinguishing feature of the Bhagavata Pur\textsuperscript{a}a is its new theory of \textit{pratiti}. None of its utterances on this
subject", comments Ferguher, "are worthy of a place in the best literature of mysticism and devotion." Bhakti in this work may be summarised in the words of Ferguher: "A surbur emotion which shakes the speech, makes the tears flow and the hair thrill with pleasureable excitement, and often leads to hysterical laughing and weeping, by turns, to sudden fainting fits and hallucinations or unconsciousness." The activities that produce such a situation centre round Krsna alone.

Apart from this emotional character, the Bhakti

yoga also contains a long series of highly erotic passages (cf. 16th). In these, Krsna’s dalliance with the gopis is depicted in sensuous and glowing poetry which captivated the imaginations of many bhaktas in later times.

In the thirteenth century, the Vaishnava bhakti of the

Bhakti yoga type became a popular religious phenomenon in the western country of which Jñanévara (popularly called Dvanyana) was its first exponent. He is said to have been an enthusiastic bhakti and was the leader of a group of saints.

NADEY

About one hundred years after Jñanévara there appeared in the same country another great bhakti called Nadey (ca. 1160–1180). He was a tailor, but he spent his life in propounding the bhakti cult in his own country and in the Punjab. He expressed his bhakti feelings in songs. In his poems, it is usually said, the influence of Islam first appears in the western country. He and his followers criticised idolatry severely, though image-worship persisted in his system. We may quote some of his songs recorded in the Adi Granth.
familiar examples, he describes his love for God:

As the deer followeth the huntsman's bell, 
And liveth up its own life rather than 
Abounds in attention,
In the same way I gaze on God. 
I do not leave Him to turn my mind in another 
direction.
As the kingfisher gazeth on the fish, 
As the goldsmith meditateth stealing gold 
while fashioning it,
As the lustful man gazeth on the wife of 
another,
As the cabbler meditateth cheating while 
playing kauris,
So hath ever meditateth on God's feet—
Whenever I gaze, there is God. 147

Speaking about Madhav and the Dvaita sects and schools 
that preceded him, Dugupta maintained that all Dvaita 
schools, before him, developed under "Brahmanic traditions 
and in the shadow of Brahmanic scriptures, the Puranas and the 
Upanisads." The Brahmanic tradition had such a strong 
hold over the country, says Dugupta, that the Dvaita cult grew up 
around the traditional cult of Rama, or Krishna, Siva, or Sakti: 
"Representations of God in images and their worship by the 
Bhaktas", the writer goes to say, "faith in the legends of 
Krishna and other inferior deities as told in the Puranas, 
pretended to much of the Brahmin cast, respect to the 
Veda, etc., became intimately associated with the doctrine of 
Sakti preached in the Puranas and other Sanskrit scriptures."

But in the thirteenth century, Visvaba Khecra, the 
traveller of Madhav, denounced the worship of images as a substitute for the God Krishna or for any other god. He is reported 
to have instructed Madhav to abandon image worship, saying:

A stone god never speaks. What possibility 
than of his removing the disease of mundane 
existence? A stone image is regarded as God,
but the true God is wholly different. If a stone god fulfills desires, how is it he breaks when struck? Those who adore a god made of stone, lose everything through their folly. Those who say and hear that a god of stone speaks to his devotees are both of them fools, whether a holy place is small or large there is no god but stone or water. There is no place which is devoid of God. That God has shown him in his heart and thus Dheerar conferred a blessing on him. 149

Like his teacher, Nâmdev himself is reported to have said contemptuously: "A god of stone and a worshiper who is deceived...! Such gods were broken in pieces by the Turks. 150

They threw them into the water as all know." Nâmdev has not only repudiated idolatry, he has equally rejected, like Appâr, Jîdev and Krîtrî, all religious ceremonies and rituals:

Vows, fasts and austerities are not at all necessary; nor is it necessary for you to go on a pilgrimage. Be you watchful in your heart and always sing the name of Hari. It is not necessary to give up eating food or drinking water; fix your mind on the foot of Hari. Neither is it necessary for you to contemplate the one without attribute. Hold fast the love of the name of Hari. 151

In another place Nâmdev speaks on the advantage of repeating God’s name:

By repeating the name of God all doubts are dispelled—By repeating the name of God is the highest religious exercise—By repeating the name of God caste and lineage are effaced.

That God is the staff of the blind man.

I bow before God! I bow before God!

By repeating God’s name death tortureth not.

God took the life of Nârâyan,

And made for Afarâl a dwelling in heaven.

The courtiers who sought he forgot to repeat

God’s name.

That last is the apple of mine eye—

By repeating the name of God, Putam(152)

Full of deceit,

The destroyer of children was saved;

By fasting, the name of God the mother of Drupad was saved;
Nāma representh, by repeating the name of such a God fear and trouble depart. 153

In the following words, Nāmdev tells us of the fate of worshippers of false gods:

They who worship Shivar shall become sprites; They who worship Sitalk shall ride on donkeys and scatter dust—
For myself I take the name of the one God; I would give all other gods in exchange for it. They who repeat the name of Siv and worship him, Shall ride on an ox and play the drum; They who worship the great motte, Dur-ā, Shall be born as women instead of men. Thou calllest thyself, o Durā, the primal Bhaumāi;
When it came to my turn to be saved, where didst thou Under the instruction of the guru, hide thyself?
O my friend, cling to God's name—
Nāma representh, thus saith the Gītā. 154

Again on the futility of idolatry:

"If I bring a pitcher and fill it with water to bathe the idol,
Forty-two kinds of animal species are in the water;
God is contained in them; why should I bathe Him?
Whenever I go there God is contained; God supremely happy ever shortest.
If I bring flowers and weave a garland to worship the idol,
The bee hath first smelled the flowers; God is contained in the bee; why should I weave Him a garland?
If I bring milk and cook it with khir(155) to feed the idol,
The calf hath first defiled the milk by tasting it; God is contained in the calf; why should I feed Him?
In this world is God; in the next world is God; there is no part of the world without Him. Thou art, o God, in every place. I represent, Thou fillest the whole earth. 156

Nāmdev's saying remind us what the Sūfis teach people about remembering God's name(dhārā); their neglect to formal
self-寂, e.g. pilgrimage, prayer and fasting; their objection to life of counsel or celebrate; their insistence on the
purity of heart which is the dwelling place of God; and their
denunciation of polytheism and idolatry. Nāmdev clearly
rejects the idea of contemplation on a nirguna Brahman.
That means, he was not a follower of spiritual monism, rather
a monotheist bhaktā. It may be asserted without any doubt
that Nāmdev's sayings betray Sūfī influence on him, though
we have no specific evidence on his acquaintance with Sūfīs.
Like Kabīr, he ridicules both Hindus and Muslims for their
external religious observances. Thus he says:

The Hindūs are blind, the Musalmāns purblind:
The man who knoweth God is wiser than either.
The Hindūs worship their temple, the Musalmāns
their mosque. 157

From our brief study of Nāmdev's ideas, we can say
that before Kabīr, Appār, Basava and Nāmdev all appear to
reveal Sūfī influence on them, and to make a clear departure
from the Hindū tradition. 158

In southern India there were two other great bhaktās,
namely, Mādhva or Ānandatirtha (1199-1278) of South Kanara
and Nimbārka (of uncertain date) of the Telugu country. Both
men's ideas were based on the Bhagavata Purāṇa, and both
were indebted to Rāmānuja. We omit any discussion of them
here, for they were not directly dependent on Sūfī teachings,
except in reference to the general idea of bhakti. 159

There were a few bhaktās, male and female, in northern
India and Bengal up to the time of Kabīr. But for our purpose
we propose to select only three, namely, Rāmānanda, Nānak
and Śrī Chaitanya. But we would reverse this chronology,
for Kabir was the direct disciple of Ramananda.

SRI CHAITANYA

Sri Chaitanya (Vrindavan, Magha, 1486–1533) was born in Jessal (Cooch district). In 1507 he went to an ascetic life and the practice of the passionate bhakti of the Śrī-Kṛṣṇa-Līlā, byjavāna āhūtī, an ascetic of the Śāṅkara sect. He began to preach and soon gathered round him a large number of disciples—Hindus as well as Muslims. Then he came under the influence of the Nimbarkas and the Vījanvānī, and soon delightedly the songs of Jūdeva (author of the Gītā-vihaṇa); Chandra and Vidyanātī. He used to sing Śrī-Kṛṣṇa-līlā (kīrtana) in prominent places in his worship. He used to sing Śrī-Kṛṣṇa-līlā (kīrtana) with his disciples, raising them to devotional excitement. Very often he would go out through the city in procession, "dancing and singing with such fervour and contagious emotion as to carry the people away in devotional capture."

Chaitanya's popularity spread like wild fire throughout Bengal and Grissa since he became a Śānchā in 1509. As a result, people from every walk of life, such as Gargha-bhaESA, a great logician of that time; Pratap Kumār, the king of Grissa; his minister Rāma-nanda Nol, swelled the ranks and file of his disciples. Then he came to be regarded as an incarnation of Kṛṣṇa by the people of his home district, and thus came to existence his cult.

Chaitanya made the Śrī-Kṛṣṇa myth the basis of his teaching and worship. So intense was his desire to beto Kṛṣṇa as
Radha was to her divine lover, that he was sometimes heard to murmur, "I am He." And Chaitanya's power over men came from the reality of his mystical religious experience, which he exhibited through overpowering emotions and an impassioned love for God. Chaitanya also seems to have believed in the brotherhood and equality of man; consequent to this, he is said to have made some relaxation in the caste rule as far as his circle of disciples was concerned. It is probably for this reason that the Muslims were also his disciples. Notwithstanding his liberal attitude to all, he would not allow any of his Muslim disciples to dine together with his Hindu disciples, nor would he allow any Muslim to enter into a Hindu house or to a house. Finally, towards the end of his life, he initiated a programme of reconverting the Muslims to Hinduism. Thus, he came to be seen to be inconsistent in theory and practice; consequently, the Muslims deserted his circle.

Although Chaitanya does not seem to have effected a clear departure from Hindu tradition, his catholicism may be regarded as having been in some way the result of Sufi influence, as well as other possible influences. If we recollect how intense and vigorous was the impact of Sufism in Bengal, where it scored its greatest success in winning Hindus to Islam, it would be unnatural to think that Chaitanya did not feel its effect. There is no evidence, however, to show that he had any direct contact with any Sufi; on the contrary, he appears to have met many Hindu brātī followers, and isibbed ideas from almost all Hindu brātīs contemporary or contemporary to him. But his practice of kirtan, similar to
praise of the Lord with devotion) which was a novelty in the bhakti cult, is reminiscent of Sūfī qawwāl which is sung by the Sūfīs frequently in praise and love of God. Finally, Chaitanya's sect, like those of Vallabha and Mirā Bāī, was an erotic bhakti sect for which we have no parallel in Sūfīs, or for that matter in Kabīr. In fact, Chaitanya differs from Kabīr in all respects with the exception of his (Chaitanya's) somewhat controlled asceticism.

GURU NANAK

Let us now turn to Śāṅkara (1469-1538), the founder of the Sikh religion in the Punjab. Although Śāṅkara is later than Kabīr, and is said to have been influenced by the teaching of the latter, we consider him before Kabīr in order to maintain continuity in our discussions on Kabīr. The relation between Kabīr and Śāṅkara is described thus:

When we pass from Kabīr to Śāṅkara one is not conscious of any change of atmosphere. The main ideas of the two teachers are the same, and both teach principles of innerness, the devotion, and command the way of quietism and of meditation. They are alike in betraying evident traces of both Hindu and Muslim influence, and at the same time they agree in standing apart from these two faiths, criticising them in the forms in which they see them, and seeking to reconcile them.

Thus, like Kabīr, Śāṅkara says: "I am neither Hindu nor Muslim nor, 156

But a worshippers of the Aṅkorn or the Formless." However, the proximity given to Kabīr in Śāṅkara's Adi Granth (on Granth 158, 161) is treated as an evidence of the former's influence on the latter. Śāṅkara is said to have been 27 years of age when he met Kabīr. As Śāṅkara was born in 1469, the year of their meeting will have been 1496, the very year in which Shāhānšah Lūt I, the Sultan of Delhi, visited Jaunpur and
other cities in that neighborhood. But Fardurhar finds no
evidence of their meeting.

Nārk was born in a village near Lahore called Salwandi
(named after Siraj Makhdoom). His father, Khān, a small farmer,
was connected with the Muslim Peterūs of the Brātī tribe.
As a boy, he was different from others of his age, and exhibited
unusual talent. He was of a meditative disposition. As a
schoolboy he said to his teacher:

Turn world love, rub the ashes and make ink of it;
Make of it the best kind of paper;
Take the heart the pen, the intellect the writer;
Ask the gurū an write the judgment;
Write the fame and the praise thereof;
Write that which has no end or limit.
Sir, if you are able to teach to this manner
of knowledge, then teach me. 172

Soon after, Nārk appeals to having left school and
associated with Hindu sadhus and Muslim faqīrs. Although he
was married and had two children, still he was frequently
seen in the company of sadhus and ascetics. By the time Nārk
became an adult, the teaching of Khānīr seems to have spread
throughout north India. Apart from Khānīr's influence on him,
Nārk is also said to have had regular intercourse with
other Sūfīs, such as 'Alī Qalandar, Shykh Dālānī,
and Mīrān Līthā.

J. G. Archer tells us that Nārk was about fifty years
old when, in response to a vision, he entered the final
stage of his mystical career. God then commissioned him to
"repeat the name," also to inspire others to repeat it, and
"to teach all mankind the true religion." It is related that
Nārk, under the inspiration of this religious experience,
uttered the basic text (mul kafira) that laid the foundation of Sufism, namely:

- One, the essential One, True Name, Dār, pervader, Sārāles, without cavity, Figure of TIME, self-existent, the kindly guide.
- Praise! aim-truth, less truth, the actual truth, The Truth, O, Lord, which can never fade. 177

Commenting on the above text, Archer says: "Sufis have sometimes represented this "beloved Son, forever and ever, the Christian tradition, or the Qur'an text, 'He alone is God, the eternal One,' and with the Vedanta, 'Thou art That.'"

In consideration of the fact that Islam developed an attitude of catholicism in regard to religion, his conception of salvation to be universal one. In this, he believed in the omnipotent reality, but maintained that the individual soul could attain union with Him through love and devotion, and not by performing ceremonial rites. Islam left no vagueness in his mind about the oneness of God, no matter what came his way. This is also true in the case of Sūs v. 30, and Kent. Besides proclaiming an absolute monotheism, Islam also declared the brotherhood of man, one of the fundamental teachings of Islam. In that, he articulated that the law of 14: 19, "For man being n to love one another and to find God through loving devotion (ibadah). Like ibn 'Abbas, in his desire for "infinite" worship, Islam did proclaim: "There is no God, and there is no Muslim, but only brothers under God."

Like ibn 'Abbas, and others, Islam unequivocally rejected
the efficacy of rites and ceremonies, and categorically condemned the Hindu caste system. In the Janamsakhi it is mentioned that in the course of his travels, Ramakrishna decided to stay with an outcaste. There was consternation among the Brahmans. Having realised their dismay, Ramakrishna said: "You are puzzled because I am staying with a good, kind and hardworking man, who is doing his duty." Then the great teacher said:

Remember, actions determine caste.
Life exists or lovers himself by his own acts.
By devoting to the sacred name
Release from the wheel of birth and death is obtained.
Do not worry about distinction of caste.
Realise that His light is in all.
There is no caste on the other side. 173

These ideas of Ramakrishna are reminiscent of what we have seen before in Sufism, and in the sayings of some bhaktas.
Therefore, the passage hardly needs any further explanation.
The similarity between Kabir and Ramakrishna is conspicuous. Both had the same mission of uniting Hinduism and Islam. For this reason neither of them had rejected either Hinduism or Islam totally, but retained essential elements of the two religions.
For example, like Kabir, Ramakrishna seems to have believed in the doctrine of metempsychosis and karma, as we have seen in the above passage. And like Kabir, Ramakrishna did not organise any sect during his lifetime.

We have no intention of going into further details about Ramakrishna. The conduct of the Adi Shankaracharya unmistakably testifies to the fact that Ramakrishna was very much influenced by Islamic ideas which came to him through Kabir's teaching, on the one hand, and through his direct association with the Sufis.
Therefore, Nānak and Kabir belong to a class of bhaktas on whom the influence of Ṣūfiism can be demonstrated, whereas Ṣamīev, Baṣāna, and Appār should belong to another group of bhaktas on whom the Ṣūfi influence is highly probable, even though there is no direct evidence.

We are now in a position to examine the life and teaching of a great bhaktā, who was the link between the bhakti cult of south and north India, and who was the direct guru of Kabir. It was Rāmānanda. Before we enter into our discussion on Rāmānanda, it is not out of place to mention here that there is a difference of opinion among the scholars as to whether or not the South Indian bhaktas were permeated by the influence of Ṣūfis, as we have seen so far. But as for north India there is an almost complete unanimity among the writers that beginning from the thirteenth-century when permanent Muslim rule was established in Delhi (1206 A.D.) and a new wave of Ṣūfis entered into north India and then spread all over the sub-continent, the influence of Islam became much stronger than ever before; and the bhaktas of this period, particularly those of north India, were directly influenced by the Ṣūfis. Rāmānanda, Kabir and Nānak are considered to have been the products of this Ṣūfi influence.

RĀMĀNANDA

Rāmānanda (ca. 1460-1470), was born in Prayaga (modern Allahabad). The dearth of information about him is due to Ṣūfis' taking special care to keep all details of their sect and its founder a profound secret, as L. A. Macauliffe tells us. However, a brief reconstruction of his life, is
George Grierson tells us that Rāmānanda had his early education in Benares from a Śrī Vaiśnava teacher called
Rāmānanda. On the authority of the Brahma-saṁhitā (1603 A. D.),
the same author also informs us that he was 4th or 5th in
spiritual descent from Rāmānuja, which does not seem to be
to historically tenable. There Chait, on the authority of Śrīpan
dravīd-dīkṣā, insists that he was twenty-second in descent
from Śrī Rāmānanda, Bhāṭṭa Pāṇḍita compares him to Śrī Bhāma, and makes
an interpolation of Jānaka descent from heaven to save the
world. At any rate, in his later life, he seems to have gone
to the South and joined the school of Rāmānanda. Then he went
on a pilgrimage to the Himalayas and other places including
Benares. In the latter place, he is said to have stayed for
a few years. Then when he went back to the South, he was
intervened by his co-religionists, on which his attitude
to the Śrī Vaiśnava rules was found radically changed; conse-
quently, he was expelled from that sect, and he came
to Benares in about 1430 A. D. The detailed history of his
doctrinal differences from the system of Rāmānuja has been
fully discussed by many renowned scholars, and need not
be given here.

One of the fundamental points of difference between
Māyāvāda and Rāmānanda is on the question of caste rules.
The former, as we have noticed, despite his good intentions
to uphold the social distinctions as far as possible, followed
the caste rules rigidly, and as a result did not include
the lower castes in his circle; the latter, on the other hand, neglected these rules, as well as the dietary and bathing rules. The liberalism and catholicity of his attitude to human beings as far as religion is concerned can be measured by the very fact that he admitted to his circle men and women from every strata of the society. His twelve principal disciples, belonging to every section of the society, were also the founders of different sects. Hence one writer says, "The catholicity of Rāmānanda's teaching may be gathered from the fact he numbered among his twelve chief disciples, or apostles, a Musalmān[weaver](Kabir), a barbar[Sena], and a low-caste Chamar, or leather-worker[Rai-dasa], each of whom founded a sub sect." Since Rāmānanda's disciples were free from observing any particular rules and regulations, he named them the Avadhūtās(the liberated ones). Rāmānanda is seen as one who has practised the doctrine of human equality and brotherhood in its most liberal sense for religious purposes. Hence it is remarked, "His ethical system was based not on the spiritual pride, but on spiritual humility." His teaching is based on: (1) that perfect bhakti consists in perfect love directed to God, and (2) that all devotees or servants of God are brothers.

Finally, unlike Rāmānuja, Rāmānanda, rejected the Hindu holy language for religious teaching; instead he adopted the vernacular, Hindī, and thus brought his doctrines within reach of the masses.

Now, Rāmānanda's liberal attitude in matters of religion
is seen as a result of Ṣūfī influence on him. Thus Farquhar maintains that albeit Rāmānanda's complete neglect of all caste distinctions in the acceptance of disciples was not a novelty; for the theistic sects had already recognised that men of all classes could, by means of bhakti, press on to spiritual religion and salvation; but Rāmaṇanda seems to have gone a little further. "In this extended freedom we see evidence of Muslim influence." Some writers are specially emphatic on this point. Thus Macauliffe asserts, "It is certain that Rāmaṇanda came in contact at Banaras with learned Ṣūfis..." The same author further suggests that it was natural to suppose that there should have been held in Banaras better discussions between "Kullūs and Brahmins, and that the better informed classes of Hindus, who had already shown predilection for monothelism, should have formed a just conception of the divine unity." That is monothelism of Islam.

However, we are lacking in the names of those individual Ṣūfis who had direct contacts with Rāmaṇanda. This may be attributed to the paucity of recorded information, the problem we are faced with in reconstructing a linked account of those medieval saints of India. But the general atmosphere engendered by the presence of a large number of Muslims in Banaras even before the permanent establishment of Muslim rule in India, on the one hand, and the vigorous missionary work carried out by the Ṣūfis in north India, especially beginning from the thirteenth century onwards, on the other, may have inspired the spiritual instinct of divinity among certain Hindu scholars. This contention is corroborated by a noted scholar, Bāthīṇābha...
... he says that during the middle ages the land of India was filled up with the spirit of love (prema) and devotion (bhakti) when Islam's political power and its spiritual culture appeared in the land. The political power of Islam, together with its "aggressive monotheism and staunch faith, brought nothing to the indigenous natural love and devotion and the monotheism that already existed in the land from a hoary antiquity."

However, Rāmānanda may have imbied Sufi influence, it will be incorrect to assert that he gave up caste distinctions altogether. It has been indicated before that Rāmānanda was a bridge between the bhakti movements of the South and the North. He was one of the products of that age when the interaction of Hindu and Muslim ideas produced a spiritual renovation. As a result, he, like many other bhaktas and Sufis, adopted a more liberal attitude towards the problem of religion. They recognised both religions as in some sense legitimate; and consequent to this, allowed some relaxation in matters of religion. Otherwise, as an orthodox Brahmin, Rāmānanda does not seem to have rejected the priestly class which monopolises Hindu religion; and also there is no evidence that he has made any attempt to overturn the caste system as a religiously institutionalised social phenomenon. He adopted a strong monotheism, in that he worshipped Rāma, the son of King Dasaratha, who is regarded as an incarnation of Viṣṇu. Besides the worship of incarnation, he is also said to have allowed idolatry freely. Thus it may be concluded that Rāmānanda did not make a complete departure from the old Hindu tradition though.
under Sufi influence he developed a strong sense of monothelism, equality of all and a general liberal attitude in matters of religion. In any case, before Kabir, undoubtedly Ramananda was one of the great bhaktas whose ideas were moulded by the interaction of Hindu-Muslim ideas through bhakti mysticism. The case of Kabir, however, was different. Unlike all bhaktas and sadhakas, with the exception of Nanak, he effected a partial break with both Hinduism and Islam, not just for the sake of breaking with, but to achieve a noble purpose of uniting the two rival communities. There is a popular saying: "Bhakti arose first in the Dravida land; Ramananda brought it to the North; and Kabir spread it to the seven continents and nine divisions of the world." Then, let us now turn to Kabir, the bhakta.
Since there seems to be some uncertainty and confusion about Kabir's life and work, it is deemed necessary to deal at first with the nature of the materials that we have at our disposal pertaining to Kabir. The necessity arises from the fact that the legendary accounts of Kabir are so mixed up with the facts that often it is not even easy to disentangle from them the true story of his life. Yet we have to make the attempt to unearth the man and his significance. In order to do so, we have to explain the nature of the information that we have derived from different sources—their historicity or authenticity. When we can do so, we will be able to form an idea of understanding Kabir and his teachings from a reasonably historical perspective.

**THE SOURCES**

There is a general dearth of information about Kabir, partly because he himself, being an unlettered person, left nothing in written form. All sources agree that Kabir was an unlettered person and that his teaching was mainly oral. In this regard, Kabir himself is reported to have said:

> I am not skilled in book knowledge, nor do I understand controversy (Adi-Granth, Bilavatu 2).

He says further:

> I touch not ink nor paper, nor take pen in my hand; of the greatness of the four ages Kabir has given instructions with his lips (Bijak, Sakh 188).

The circumstances of Kabir's upbringing make it quite probable that he was unable to read and write. However, there is a collection of his sayings called Bijak. But the
composition and compilation of this book was not made until about fifty years after his death. J. N. Farquhar specifically mentions the year 1570 when the vast number of Kabir's poems and utterances were compiled by one of his disciples. F. E. Keay goes into further details and says that since it was unlikely that Kabir could read and write, his admirers and followers treasured his poems and repeated them to one another, and perhaps in some cases wrote them down. Then when the Kabirpanthi was definitely organised, the need for an authentic scripture was felt, and thus steps were taken to collect Kabir's verses together. This is known as the Bijak. The compiler may have been Bhagavan Das, and the compilation was not made till somewhere about 1600. Some hold that Kabir dictated his sayings to his disciple, Bhagavan Das.

(A) The Bijak (Account Book of Invoice) is accepted as the most authoritative record of Kabir's teaching. The language of the Bijak is said to be that Hindi dialect which was spoken in the neighbourhood of Banaras, Mirzapur and Gorakhpur. But it contains more than 235 words of Persian, Arabic and Turkish origin. Undoubtedly, these words found their way into Kabir's language due to the interaction between Hindus and Muslims. The language of the Bijak is described as obscure and in many places it is unintelligible and difficult to interpret. About his language, Kabir is reported to have said:

My speech is of the East,
no one can understand me.
Only he can understand me,
who is from the farthest East (Bijak, Sakhī 194).
"Colloquialism, idiomatic and elliptical structure of sentences", says Keay, "and frequent play on words increase the difficulty." Scholars find no grammatical accuracy in his language. His style is unpolished by modern standards of language. Kabir, however, was aware of the usefulness of his vernacular. Ahmad Shāh quotes a saying of Kabir that "Sanskrit is like the water of a well, while the bhāshā (the vernacular) is like the flowing waters of a river." The use of the vernacular, instead of Sanskrit, for religious teaching, made it possible to popularise religion in Hindi-speaking regions. For doing so, Kabir is regarded as the father and pioneer of Hindi literature. There is probably no Indian author, it is argued, whose verses are more on the lips of the people of North India than those of Kabir, unless it be Tulsi Dās. As G. A. Grierson says, "The words of two men of the past can still be heard in every village of Hindūstān. Those are Tulsi Dās, the abandoned child of a beggar Brāhmin tribe, and Kabir, the despised weaver of Benares."

The hymns of the Bhājak are written in a great variety of metres previously unknown, of which Kabir is regarded as the inventor. Therefore, the Bhājak consists of the following divisions according to different metres:

1. The Adī-Mongal (a short introductory poem);
2. Ramānīs (short doctrinal poems consisting of an indefinite number of Chaupāis);
3. Sakhīs (evidence or rhyming couplets bearing witness to the truth: short apophthegms consisting of a single couplet);
4. Sabdās (words: of the same character as the Ramānīs)
but in the *lalita* metre;

(5) The *Chauntisi* (or the 34 consonants of the Nāgari alphabet, with their religious significations);

(6) The *Vipramatīsī* (an attack, in thirty short verses, on the orthodox religious system of the Brāhmīns);

(7) *Kaharās, Basantas, Chānchāris, Belīs, Bīrhuīs* and *Hindolās* (all religious songs in various metres);

(8) The *Sāvar Bījāk ko Pad* (summing up of the whole *Bījāk*). The *Bījāk* ends with the following verse:

Kabīr said, Within the Creator is all, and the Creator permeats all;
Without the secret all are sunk in error; only the holy man, the wise, can comprehend.

But the *Ramanīs*, the *Sākhīs* and the *Sabdas* form the bulk of the *Bījāk*.

There are several printed editions of the *Bījāk*. The two best known editions are both supplied with a commentary, the one by Mahārājāh Biswanath Singh, the Rājah of Rewāh, and the other by Babā Pūrān Dās of Būrāhān pūr. The former has been printed at Banares (1868), Lucknow and Bombay, and also without the commentary at Gāya (n. d.); the latter at Lucknow and Allahābād (1905).

In 1890, the Rev. Prem Chand of the Baptist Mission, Monghyr, printed an edition at Calcutta. The editor of this edition writes:

Some thirty years ago I was lent a manuscript copy of the *Bījāk*, taken from the Murshidābād edition. This I had copied out and afterwards compared my copy with others from different parts of the country. I found in these a certain number of *Dohas* (couplets)
which were not in my copy and these
I have printed at the end of the book.
The other poetical pieces were the
same in all editions. I corrected
various clerical errors and separated
words which had been allowed to run
into one another and added a few foot-
notes to make the meaning clear to any
ordinary Hindi scholars. 13

In other words, in this edition the order of the verses is
different from that of other editions.

In 1911 the Rev. Ahmad Shāh of Kanpūr published a
text which follows the order of the edition made by the
Rājāh of Rewāḥ, but the verses not found in this but found
in other editions have been added at the end. There may be
other editions in existence and many manuscripts. If there
are any old manuscripts at the disposal of the KabĪrpāntḥīs,
they are not available to modern scholars for examination.
Thus the KabĪrpāntḥīs, the upholders of the tradition,
prevent modern scholarship from digging farther to unearth
more information about KabĪr. However, as we can see, all
the printed editions of the Bījāk are modern. The variations
among the different editions suggest the argument that all
verses of the Bījāk are not the original words of KabĪr.
There have been accretions and additions made by different
hands. In the Sākhīs the greatest amount of variation seems
to occur. A very large number of Sākhīs have been collected
by the KabĪrpāntḥīs; although they are ascribed to KabĪr,
they are not found in the Bījāk. Keay has drawn a chart
showing the discrepancy among various editions of the Bījāk.
At any rate, "On the whole", asserts Keay, "it seems likely
that the bulk of it [Bijak] is his [Kabir's] work. There is, generally speaking, a consistency about the style and ideas which seems to show it to be the work of one man." Of the two well-known editions, the text of Pūrān Dās is recognised by the Kabīrpanthīs of Kabīr Chaura, Banares; while that of the Rājah of Rewāh is accepted by the section of the Panth at Chhättisgarh. According to some Kabīrpanthīs, the Bijak was given to the royal family of Rewāh by Kabīr himself, and that they have a manuscript written out by Dharam Dās in 1469. But on investigations made by Keay from the officials of that State, no information could be obtained about it.

(B) The second most important source of information is the Sikh scripture, namely, the Aṯi-Granth, compiled in 1604 by the orders of Guru Arjun Dev (d. 1606), the fifth Guru of Sikhism. Although we have no evidence that the Bijak in its present form was available to Guru Arjun Dev, let alone to Guru Nānak (d. 1538), the compilation of the Aṯi-Granth may have been suggested by the Bijak. The Granth contains, in addition to the compositions of the Sikh Gurus, beginning from Nānak up to Tegh or Tej Bahāūr, the ninth Guru (d. 1675), poems of other bhaktās, who, coming just before Nānak, paved the way for him. Of these bhaktās, whom Nānak acknowledged as his spiritual precursors and whose hymns are included in his Granth, Nāmdev and Kabīr are the outstanding. We have already seen the place given to Nāmdev in the Granth. The hymns of Kabīr, with the exception of those of the Sikh Gurus, are the greatest in bulk. It is the preponderance
that has been given to Kabir's poems in the Adi-Granth, and the respect and the interest that Nanak has shown to Kabir, that has led writers like Westcott to suggest that the former probably enjoyed personal intercourse with the latter.

The Adi-Granth is in three parts, the first of which is liturgical, while the second contains the general body of the hymns; and the third part is supplementary. It is in the last two portions that the verses of Kabir are found.

In the last part of the Adi-Granth, which is called the Bhog, there are 244 Sakhis of Kabir. Altogether, according to F. Pincott, there are 1,146 stanzas of Kabir to be found in the Granth. The number of stanzas is about two-thirds of the number to be found in the Birak, calculates Keay. The incorporation of such a large number of Kabir's poems in the Granth Sahib, contends R. S. Majumdar, is seen as an evidence of Birak's authenticity.

We have already discussed the relation between Kabir and Nanak in a previous chapter. It is very important to consider what connection there is between these two collections of the poems of Kabir. Keay informs us that the verses in the Granth are not considered so authoritative as those in the Birak by the members of the Kabirpanth; and the Kabirpanthis who sit at the Kabir Gate of the Sikh Golden Temple, at Amritsar (East Punjab), only recite the Birak. The same writer also tells us that some time ago Ahmad Shah expressed the opinion that these poems in the Granth were "in the
spirit of Kabir", rather than by Kabir himself. But, later on he revised his opinion and considers that they have the same marks of genuineness as the poems of the Bijak. It is interesting to notice, observes Keay, that, on the whole, the poems of the Granth probably contain more information about the personal life of Kabir than the poems of the Bijak.

For example, in the translation of the Adi Granth by M. A. Macauliffe, there are elaborate verses pertaining to the circumstances of the birth of Kabir, and the punishment he has suffered at the hands of Sultan Sikandar Ludhi of Delhi. Moreover, the Granth contains fewer poems with an advanced cosmogony, and more poems which speak of Kabir's personal experiences. According to Keay, in the "Kabir portions" of the Granth (apart from a few brief sayings and couplets) there are only about two verses which do not contain the name Kabir, whereas in the Bijak there are about fifty-one such verses.

There are very few verses of Kabir which are found both in the Bijak and the Adi Granth, but the following verses of the two collections may be compared even though they are not quite identical:

Bijak

(1) Ramaini 33
(2) Sabda 73
(3) " 112
(4) " 197
(5) Charchari 2
(6) Chauntisi

Adi Granth

Gauri 30
Gauri 42
Gauri 75
Gauri Purbi
Bavanakhri
Soratha 2
Prabati 2
The slokas (verses) of the Granth are of the same form as the sakhis of the Bijak, but there are only a few which are common to both. It is indeed very interesting to find so few poems which occur identically in both collections. Yet the spirit of the two collections is the same. And there seems no reason to doubt that they both contain a large majority of poems which are the genuine words of Kabir, though both the collections include some verses which have probably been spoken by others in the name of Kabir. In some cases, for instance, Macauliffe passes on a tradition that a poem here and there was composed by one of the Sikh Gurus on a theme of Kabir's (e.g. Bhairau 2), and this may have been the case with other verses where such a tradition has not been preserved.

At any rate, how are we to reconcile the discrepancies in the two collections of the Bijak and the Adi Granth? Whatever variations are found between the two collections may be accounted for by the fact that Kabir gave his teaching orally in Banaras, and that certain of his disciples carried them away in their memories. When his followers split up into groups, and organised themselves into sects, they prepared their respective collections without any coordination between groups. One of these groups, sometimes called the western group, or some individual disciples of Kabir must have met Nanak, if he himself did not meet Kabir, from whom most probably by oral communication Nanak incorporated in his sayings those of Kabir. In other words, it may be argued that "there were probably two principal oral traditions; one in the East,
which became the nucleus of the *Bijak*, and the other in the North-west, which was the nucleus of the collection incorporated in the *Granth*.

Besides these two main collections, there are innumerable *sākhīs* and wittysayings which are currently ascribed to Kabir. Keay informs us that there are as many as five thousand couplets current in India; whereas the *Bijak* only contains about four hundred. Although these *sākhīs* are strikingly similar to those in the *Bijak*, and are used like proverbs, "it is not at all likely", remarks Keay, "that all of them are really the work of Kabir." "Most of them are however in his spirit," Keay goes on to say, "and in substance consistent with the teaching to be met with in the *Bijak* and the *Granth*.

The Kabirpanthīs also have a considerable literature, much of which they claim came form their preceptor. Of these, Macauliffe mentions a few, such as *Kabir Kasautī* (Bombay, 1885); the *Bharat Khand cha Aravachim Kosh* and the *Bhakta Vihāya*. In the bibliography of his book, *Makers of Indian Literature: Kabīr*, Prathakar Machwe has given a long list of books written by the Kabirpanthīs in Hindi, Marathi and Gujarati. These works are of as late as the nineteenth century, and thus can hardly be accepted as containing the authentic words of Kabir.

(C) In addition to these works attributed to Kabir, there is a book by Rabindranāth Tagore, entitled *One Hundred Poems of Kabir* with an introduction by Evelyn Underhill. This translation is supposed to be based upon the Hindi text
(in Bengali characters) with a Bengali translation by Kshiti Mohan Sen, who has gathered from many sources a large collection of poems and hymns to which the name of Kabir is attached. The genuineness of all the hundred poems in Tagore’s translation has been doubted by Ahmad Shah and Farquhar; the latter says, "Tagore’s beautiful renderings scarcely reflect the style of the original, though they are not unfaithful as translation."

However, we may postpone our comments until we consider a few important points: (1) None of the hundred poems is found either in the Bāīkī or in the Granth with the exception of poems 1 and 69, even though they are only extracts from the poems found in those two collections. In some of the poems there are lines or phrases here and there which came from those two collections, but the remainder of the collection is probably of later date. (2) Of the hundred poems, the contents of many are quite contrary to what we know of Kabir’s habits and teachings as found in his authentic poems (cf. nos. 29, 57, 62, 64, 75, 82). They present Kabir as practising Hindu rites, e.g. asceticism, and accepting Hindu religious things, e.g. the Vedas, the Puranas, the holy rivers, etc., against which he, in fact, raised his strongest voice. (3) In these poems, for God the terms are Brahma, Supreme Soul, Supreme Spirit, Unconditioned, Thatness, Śūnyata, etc. (cf. 7, 13, 14, 19, 39, 40, 45, 56, 76, 80), but there are no occurrences of Rāma which is the name Kabir usually uses for God. (4) All Hindu gods and goddesses are recognised (cf. no. 15). (5) Creation is caused by the OH, and by the dancing sport of the Creator (cf. nos. 26, 82). (6) Poems 46 and 81 describe an advanced cosmogony with five elements which corresponds to that of the Taittirīya Upani-
(7) In poems 30 and 47 man is compared to a tree in which there are two birds—one is the Guru and the other is the disciple, i.e. the Universal Self and the individual self. Obviously, these ideas have been borrowed from the Brhad-āranyaka Upanisad. (8) Poem 27 describes many miracles which Kabir is believed to have played. (9) There are many poems which express highly mystical, especially Sufistic abstractions (cf. 4, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 22). (10) In some poems the theme of Krishna's playing of the flute is expressed (cf. 50, 53, 68). (11) Poem 91 presents Kabir as one who has learned the Sanskrit language. This, of course, goes against the fundamental truth about Kabir, for he had nothing to do with the holy language of the orthodox Hinduism. (12) The hundred poems contain many Hindu-Buddhist philosophical ideas which Kabir can hardly be credited with, for philosophy was not his primary accomplishment.

In view of these facts, it may not be incorrect to hold that the original Hindi text of which Tagore's hundred poems is a translation is probably not a collection of authentic poems of Kabir, except for some lines and phrases. The poems seem to have been contributed by different persons, some Vedantists, some Sufis, some orthodox Krsnites Hindus. The collection as a whole does represent the spirit of Kabir's teaching, though it is moulded in a philosophical fashion. As to the use of the name of Kabir in these apocryphal poems, we should not be surprised, for the names of revered persons, like Kabir and Nanak, have frequently been used by those who profess their systems. It is a universal phenomenon. Nanak's name, for example, was used in all the compositions of the Gurus in the Sikh Granth down to Guru Arjun.
The use of the name of a great teacher, as we know, is not to be taken as intended to be mere forgery, but rather as showing respect, and for authenticating later writings.

(D) Apart from these collections, we have some valuable information in the National Biography Series of India. The compiler of this work is Dr. Parasnath Tiwarī, who has done a great deal of research work about the life of Kabīr. Dr. Tiwarī’s work is a critical exposition of Kabīr’s life as gleaned from different sources and the current legends.

(E) In addition to these works, there are numerous other references to Kabīr. All traditions and all Kabīnpanthīs are in full agreement on one point—that Kabīr was brought up by a Muslim weaver. In the Adī-Granth occur these lines: “By caste a weaver and patient of mind; utters Kabīr with natural ease the excellencies of Rāma.”

A Muslim historian, named Muḥsin Fānī of Kashmir, who lived during the reign of Akbar (1556-1605), in his Dabistān-i-Madhāhib describes Kabīr as a weaver and a muwahhid (believer in the unity of God). It is further stated that in his quest for guidance, he visited Muslim as well as Hindu saints of his time, and finally became a disciple of Rāmānanda. Mention is also made of the following story:

One day when certain Brāhmans were expatiating on the purifying qualities of the Ganges water, Kabīr filled his wooden cup with water from the river and offered it to them to drink. They were horrified at the thought of drinking out of the cup belonging to a low caste man; upon which Kabīr remarked, “If the Ganges water cannot purify my cup, how can I believe that it can wash away my desire.”
There are verses both in the Bījak and Ādi-Granth which describe Kabīr's rejection of the efficacy of the holy waters. On the strength of these we can say that the above story is not a mere legend, but a part of his teaching.

However, the statement that Kabīr was a weaver and a believer in the unity of God has been confirmed by Akbar's court historian, Abūl Faḍl, and has never been contradicted by any.

It is interesting to note the opinion of the Sufis of Kabīr's time. Shaykh 'Abdul Ḥaq Dihlawī records the answer of his own grandfather, who was a learned Sufi, to the query of one of his sons as to whether Kabīr who was a believer in the unity of God (muwahhid) should be regarded as a Muslim or an unbeliever, that "it is a secret difficult to comprehend. One should try to understand."

The significance of the above statement is that it has not said anything positively or negatively. Kabīr was a muwahhid which has been established. Secondly, the statement implies that one finds it difficult to categorise Kabīr with this group or that group. This is exactly our position. From any particular point of view—Hindu or Muslim—Kabīr cannot be accepted totally. It was part of his mission to remain above and beyond denominations; and thus he hoped to bring the two communities together.

In the Muslim hagiographical literature Kabīr's name is not mentioned very frequently. But according to the popular
Padshirkar-i-Awliya-i-Hind (Description of the Lives of Indian Muslim Saints), Kabir was a disciple of Shaykh Taqi, a renowned Sufi of Banaras and North India.

The Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam describes Kabir as an Indian mystic of the fifteenth century, who was claimed both by the Hindus and Muslims as belonging to their faith. A large collection of Hindi verses is attributed to him, but their authenticity is doubtful, and a like uncertainty attaches to his biography, which is obscured by legends. He is said to have been the son, or adopted son, of a Muhammadan weaver, and to have become the disciple of Ramananda. Kabir joined in the theological and philosophical arguments that his master held with Brahmins and Sufis at Banaras. Kabir appears to have earned his living as a weaver, and to have been a married man, the father of a family, "and to have been as contemptuous of the professional asceticism of the Yogi as he was disregardful of the doctrines and ordinances of orthodoxy, whether Hindu or Muslim." The boldness with which he sang his mystical doctrine of the divine unity exposed him to persecution, and he is said to have been driven from Banaras in 1495, when he was about 60 years of age, and to have died at Maghar, in the district of Basti, in 1518. Legend says that his Hindu and Muslim disciples disputed as to the disposal of his body, which the former wished to burn and the latter to bury; when they lifted the cloth that covered the body, they found in place of the corpse only a heap of flowers; of these the Hindus burnt half in Banaras, while the Muslims buried the rest at Maghar, where the shrine is still in the
charge of Muhammadan Kabirpanthis. The Encyclopaedia further says that a study of his poems makes it clear that he had no desire to attach himself to any organised religion.

"Saith Kabir, they are good riders who keep themselves aloof from the Vedas and the Qur'ān". He did not attempt to formulate any religious or philosophical system of his own, but he popularised the bhakti religion, without, however, connecting it with any particular incarnation, and he spoke of God indifferently as "Rām, Hari, 'Ali or Allah." He rejected the outward signs of Hindūism, e. g. the sacred thread, the distinctions of caste, the ritual observances of temple worship, etc., and his references to Muslim authorities and institutions (e. g. the Qur'ān, circumcision, pilgrimage, the Mulla, the Qādi, etc.) are accompanied with a denial of their validity.

He represented God as the omnipresent reality. But the human soul could attain union with God through love, not by knowledge or by ceremonial observances. His doctrines were accepted by many of whom the unlettered persons formed the majority.

Mawlāvī Chulam Šarwar in his Khazīnat-ul-Āṣfiyā (Treasury of Saints) writes that Shaykh Kabīr Jūlāhā (weaver), the disciple and successor of Shaykh Taqi, is described as being one of the great men of his time, and a leader among theists. He is described as the author of many Hindi writings, which shows that he was a man of great learning. He taught the Ṣūfī doctrine of wasāl (union with God) and remained silent with regard to firāq (separation). He is said to have been the first to write about God and His attributes in Hindi, and to have been the author of many poems in Hindi. Because
of his wide religious toleration, he was accepted as a religious leader by both the Hindus and the Muslims, and designated by the former Pir Kabir and by the latter Bhagat Kabir. He died in 1594. (we will deal with the date of Kabir later, p. 188)

Among the Hindus, Nathaji is the earliest to write about Kabir. An important statement is found in his (Nathaji) Bhaktamala (ca. 1600). He says:

Kabir refused to acknowledge caste distinction or to recognize the authority of the six schools of Hindu philosophy, nor did he set store by the four divisions of life (Ashrama) prescribed for Brahmins. He held that religion without Bhakti was no religion at all and that asceticism, fasting and almsgiving had no value if unaccompanied by worship (Bhajan, hymns singing). By means of Namans, Shabdas, and Sakhis, he imparted religious instruction to Hindu and Muslim alike. He had no preference for either religion, but gave teaching that was appreciated by the followers of both. He spoke out his mind fearlessly and never made it his object merely to please his hearers.

This statement is one of the best available of Kabir's life and mission. The account clearly tells us of a man who had no great sympathy with Brahmanical teaching; he believed in a personal God and in salvation by bhakti rather than by performing ceremonial rites; and he delivered a message, regarded as God's message, to Hindus and Muslims alike. In short, the account of Nathaji is an independent presentation of the central core of Kabir's life and teaching.

This is all that is stated in the above text, but to this text is appended a commentary written by a later hand. In this commentary it is stated that Kabir in his desire to wear a khanti round his neck and a tilak on his forehead
(apparently to attract a Hindu audience) made up his mind to become a disciple of Rāmānanda and achieved his purpose. The commentary tells us that Muslims objected to the repetition of "Rām, Rām", by a co-religionist and asked Rāmānanda whether it were true that he had received a juluḥ as his disciple. Rāmānanda at first denied that he had done so, but when confronted with Kabīr acknowledged his mistake.

In the same commentary mention is made of the incident in which Kabīr was charged before the Sultan Sikandar Lūdhi, and refused to salute the Sultan, and was sentenced to death and in succession was thrown into the Ganges, committed to the flames, and exposed to the fury of an elephant, but all to no purpose. It is added that the Sultan, thwarted in his desire to destroy Kabīr, recognised that he had acted wrongly, asked Kabīr's forgiveness, and offered to compensate him for the injuries inflicted.

It is apparent that the commentator of Nabhaṇjī was familiar with all the popular legends that were current in the society in those days. It is not impossible that Nabhaṇjī himself was also acquainted with those legends. The only thing we do not know is when these legends came into being. These legends gradually came to be known and were incorporated into various writings of later dates, and were accepted as authoritative and historical by the Kabīrpanthis.

(F) Having recorded some medieval opinions about Kabīr, we propose to take into consideration a few modern views on Kabīr. The examination of some modern opinions about Kabīr,
like those of medieval times, will help us to form our idea about the man and his ideals. It is deemed necessary, for any saying or sayings attributed to Kabir, but do not tally with these opinions, may be regarded as apocryphal.

The obscurity of Kabir's life led writers like H. H. Wilson to doubt even the historical existence of Kabir. Thus rejecting the view of Malcolm, who regarded Kabir as a celebrated Sufi, Wilson says: "Indeed I think it not at all improbable that no such person as Kabir ever existed, and that his name is a mere cover to the innovations of some freethinker amongst the Hindús." The learned author does not stop here. He goes on to say that his Kabir's names are suspicious, and Jñāni (the sage), or Kabir (the greatest), "are generic rather than individual denominations; at any rate, even if the individual were distinct, we must suppose that the name which occurs in his writings is nothing more than the Takhallus, or assumed name, under which both Musalmān and Hindu poets have been accustomed to send their compositions into the world." The learned writer, however, did not find any support for his views in the circle of modern scholarship. His contention does not appear to have been based on an adequate study of the facts about Kabir, for the name "Kabir" is not unique or uncommon; many people with the name "Kabir" lived in the history of India, as we shall see later. Therefore, to argue that the name was merely a title or an epithet would require explicit evidence, since there is nothing inherently unlikely in the man bearing the personal name, Kabir.
H. H. Wilson and R. G. Bhandarkar are the two major scholars of our time who think Kabir was a Hindu. It seems that the nature of Kabir's life and teaching encouraged these scholars to regard him as a Hindu. But this view is one-sided, for it does not appear to consider the other side of his life and teaching, which is equally weighty. The central truth about his teaching is that there is no way to see him as either a Muslim or a Hindu exclusively. His upbringing in a Muslim family is one sure evidence for regarding him as a Muslim. This means, that those who consider him a Hindu do not take into consideration his life history.

Moreover, Kabir himself does not identify himself as a Muslim or as a Hindu. The only identification given by himself is that of a "weaver of Banaras." It is very important to remember that any sectarian identification, one way or the other, on the part of Kabir would have killed the very noble mission, that is the unifying of the Hindus and the Muslims, for which he struggled so hard. It is our intention to keep him above the sectarian level, but the fact of his Muslim name cannot be brushed aside.

There are some writers who are not willing to identify Kabir as a Hindu or as a Muslim, but they see him only as a bhakti-reformer. One of them is A. B. Pandey. According to him, the bhakti reformers before Kabir recognised the need of reform in the then prevailing social order but they could not or did not take the revolutionary steps of scrapping the existing social order altogether and replacing it with a new order. They were only reformers but not revolutionaries.
"But Kabir wanted to revolutionise the existing social order and social values root and branch. For this reason, Kabir has attracted the greatest notice." In the same tone, another writer remarks, "The real clue of Kabir is, after all, not his birth or his association, but his critical, almost completely hostile, attitude toward all formalism in religion."

These writers, to a great extent, actually represent the spirit of Kabir, who seldom identified himself as a Muslim or a Hindu. His Muslim family is mentioned only accidentally.

However, there are other writers who present Kabir as a blending of two religions—Hinduism and Islam—in his life and teaching. One of these writers is W. W. Hunter. He recognises Kabir as a great lyrical poet and mystic. "He is also considered as the Indian Luther of the 15th century who may rightly be regarded as the creator of a sacred literature in Hindi." He and his successors endeavoured to synthesise the strict monotheism of Islam with its "abhorrence of idolatry with whatever was best and most deeply rooted in the creed of Hinduism." "Like Raja Rammohan Roy," maintains Westcott, "he had attempted to form a composite creed out of the best elements of Hinduism and Islam."

Khuswant Singh, a Sikh historian, has made a study of the history of Hindu-Muslim interaction in India during the medieval period. After the study, he concludes that in everything—dress, food, customs, speech, music—except the place of worship, the two communities became identical. "All they needed was someone who could bridge the
gap between the temple and the mosque." And this great task was shouldered by Kabir.

The word "identical" in the above statement may be an oversimplification. The fact remains, however, that the interaction between the two communities took place in almost every segment of their life. Nonetheless, it may be too hazardous to say that they became identical, for neither community was ready to lose its identity as Hindu or Muslim. This sense of identity buttressed by religious separateness in the main kept the two communities far apart from each other. Kabir's greatness lies in trying to abolish their separate identities based on religious grounds. Thus, when Kabir says, "I am the son of both Allah and Rama," he specifically means to forego religious identity. It was an insurmountable task for the two orthodox religions to give up religious identity. But Kabir as a mystic could afford to venture it. It is this line of thinking that enabled J. N. Farquhar to say: "In the life of Kabir the two religions mingled. The strongest elements of each laid hold of him and formed his thought, the Sufi conviction that all ordinary religions are but forms dictating his general attitude to the two faiths. Hence he was persecuted from both sides."

Having examined all available sources—contemporary and near contemporary—of Kabir's life, and also some comments on his life and teaching made by writers of both the medieval and modern periods, we are now in a position to write a connected sketch of his whole life. There are a few scholars who have
written on Kabir's life and activity, as gleaned from different sources including legends. We may here summarise the account given by Dr. Evelyn Underhill in her introduction to Rabindranath Tagore's One Hundred Poems of Kabir.

**Kabir's Life Sketch**

The poet Kabir is one of the most interesting personalities in the history of Indian mysticism. He was born in Varanasi "of Muslim parents", about the year 1440. In early life, he became a disciple of the celebrated Hindu ascetic Ramana. Ramana had brought to northern India the religious revival which Ramana, the great twelfth-century reformer of Brahmanism, had initiated in the South. (we have already discussed the relationship between Ramana and Ramana as far as the bhakti cult is concerned).

Though the elements of bhakti religion are indigenous in Hinduism, and find expression in many passages of the Gitā, there was in its medieval revival a large element of syncretism. Ramana, through whom its spirit is said to have reached Kabir, appears to have been a man of wide religious culture and full of missionary enthusiasm. Living at the moment in which the impassioned poetry and deep philosophy of the great Persian mystics, Ṭehrār, Sa'dī, Jalāl-ud-Dīn Rūmī and Ḥāfiz, were exercising a powerful influence on the religious thought of India, he dreamed of reconciling this intense and personal Muslim mysticism with the traditional theology and mysticism of Brahmanism. Some have regarded both these great religious leaders as influenced also by Christianity.
We may safely assert that in their teachings, two—perhaps three—apparently antagonistic streams of intense spiritual culture met, as Jewish and Hellenistic thought met in the early Christian church; and it is one of the outstanding characteristics of Kabir's genius that he was able in his poems to fuse them into one.

A great religious reformer, it is yet supremely as a mystical poet that Kabir lives for us. His fate has been that of many revealers of reality. A hater of religious exclusivism, and seeking above all things to initiate men into the liberty of the children of God, his followers have honoured his memory by re-erecting in a new place the barriers which he laboured to cast down. But his wonderful songs survive, the spontaneous expressions of his vision and his love; and it is by these, not by the didactic teachings associated with his name, that he makes his immortal appeal to the heart. In these poems a wide range of mystical emotion is brought into play: from the loftiest abstractions and the most other-worldly passion for the infinite to the most intimate and personal realisation of God, expressed in homely metaphors and religious symbols drawn indifferently from Hindu and Muslim belief. It is impossible to say of their author that he was Brahmin or Sufi, Vedantist or Vaishnavite. He is, as he says himself, "at one the child of Allah and of Ram."

That Supreme Spirit Whom he knew and adored, and to Whose joyous friendship he sought to induct the souls of other men, transcended. He embraced all metaphysical categories; all credal definitions; yet each contributed something to
the description of that Infinite and Simple Totality Who revealed Himself, according to their measure, to the faithful lovers of all creeds.

Kabir's story is surrounded by legends. Some of these emanate from a Hindu, some from a Muslim source, and claim him by turns as a Sufi and Brahmin saint. "His name, however, is practically a conclusive proof of Muslim ancestry;" and the most probable tale is that which represents him as the actual or adopted child of a Muslim weaver of Banaras, the city in which the chief events of his life took place.

In fifteenth-century Banaras the syncretistic tendencies of bhakti religion had reached full development. Sufis and Brahmins appear to have met in disputation; the most spiritual members of both creeds propagating the teachings of Ramananda, whose reputation was then at its height. The boy Kabir, in whom the religious passion was innate, saw in Ramananda his destined teacher; but knew how slight were the chances that a Hindu guru would accept a Muslim as disciple. He therefore lay upon the steps of the river Ganges, where Ramananda was accustomed to bathe; with the result that the master, coming down to the water, trod upon his body unexpectedly, and exclaimed in his astonishment, 'Rami! Rami!'—the name of the incarnation under which he worshipped God. Kabir then declared that he had received the mantra of initiation from Ramananda's lips, and was by it admitted to discipleship.

In spite of the protests of orthodox Brahmins and Muslim Mullahs, both equally annoyed by this contempt of theological
landmarks, he persisted in his claim; thus exhibiting in action that very principle of religious synthesis which Rāmānanda had sought to establish in thought. Rāmānanda appears to have accepted him, and though Muslim legends speak of the famous Ṣūfī Pīr, Taqī of Ḥansi, as Kabīr’s master in later life, the Hindu saint is the only human teacher to whom in his songs he acknowledges indebtedness.

Kabīr’s life story contradicts many current ideas concerning the Oriental mystic. Of the stages of discipline through which he passed, the manner in which his spiritual genius developed, we are completely ignorant. He seems to have remained for years the disciple of Rāmānanda, joining in the theological arguments which his master held with all the great Mullahs and Brāhmins of his day; and to this source we may perhaps trace his acquaintance with the languages of Hindūism and Ṣūfīsm. He may or may not have submitted to the traditional education of the Hindū or the Ṣūfī contemplative; it is clear, at any rate, that he never adopted the life of the professional ascetic or retired from the world in order to devote himself to bodily mortifications and the exclusive pursuit of the contemplative life. Side by side with his interior life of adoration, its artistic expression in music and words—for he was a skilled musician as well as a poet—he lived the same and diligent life of the Oriental craftsman. All the legends agree on this point: that Kabīr was a weaver, a simple and unlettered man, who earned his living at the loom. "Like Paul, the tent-maker, he knew how to combine vision and industry; the work of his hands helped rather than hindered
the impassioned meditation of his heart." Hating mere bodily austerities, he was no ascetic, but a married man, the father of a family—a circumstance which Hindu legends of the monastic type vainly attempt to conceal or explain—and it was from out of the heart of the common life that he sang his rapturous lyrics of divine love. Here his works corroborate the traditional story of his life. Again and again he extols the life of home, the value and reality of diurnal existence, with its opportunities for love and renunciation; pouring contempt upon the professional sanctity of the Yogis, who "has a great beard and matted locks, and looks like a goat," and on all who think it necessary to flee a world pervaded by love, joy and beauty—the proper theatre of man's quest—in order to find that One Reality Who has "spread His form of love throughout all the world."

It does not need much experience of ascetic literature to recognise the boldness and originality of this attitude in such a time and place. From the point of view of orthodox sanctity, whether Hindu or Muslim, Kabir was plainly a heretic; and his frank dislike of all institutional religion, all external observance—"which was as thorough and as intense as that of the Quakers themselves"—completed, so far as ecclesiastical opinion was concerned, his reputation as a dangerous man. The "simple union" with Divine Reality which he perpetually extolled, as alike the duty and the joy of every soul, was independent both of ritual and of bodily austerities; the God whom he proclaimed was "neither in Ka'bah nor in Kailas." Those who sought Him needed not to go far, for He
awaited discovery everywhere, more accessible to "the washerwoman and the carpenter" than to the self-righteous holy man. Therefore, the whole apparatus of piety, Hindu and Muslim alike—the temple and mosque, idol and holy water, scriptures and priests—were denounced by this "inconveniently clear-sighted poet" as mere substitutes for reality; dead thing intervening between the soul and its love;—

The images are all lifeless, they cannot speak:
I know, for I have cried aloud to them.
The Purana and the Kor'an are mere words:
Lifting up the curtain, I have seen.

This sort of remark cannot be tolerated by organised religion; and it is not surprising that Kabir, having his headquarters in Benares, the very centre of priestly influence, was subjected to considerable persecution. The well-known legend of the "beautiful courtesan sent by the Brâhmins to tempt his virtue, and converted, like the Magdalene, by her sudden encounter with the initiate of a higher love," preserves the memory of the fear and dislike with which he was regarded by the ecclesiastical powers. Once at least, after the performance of a supposed miracle of healing, he was brought before the Sultân Sikandar Lûdhi, and charged with claiming the possession of divine powers. But Sikandar Lûdhi, a ruler of considerable culture, was tolerant of the eccentricities of saintly persons belonging to his own faith. "Kabir, being of Muslim birth," was outside the authority of the Brâhmins, and technically classed with the Sûfis, to whom great theological latitude was allowed. Therefore, though he was banished in the interests of peace from Benares, his life
was spared. This seems to have happened in 1495, when he was nearly sixty years of age; it is the last event in his career of which we have definite knowledge. Thenceforth he appears to have moved about amongst various cities of northern India, the centre of a group of disciples; continuing in exile that life of apostle and poet of love to which, as he declares in one of his songs, he was destined "from the beginning of time." In 1518, an old man, broken in health, and with hands so feeble that he could no longer make the music which he loved, he died at Maghar, near Gorakhnath.

An interesting legend tells us that after his death, his Muslim and Hindú disciples disputed the possession of his body; while the Muslims wished to bury, the Hindús to burn. As they argued together, "Kabir appeared before them, and told them to lift the shroud and look at that which lay beneath." They did so, and found in the place of the corpse, a heap of flowers; half of which were buried by the Muslims at Maghar, and half carried by the Hindús to the holy city of Banaras to be cremated—"fitting conclusion to a life which had made fragrant the most beautiful doctrines of two great creeds."

LEGENDS OF KABIR'S BIRTH

However, although in none of the sources of Kabir's life that we have discussed is any account given as to the manner of his birth, yet numerous legends are in existence which relate to his birth. These legends have been recorded in the National Biography Series of India. Although these legends are often conflicting, yet they are very interesting and they supply such information as is not available in history. Let
us consider them:

The first legend relates that one day a Brāhmin, accompanied by his widowed daughter, went to visit Śwāmī Rāmānanda. The lady did her obeisance to the saint and, not being aware of her widowed state, the latter said: "May you be blessed with a son!" What a holy man had said must be, and in due course the virgin widow was delivered of a boy, whom, for fear of scandal, she threw into the pond at Lahartara. According to another version of this story, there is no mention of the name of Rāmānanda, instead, it says, "a Brāhmin widow who went with her father on a pilgrimage to the shrine of a famous ascetic." In the third version of this legend an element of miracle has been added. It says that when Śwāmī Rāmānanda discovered that the lady was a widow he said to her: "My daughter what I have said cannot be otherwise. But no blemish shall attach to your name and the son you will bear will be a great saint;" and the saint would arrange that the birth should not be after the usual manner. The lady is then said to have developed a blister on her palm which grew and grew and when it burst a live lump of flesh came out of it which immediately assumed the form of a human infant.

This part of the legend enables the Hindū section of the Kabirpanthis to explain the name Kabir as a corruption of "Kar-Bīr" or "Karavir" (the hero born from the palm of his Brāhmin mother). But Keay dismisses this etymology as fanciful. At any rate, the point sought to be proved here is that Kabir was not born of a woman. The other point to note in this
three-version-legend is that no mention of the place where the lady visited the saint has been made. However, when the baby was born, she placed it on a lotus-flower in the Lahr Talab (tank or pond or lake), not far from Banaras, where it was found by a Muslim weaver-couple, Nīrū or Nīrū 'Alī, and his wife, Nīma. They took him home and brought up as their son.

Another account of Kabīr's birth is more poetical in character and elaborate. It says that Kabīr descended from heaven to earth:

The lotus flower was blooming in the place where Kabīr was born. The bees were tired of humming. Peacocks, larks and other kinds of birds in their flight passed circling round the tank. Thunder and lightning were in the air when Kabīr became manifest in the heart of a lotus flower, in the midst of the Lahr Tank. A feeling of thirst overcome Nīma, the newly wedded wife of Nīrū, the weaver, as after the marriage ceremony she was making her way to her husband's house. She approached the tank but was much afraid when she there beheld the child. She thought in her heart 'this is probably the living evidence of the shame of some virgin widow.' Nīrū suggested that they might take the child to their house, but Nīma at first hesitated, thinking that such action might give rise to scandal. Women would ask, 'who is the mother of a child so beautiful that its eyes are like the lotus?' However, laying aside all fears, they took pity on the child. On approaching the house, they were welcomed with the songs of women, but when the women saw the child, dark thoughts arose in their hearts and they began to ask, 'How has she got this child?' Nīma replied that she had got the child without giving birth to it and the women then refrained from asking further questions.

Still another legend is even more interesting. It says that once when Viṣṇu was consorting with Lakshmi he abruptly left her presence. When he returned after a while, he explained to Lakshmi that one of his devotees, who was in trouble, had called and he had to go to the rescue. Could there be a
greater devotee than herself, Lakshmi asked? Of course, there were several, replied Viṣṇu. Lakṣmi was hurt and she decided to test the devotee who was the cause of her recent discomfort. Assuming the guise of a gardener’s woman, she created the illusion of a beautiful garden at a spot by which the devotee, Śwāmī Rāmānanda, would pass. The Śwāmī had hardly entered the garden and picked a flower or two for his pūja when Lakṣmi stopped him, "You are stealing flowers, sir." He flung the flowers at her and went his way. When he looked back, the enchantment had vanished. Lakṣmi on her part was pleased that she had caught the devotee stealing. Back at Vaikuntha, she narrated the incident to Viṣṇu and wishing to produce the flowers for Viṣṇu to inspect she looked into the folds of her dress. But lo and behold! there were no flowers there: only a handsome baby. "What is this?" Viṣṇu asked. His spouse was confused. She accepted defeat. "It is all right," Viṣṇu reassured her. "Take the baby back to where you found it. He will be a great devotee of mine." Lakṣmi went and left the baby on a lotus leaf in the pond at Lahartara. This baby was Kabir.

Last, but not the least, another legend says that Kabir was the incarnation of the sage Śūkadeva. God Śiva bade Śūkadeva appear in the world for the good of men. Since the sage had already in a former birth suffered the pain of a foetal existence for no less than twelve years he was not keen to go through the experience a second time. So he enclosed himself in a shell and let it be cast into the Ganges. The current carried the shell to the Lahar Talao and there opened
on a lotus leaf, a baby coming out of it. This baby was Kabir.

These and similar stories evidently gained currency long after the death of Kabir, for they all contain elements based on free imagination. Most of the legends relating to Kabir's birth and upbringing are found in a Hindi pamphlet entitled *Kabir Kasauti*, Bombay, 1885. This pamphlet is the joint production of five members of the Kabirpanth, and based upon information gathered both from books and oral tradition. The stories featuring Visnu, Siva, Lakshmi and Sukadeva are obviously based on puranic pattern, even though the names of Visnu and Siva have been attached to unappropriate stories. The first legend may have some basis in fact. Lahar Talab invariably appears in all stories. Wilson tells us that some followers of Kabir do not admit any story about Kabir's birth except what is reported in the *Bhakta Malah*. According to this legend, the child, who was no other than the incarnate deity, was found, floating on a lotus in Lahar Talab, by the wife of a weaver, named Nima. Tiwari informs us that the followers of Kabir (that is, some of them) do not believe in any legends we have discussed above. They believe, according to Tiwari, that Kabir was not of woman born, that he, being part manifestation (aansa) of Sat Purusa (Tru Being), is not subject to birth and death but brings himself forth whenever there is need. They believe, Tiwari tells us further, that there had already been thirteen incarnations of Kabir during the preceding three Yugas. For the fourteenth time, in Kali Yuga, the Divine Light of Sat Purusa descended on the full moon day of Jyeshtha (second month according to Bengali calendar).
in the year 1455 of the Vikrama era, at Lahar Talab near Kāśi (Banares or Varanāsī). A certain Ashtanand Vaiśnav was present at the pond on the occasion. "There was a gentle drizzle from a clouded sky. Every now and then flashes of lightning illumined the soft dark prospect, revealing flowers in bloom over which beetles droned." When Ashtanand saw that "Divine Being" he was dazzled and dazed. He reported the miracle to his guru, Rāmananda, who said, "You will hear more about the One whose sight has blessed you today. His name will soon resound everywhere." "This Divine Light turned itself into an infant and a lotus leaf became its bed. It was this infant that Nīma found."

These legends are surely based on Kabīrpanthis' beliefs and conviction. We may not argue against such beliefs whose basis is faith. Such convictions have their place and religious value. However, sometimes they are carried too far. And in these stories there is a good deal that commonsense and history will not readily accept.

Putting together all these legendary stories, we may say nothing definite is known concerning either the parentage of Kabīr or his place of birth. Lahar Talab occurs in most of the stories but not that that was his birthplace. He was only found there. According to the Benares Gazetteer, Kabīr was born at Belhara, a village in the district of ‘Azamgarh. It is asserted that Belhara in course of time became "Lahartara" through linguistic distortion. But the investigations made by Dr. Tiwārī did not produce any clue as to the exact location
of Belhara nor as to how it became transferred from ‘Azamgahr to Banaras. Yet others believe that Kabir was born at Maghar. They produce the following doha of Kabir in evidence:

The first view of the world at Maghar I had, then came to settle at Kashi. 83

But the difficulty here is that the authenticity of this and many similar couplets has not been established, and it can be said that a number of them are not genuine. As such they cannot be accepted as valid materials for historical evidence. All that can be said with any degree of certitude is that Kabir was found in the Lahar Talab by a Muslim weaver-couple, Niru and Nima who brought him up, and they all lived in Banaras. As regards the rest of the stories, their legendary character is clear. Ramananda may not have anything to do with the birth of Kabir. Apparently, it was the desire of the Kabirpanthis, probably of the Hindu section in particular, who wanted to raise a halo round the head of their spiritual preceptor, and to explain his Hindu origin, coined the story instead of saying what could have happened in actuality. Undoubtedly, it would appear that a certain woman, who gave birth to an illegitimate son, in order to save her face in the society, abandoned the baby in an uninhabited place. This is not an uncommon phenomenon in the society of the Indian sub-continent.

Then, although the legend mentions a Brahmin widow, there is nothing unusual in supposing her to be a Muslim woman as well. Hence S. N. Dasgupta says, "Kabir (1440-1518) was an abandoned child, probably because of the illegitimacy of his birth." 84 M. A. Macauliffe is in full agreement with this view.

LEGEND OF KABIR’S MANKING

Like the legends of Kabir's birth, there is a legend
about his being named Kabir. It is stated that Niru and Nima returned to their home at Kabir Chaura or called by some as Nirutalla in the city of Banares with the child. And when the time came to name the baby, Niru Ali called the Qadi (Muslim religious functionary), who opened the Qur'an to find a name. He found the name Kabir, which means "great" and is used as an attribute of God. Again and again, the Qur'an was consulted and every time the names that turned up were attributes of God, such as Akbar, Kubra and Kibriya. Other Mawlawis were called, but to their astonishment, a few times they found in the Qur'an Kabir. It was impossible, they all agreed, that a title of such dignity should be given as a name to a weaver's child. Since the Mullahs were not willing to give this name to a human child, it is said they advised Niru to destroy the child. The legend has it that when Niru, in obedience to the priestly command, "struck the child with his sword" the blow had no effect on him. Niru, seeing this, was terrified, but the child uttered the following verse:

I have come from an unknown place.
Maya has deceived the world; no one knows me.
I was not born of a woman, but manifested as a boy.
My dwelling was in a lonely spot nigh to Kasi,
and the weaver found me.
I contain neither heaven (air) nor earth,
but wisdom only.
I have come to this earth in spiritual form
and of spiritual significance is my name.
I have neither bones nor blood nor skin.
I reveal to man the shabda (word; this concept of Kabir will be dealt with later).
My body is eternal.
I am the highest being.
These are the words of Kabir who is indestructible.

However, they ended up by giving the child the name Kabir.

The veracity of the story may well be questioned on
various grounds. Firstly, the legend has different versions. Secondly, in one version instead of "sword" the term "knife" occurs. Although the function of both sword and knife is the same, yet it would appear improbable that a poor weaver like Siri could have owned a sword. Thirdly, the occasion of the alleged saying of Kabir has been given differently. According to Macauliffe, when Kabir reached an age to understand the nature of the doubts cast on his birth, he composed the above quoted verse. Finally, no such parallel verse is found in the Bija. It is very important to remember that the Bija, which is accepted as more authentic than other sources, does not contain any verse pertaining to the circumstances of Kabir's birth and his being named Kabir. It would be quite unusual to suppose that such important incidents of Kabir's life would not be known to all Kabirpanthis. Moreover, in the Bija we have evidence to the effect that Kabir never spoke of him as one divine and superior being. In fact, he criticised the Brâhmans and the Muliaths for their posing as superior beings, as we shall see in the next chapter.

From the very nature of the above story, its historicity can be doubted. It appears to be a spurious story told by Kabir's followers, most probably the Muslim section, at a later time who wanted to glorify and sanctify their spiritual preceptor. Apparently, the foundation of the whole legend is the name "Kabir". It must be emphasised that "Kabir" has not been a unique or uncommon name in Indian society at any time. We have references to other people named Kabir who lived in India at varying dates. Westcott gives eleven references to
the name Kabir in several historical works ascribed to different kinds of holy men, lived at different dates. And oriental biographical dictionaries also record many people named Kabir. Moreover, it is a well-established Muslim custom to have an infant named by a religious person. The main object behind this tradition seems to have been a desire to have the child blessed by a kavlawi. But there is no such custom that the name should be found in the Qur'an. The Qur'an is not an index of names from which one can easily select names suitable for us. Furthermore, it is incredible that the Mullahs, time and again found in the Qur'an the four names, viz., Kabir, Akbar, Kubra and Kibriya, whereas there are ninety-nine such attributes of God in the Qur'an. Still more, it is difficult to believe that the Mullahs, who are religious persons should ask Miru to kill the baby. In spite of their somewhat more liberal attitudes in modern times, they are still opposed to even birth control. Finally, in the authentic sources, we have no evidence that Kabir ever laid claim to divinity and powers of miracles for himself. What is more interesting is the fact that, unlike many bhaktas, he refused to give any divine status even to guru (cf. infra, p. 260). These are some of the features of his teaching for which Kabir is seen as different from both Sufis and bhaktas.

Hence it may be asserted that the legend of Kabir's naming is a creation of his Muslim followers who lived after him, designed to glorify their Pir. At any rate, it is not a peculiar phenomenon in the case of Kabir, it is almost a universal part of the mystical tradition that after the death of a
saint his disciples coin all kinds of imaginary fables with the intention of sanctifying and glorifying their deceased preceptor whose blessings they seek.

**Problem of Kabir's Date**

Before we go into the early life of Kabir, we must deal with the problem of his date, which is very important. The difficulties in determining the dates of Kabir can be diminished by taking into consideration all historical dates related to Kabir's life. According to one school of Kabirpanthis, Kabir was present in the world three hundred years, or from 1149-1149. In an alleged saying of Kabir, mention is made of two saint-poets, Jaydev and Namdev, as gurus of Kabir. The former lived in the twelfth century and the latter in the thirteenth century. According to another tradition, Kabir was born when the year 1455 of the Vikram era (corresponding to 1398 A.D.) was past, on Monday, full moon day of Jyeshtha, on which date also fell the Vat Savitri festival. Some followers of Kabir, according to Dr. Tiwari, still continue to celebrate Kabir's birthday on the Vat Savitri day every year. But some people think, Tiwari tells us, that Kabir was born 25 or 30 years earlier. Those who maintain that Kabir was born at Belhara do not mention any specific date. Mawlavi Shulam Sarwar gives 1594 as the year of Kabir's death, but does not give the year of his birth (cf. supra, p. 166). Abu'l Fadl in his A'in-i-Akbari, written in 1596, makes reference to Kabir as one of the holy men but no longer living. The Kabirpanthi school which holds that Kabir was born in 1398 also maintains that he died in 1518. The former is rejected by all on the ground that that date has been given in order to make Kabir contem-
eraneous with Rāmānanda (b. 1299?) who is supposed to have lived in the fourteenth century. The former is commonly believed to have been the disciple of the latter, whose dates, however, have been tentatively fixed by Farquhar and others as 1400–1470. And, according to them, Rāmānanda came to Banares as a religious reformer in 1430. If, therefore, Kabir was born in 1440, as has been suggested by many, and became the disciple of Rāmānanda about 1455, this would fit in well with the circumstances of his life. Kabir is also believed to have been a contemporary of Guru Nānak, who lived from 1469 to 1538. He is said to have been 27 years of age when he met Kabir; and the year of their meeting has been suggested 1496. Kabir is also believed to have been a contemporary of Sultan Sikandar Lūdī who reigned from 1489 to 1517. And according to The Cambridge History of India, the Sultan visited Banares sometime between 1494 to 1496 (his relation with Kabir will be dealt with later). Since these dates are very close to one another, they seem to enable us to fix Kabir’s dates approximately 1440 to 1518, albeit all that can be said with some degree of confidence is that he lived in the fifteenth century.

**Kabir’s Early Life**

Like his birth and naming, concerning Kabir’s early life also similar stories are told. In these legends he is said to have performed many miracles even when he was only a baby. According to one tale, Kabir spoke in Hindi in his childhood, and told the people that on account of Nima’s kindness to him in a previous birth, he had come to their house, and he would deliver them from transmigration. In another story it is said that Kabir grew up without taking any nourishment. When
his foster parents saw that he ate nothing they were worried. Yielding to their persuasion, Kabir agreed to take milk.

This milk was obtained not in the usual manner, rather, an earthen jar was placed under the udder of an uncailed heifer, and Kabir looked at the animal thinking of milk. This induced lactation in the heifer and the jar was quickly filled. "Milk obtained thus alone would Kabir drink."

These legends have their basis in faith. The first story appears to have been designed to parallel Kabir with Jesus who is said to have spoken in his childhood. The followers of Kabir who have coined the story must have been familiar with the life history of Jesus. The other story has been made to heighten the spiritual genius of Kabir. It gives the impression that Kabir was a saint by birth. We have no intention of arguing that there has never been any person who showed signs of high spiritual quality and played miracles even as a child. But in the case of Kabir, we have specific evidence in his own sayings that he was not a miracle worker, nor did he like those who lay claim to miracles. However, stories of miracles ascribed to Kabir are but pious fabrications of his faithful disciples, who themselves probably worked miracles.

As regards Kabir's education, the circumstances of his upbringing in a poor Muslim weaver's family make it quite understandable that he did not have any formal education. His speech was a local dialect to which allusion has already been made. Nevertheless, he does not appear to have been apathetic to learning. In one place he says:
I know that reading is good but better than reading is meditation (jog) (Graoth, Slok. 145).

Kabir's aim was not scholarship or philosophy; it was the knowledge of God, and of the things of God, which he sought after with all his heart and mind. He was neither able nor interested in learning of the schools. A well-known proverb says: "What the theologians learn from books, the saints learn it from their hearts."

Now, let us turn to some important events of Kabir's life. Although in Dr. Underhill's sketch of Kabir's life slight reference has been made of most of these events, still they need detail historical explanations. In passing, it may be mentioned that it is almost impossible to fix any chronological order of events in Kabir's life. In such a situation we will try to describe them in a reasonable chronological order which will be based on our knowledge of a normal life in the society of the Indian sub-continent. Secondly, in every event of his life, almost invariably there is an element of his teaching; one way or the other. In our study of his teaching in the next chapter the events touched upon here will not be repeated.

KABIR REPUDIATES CIRCUMCISION

According to Muslim custom and tradition, a boy is circumcised at the age of 5 or 6. This time limit has not been ordained by the Qur'an, though there are hadith (Muhammad's sayings) which show that that was the practice in early Islam. When Kabir reached that age he was to be circumcised, and a khalifa was called. But Kabir exhibited such strange portents that the Khalifa was terrified. On this occasion Kabir is said
to have uttered the following verses:

Vain-glorious of authority, you make me to be circumcised; never will I endure it, brother!
If it is God that makes thee to be circumcised, why came not this cutting of itself?
If by circumcision one becomes Turk, what then will be said to your women?
Half the body, so the wife is styled; then you still remain Hindu!
By putting on the sacred thread, does one become a Brähmin?
What has thou given to women to wear?
She from birth is but a Sudrá.
Why dost thou eat the food she brings, O Pandit? (Bijak, Sabda 84).

It is evident in the above poem that in denouncing religious symbols and rites, Kabir showed favour neither to Hindus nor to Muslims. His criticism of each of them is equally severe and categorical. The rites and practices which constitute the two forms of worship—Hinduism and Islam—appeared to him equally useless; it is in the heart that the true faith resides, Kabir insisted. One interesting feature of his sayings is that though he starts denouncing any particular rite of one religion, he quickly links it with a similar aspect of the other religion, thus maintaining balance by criticising both the religions simultaneously. His equal denunciation of the Muslim rite of circumcision and Hindu rite of putting on the sacred thread is an example in point.

We are told that as a boy, Kabir offended both Hindu and the Muslim playmates by crying "Rām, Rām" and "Hari, Hari." (Muslims called him a kāfir (unbeliever). To this accusation he replied saying that only an evil doer was a kāfir. We are also told that one day he put a tilak on his forehead and put a thread round his neck and cried "Narāin, Narāin." This action
roused the anger of the Brāhmīns, for it was a sacrilege committed by a low caste "Muslim". To their protest, Kabīr retorted: "Being a weaver, I wear a thread. You wear the sacred thread, and repeat the Gyatri and Gitā daily, but Govinda dwells in my heart.... You are Brāhmīns, I am a weaver of Benares....

You daily search after an earthly king,

While I am contemplating Hari."

The Hindūs taunted Kabīr with being a Nirgura (one without the guidance of a guru, in other words spiritual preceptor). It is said that to overcome this shortcoming, he was determined to seek out some guru. But no chances appeared quickly.

It is stated that in his boyhood, one day he found a cow that was slaughtered by a Mullān. Kabīr objected to it strongly for which the Brāhmīns felt delighted. On this occasion he uttered the following verses in which, of course, he did not spare either Muslims or Hindūs:

O Saints (holy men)! I have seen the way of both. Hindus and Turks heed no warning; to all the taste of their desires is sweet. Hindūs keep fast on Ekādasi (the eleventh day of the half-month, observed as a fast), they eat only singhārās (water chestnuts) and milk. They abstain from grain, but do not check the mind's desire; next day they eat the flesh of beasts. Turks keep fast and hours of prayer; they cry aloud on the name of God [adhān]. How will they find Paradise? When evening comes they slaughter fowls. Hindu and Turk, each has renounced his mercy in his heart. One kills by ḫalāl (the Muslim legal formula of slaughter), an animal; one kills by ḥatakā (Hindū method of killing an animal); but fire is kindled in both their houses.
For Hindū and for Turk there is one path; so the Sat Guru (True Teacher) has taught; Says Kabir, Listen, O Sants: Cry 'Rāma'; cry 'Khuda' (Persian and Urdu name for God)—it is all one! (Bījak, Sabda 10).

As we see in these verses, Kabir started talking about the slaughtering of animals, particularly the cow, which he denounced. From there he passed over to other Hindū and Muslim religious observances such as fasting, prayer, etc. Finally, he has given us his conception of one God. It is clear that to Kabir use of different names for God matters little; it is the One God. This attitude on the part of Kabir is exactly in the vein of the mystics. The verses also show that Kabir's expression of ideas is not systematic, and all his poems are distinguished by this particular characteristic.

At this stage we have information about five or six important events of his life, namely, his marriage and domestic life; his association with Hindū saints, especially with Rāmananda; his association with the Sufis, particularly with Shaykh Taqi; his confrontation with Sultan Sikandar Lūdhi and, finally, his death. Although it is difficult to fix any chronological order for these events, as we have indicated before, we propose to describe them in the same sequence as they are mentioned here, so that the secular and spiritual aspects of his life can be discussed separately though they are not mutually exclusive.

KABIR'S FAMILY LIFE

The question whether Kabir was married or not has been hotly disputed, at first among his Muslim and Hindū disciples, and then among the modern writers. We cannot answer this
question with absolute certainty, but the evidence appears to show that he was a married man. For the Muslims there is no problem in regarding him as a married man; for most of the Sufis are married; and celibacy is not encouraged by Islam. But the Hindús, who are wont to see that an ascetic and celibate life has greater value than a domestic one, have tried to explain the circumstances in a way that show that Kabir was unmarried. Thus, while the Muslim tradition regards Loi as his wife, and Kamál and Kamálí his son and daughter respectively, the Hindu tradition considers the latter two as his disciples as well as the first-named who, it argues, was also his disciple having learnt his profession of weaving by frequently visiting his home. This suggestion about Loi has been rejected by some on two grounds: firstly, that it would be unlikely for a woman disciple to adopt the guru's profession; secondly, that in the society of the Indian subcontinent a woman, disciple or not, usually would not live in a man's house unless married to him. However, there are two poems which show clearly that Kabir was married and had children.

In the first of these, Loi, being anxious, like Kabir's mother, at the neglect of his weaving and also at his constant entertainment of the saints, addresses him thus:

Thy threads are broken, thy size is at an end,
Thy reeds shine over the door,
Thy poor brush hath gone to pieces,
May death light on this shaven fellow's head!
This shaven fellow hath lost all his property.
I am persecuted by those sādhus coming and going.
Kabir now never speaketh of his beam or shuttle;
His mind is only concerned with the name of God.
His daughter and son[sic] have nothing to eat;
Knights with shaven heads are crammed in; night and day;
One or two are in the house, and one or two are on the way.
We have only a pallet [on the ground]; they get a bed [to sleep on].

We get parched pulse, they have bread [to eat].
These shaven-heads and my shaven-headed [husband] have become all one.

To this complaint Kabir replied thus:

These shaven-heads are the support of the drowning.
Hear, O blind misguided Loi!
Kabir hath taken the protection of these shaven-heads (Adi-Granth, Gaund 6).

At any rate, the circumstances under which Kabir married Loi are told in great details in Kabir Kasauti. The legend says that at the age of thirty Kabir met Loi, aged about twenty, in the cottage of a Bankhandi-Bairagi (ascetic who lived in the jungle), that home was on the bank of the Ganges. To her questions as to who he was, what was his caste and sect, Kabir replied: "Kabir". The legend is interpreted as meaning that Kabir did not like the idea that there can be any distinction between man and man on the grounds of caste and sect. In other words, Kabir maintained that there is one God, one human race, therefore, one religion. The girl, however, was charmed by Kabir's spiritual quality, Kabir took Loi home, and his mother, Nima, thinking that her son brought a wife, accepted her as Kabir's wife.

According to another account, Kabir had two wives; one homely, the other pretty. The second wife was called Dhania or Rani (Ania, Adi-32, 33). As the latter name is also used euphemistically for dancing girls, some suggest that this second consort was probably a courtesan. But since no tradition supports his second marriage, Adi-32 is explained as Kabir's spiritual achievement which is contrasted with the
unhappiness of his married life. The Kabirpanthis do not accept the thesis of a second marriage of Kabir. In fact, they resent it.

According to some legends, Kabir's son Kamal and his daughter Kamali were not his actual offspring but children he found dead on two different occasions whom he raised to life and adopted as son and daughter. It is also said that both of them worked with him at the loom.

Apparently these legends are told by those disciples of Kabir, probably the Muslims, who wanted to raise a halo round the head of their pir by attributing to him the working of miracles; otherwise, we find no difficulty in accepting the idea of Kabir as the father of some children since he seems to have been married.

All modern writers on Kabir are in full agreement that he was a householder, who earned his livelihood at the spinning wheel which did not interfere in his devotion. In other words, although Kabir was a householder, yet he found opportunities for meditation. It is in the spirit of the Sufi tradition that family life is not incompatible with spiritual life.

As regards Kabir's domestic life, we are told that he continued to live with his foster parents and followed his profession as a weaver. But his avid interest in religion and religious men sometimes led him to neglect his business, for which his wife rebuked him, as we have noticed before. Like his wife, his mother also seems to have reproached him for-
his neglect of his trade. She seems to have complained to other relatives. The following verses are attributed to her:

Thou art always rising early and bringing fresh utensils; thy life hath gone in plastering; cooking squares; Thou hast no attention to thy weaving; thou art engrossed in the pleasure of saying 'God, God'. Who in our family hath ever uttered the name of Rām? Since this worthless son of ours began to wear a rosary, we have no peace.

Hear, wife of my eldest brother-in-law; hear, wife of my youngest brother-in-law; a wonderful thing hath occurred! This boy hath ruined our weaving business; why is he not dead?

Kabir replied to his mother:

The one God is the Lord of all happiness; the guru hath granted me His name.

He preserved the honour of the saint Prahlād, and destroyed Harṇakhaś with Jarshā's nails.

Prahlād abandoned the gods and ancestors of his house, and embraced the instruction of his guru Nārada.

Smith Kabir, God is the destroyer of all sin; He saveth His saints.

Since as a legend has it that Kabir was the adopted son of Muslim parents—his real parents may have been Hindus—it is quite understandable that he showed unusual inclination towards Hindūism. He uttered Hindū words for expressing his religious ideas and pronounced Rāma as God. This must have shocked his parents who expressed their resentment. As an adopted son of a Muslim parents, they would naturally have liked to see him professing their religion, i.e., Islām. But, fortunately, or unfortunately, Kabir did not have any aptitude for any organised religion. His was a religion of one God, which was above all categories. Thus his religious views must have disappointed his Muslim foster parents. And it seems that Kabir himself regretted the matter that people, particularly
members of his family, misunderstood him or did not understand him at all. Thus when Kabir says, "Kabir has died by the faults of the world, walking in obsequiousness to the family" (Adi-Granth, Sloka 166), he seems to give expression to his sorrow at being misrepresented and persecuted by the Hindus and the Muslims alike.

However, Kabir does not seem to have been unaware of the fact that his too great an involvement in matters of religion, such as meeting the saints, entertaining them, conversing with them, and personal devotion (bhakti) to God, led him to be unattentive to his business, the only source of his family's livelihood. But Kabir, believing that he was acting in accordance with the wish of God, affirms his dependence on God and hopes to get the needs of himself and his family met. Hence he says:

O thou compassionate to the poor, I trust in Thee!  
All my family I have put into the boat (Adi-Granth, Gauri 61)

Still there is another verse in which Kabir's mother appears to have asked him to give attention to his own business and leave religious matters to Brahmins and Mullahs. To this Kabir replied:

While the thread was passing through the bobbin,  
I forgot my beloved God.  
My understanding is mean, my caste is that of weaver;  
But I have gained the name of God as my profit.  
Saith Kabir, Hear, O mother! 115  
The One God will provide for us and them.

This attitude on the part of Kabir is exactly in line with Sufi tradition which holds it to be a form of piety to be dependent on God (tawakkul 'alâ Allah) for provision instead of struggling for it. Although the Sufis were householders,
yet they disliked hoarding of money or possessing great wealth which they considered as a hindrance to spiritual progress. Kabir seems to have maintained this Sufi tradition perfectly. At a time when he was hard-pressed for the simple necessities of life, he prayed to God for help. Such prayers are cited in all literature.

KABIR'S RELATION WITH HINDUISM

Turning to the subject of Kabir's relation with Hinduism, and its influence on him, we see there has been a good deal of speculation as to how Kabir, being a Muslim at least by upbringing, could have grown up with such strong Hindu leanings. His inclinations towards Hinduism and his intimate knowledge of it, led writers like Wilson and Bhandarkar to consider him a Hindu. But there is no evidence to support this thesis, as we have noted before. However, we can explain his relation with Hinduism by other means.

Firstly, in the story of his birth, mention is made of a certain Gosain Astānanda, a Hindu saint of Banaras, who is said to have been a disciple of Rāmānanda. One legend says that Gosain witnessed the scene of Kabir's exposure by his Brāhmin mother at Lahar Talab, and, consequently, the saint might have followed the child's destination to Mirū's house and taught him Hindu ideas as opportunities offered. Ahmad Shāh suggests that if Kabir were a Hindu widow's son of illegitimate birth, Gosain may have been the real father. That may be, but we have no evidence to support it. Gosain's name is never mentioned in the Bījak or in the Granth. Nonetheless, Kabir appears to have had regular intercourse at his
home with a number of saints; Gosain may be only one of them from whom Kabir got his acquaintance with Hinduism.

Beside this possibility, Kabir's familiarity with Hinduism can be explained otherwise. All traditions agree that he was born and brought up in Benares and lived his whole life there. During the medieval period, particularly the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, there was a great upsurge of bhakti movements all over India in which the Hindu and Muslim saints, coming together in an atmosphere of harmony and concord, reached what is called the climax of Indian spiritual tradition. During that period of interaction and assimilation between the two systems, the saints used to assemble in important places, like Benares, for religious discussions. We are told that in Benares Ramananda had regular disputations with Hindu and Muslim saints.

Benares being the holiest of all places for Hinduism, Hindu pilgrims from all over the country would gather there occasionally. This venerable city with its shrines and temples, and those stately bathing ghats leading down to the Ganges, and its throngs of mendicants—Hindu and Muslim—, devotees and bhaktas could not but make a deep impression on a thoughtful boy like Kabir, who from his very boyhood had given expression to his religious feelings. Here in this city, one would meet with new people and new ideas. For Kabir, living in Benares enabled him to meet with various people who helped form his ideas. Being a weaver's son, from a class of poor people, it is not surprising that Kabir had not had any formal
schooling. Notwithstanding the economic handicap, Kabir does not seem to have been devoid of intelligence of a high order. His interests in matters of religion must have energised him to acquire whatever religious knowledge he could from those with whom he came in contact. There was a spiritual hunger in him; he was a seeker after truth from his boyhood. His quest for divine knowledge would not be satisfied without diving deep for it.

Apart from this general religious atmosphere that prevailed in Banaras, where the Hindu and Muslim religious personalities had regular spiritual intercourse, there was at that time a luminary whose glamour seized the religious consciousness of many. It was Ramana, the great bhakt, at the height of his fame, who was teaching a way of salvation based on bhakti as against the ceremonialism of orthodox Hinduism and Islam. It is not at all surprising if Kabir, with such a strong inclination towards religion, was captivated and longed to become a disciple.

However, all traditions agree that Kabir became a disciple of Ramana; and all these sources have uniformly narrated the method that Kabir adopted to obtain the discipleship. In these accounts it is mentioned that Ramana was not willing to accept Kabir as his disciple for he was a Muslim and a low caste. It needs some explanation, for even before Ramana there were cases where a Sufi or a Hindu saint had both Hindu and Muslim disciples; and those saints were venerated by the Hindus and the Muslims equally. Secondly, Ramana
himself had disciples from all castes. Then how does one explain his opposition to Kabir. If the story of opposition were true, it can be explained only by holding that Kabir was probably the first Muslim and low-caste person to become Ramananda's disciple. The name of Ramananda is mentioned once in the Bija, namely, Sabda 77: "Ramananda drank deep of the juice of Rama; says Kabir: I am weary with repeating this."

In Tagore's One Hundred Poems of Kabir, it is stated, "I became suddenly revealed in Benares, and Ramananda illumined me" (no. 29, LL 19-20)

But the issue of discipleship became a matter of clamour for both Hindus and the Muslims. Ramananda, however, calmed it by publicly declaring his acceptance of Kabir as his disciple. From the time of initiation, Kabir is said to have regularly visited his guru and, as time passed, to have taken part in religious disputations with distinguished personalities who came to deliberate with his guru. Through these discussions and Ramananda's instructions, Kabir gained a considerable knowledge of Hinduism.

Kabir's Relation with Islam

As regard Kabir's relation with Islam, it can be safely concluded that he was an adopted son of a Muslim weaver, Niru or Nur Ali, as all accounts concur. There was nothing wrong on the part of a Muslim family adopting a luqta (found child) with or without knowledge of its origin. According to Islamic tradition, all children are born pure and free from all defilement. However, there are some writers who are willing to accept Kabir as a Muslim by birth, and a Sufi without making
any reference to the traditional story of his birth. Thus one writer concludes, "The right conclusion seems to be that Kabir was a Muslim Sufi who, having come under Ramananda's influence, accepted some Hindu ideas and tried to reconcile Hinduism and Islam. However it was the Hindus, and particularly those of the lower classes, to whom his message appealed." But still we feel reluctant to agree with them, for the other tradition is much stronger and has obtained almost unanimous support.

Now, as a member of a poor Muslim weaving family, we cannot expect Kabir to have had any early religious education. It is clear that Kabir did not have any religious education either at home or at any school. On the other hand, it is also fairly clear that he did not show any desire to attach himself to any organised religion. He was brought up in a Muslim family; nonetheless, he had little to do with that Islam which was professed by his family. What the theologians learned from the Qur'an and other books, Kabir, being mystically oriented, learned from his personal experience, that is, from his heart. Thus one writer says, "It is plain, however, that the mystic Islam of the Sufis laid hold of him, whether he ever lived the Muhammadan life or not."

Kabir, then, seems to have come into close touch with Sufism. We need not here explain what Sufism is, for we have dealt with this subject: its nature and doctrines, and its difference from orthodox Islam, in some detail in a previous chapter. As to who the Sufis were with whom Kabir came in contact, and
whose influence went to form his ideas it is difficult to point to any one clearly with the exception of Shaykh Taqī.

Shaykh Taqī's name is mentioned in many places. We find it in the story relating to Kabīr's son, Kamāl. In the Bijāk, Ramānī 48 and 63 mention Shaykh Taqī's name; the latter is usually interpreted thus: "Kabīr settled for a while in Manikpūr having heard the praises of Shaykh Taqī. He heard also about Uji in the district of Jaunpūr. At Jhusī he heard the names of his Pīrs (i.e. Shaykh Taqī and his father Shaybān-ūl-Mīllat)."

However, the exact relationship of Kabīr with Shaykh Taqī is somewhat obscure. In the Hindū legends, he is generally presented as the enemy and persecutor of Kabīr; he appears to have been jealous of Kabīr, for he thought the latter was replacing himself in the favour of the Sūltān Sikandar Lūdhi. On the other hand, Muslim tradition claims that Shaykh Taqī was a Pīr of Kabīr, who is said to have been a young man of about thirty years when he first met the former. It is further stated that Kabīr besought the Shaykh to bestow upon him a blessing that would give him power to remove those differences of belief which separated Hindūs from Muslims. Though the Shaykh regretted this, yet he said that he would like to see that both Muslims and Hindūs regarded Kabīr with reverence. Moreover, Kabīr's son, Kamāl, also considered the Shaykh as his Pīr.

The elaborate legends say that it was Shaykh Taqī who voiced the feelings of Muslims against Kabīr's ideas, and
accused him before Sultān Sikandar Lūdhi for laying claim to divinity. Westcott appears to have given much attention to the problem of Kabīr's relation to Shāykh Taqī. According to his findings, there were two Shaykh Tāqīs: the one was of Manikpūr Kāra in the Fatehpūr district, a cotton cleaner by profession and belonged to the Chishti order of Sūfīs, and his descendants are still to be found in that district. He died in 1545. Since Kabīr seems to have lived at Manikpūr for sometime, argues Westcott, it was not impossible for him to have met this Shāykh Tāqī. Apparently, this Shāykh Tāqī has been mentioned in the Khażīnát-ull-Asfīyā. According to this book, Shāykh Tāqī was a weaver and died in 1574, when he was succeeded by Shāykh Kabīr, the weaver.

The date of the death of the Shāykh in the two above accounts is given differently. This cannot be accounted for unless an editorial mistake is acknowledged. Secondly, in the account of the Khażīnát-ull-Asfīyā, the mention of Kabīr's succession to Shāykh Tāqī is probably a traditional way of describing the relationship between two Sūfīs; otherwise, we have no other evidence to support the view that Kabīr belonged to an organised order of Indian Sūfīsm.

The other Shāykh Tāqī, son of Sha‘ban-ul-Millat, lived in Jhusī, and belonged to the Suhrawardiya order of Indian Sūfīsm. He is said to have died in 1429. Although Westcott suggests that it would seem that Kabīr was more closely associated with this Shāykh Tāqī, we are not in a position to agree with this contention unless his date of death, 1429,
is recognised as a mistake. We have accepted Kabir's date of birth 1440. Kabir may have met one of the successors in office of this Shaykh Taqi. As regards the Ramaini which refers to this Shaykh, it seems to have been only a speculation made by Westcott, for in the text only the word "pirs" is mentioned without reference to any specific name.

It appears that Kabir was associated with a Sufi named Shaykh Taqi most probably of Manikpur Kara, or both Kara and Jhusi. In addition to him, or them, Kabir seems to have been associated with other Sufis. In the Ramaini 48, it is said that he heard of twenty-one pirs in all. In this connection, the names of Shaykh Aqardi and Shaykh Saqardi, most probably two brothers, have been mentioned. They are said to have been the caretakers of the shrine of Shaykh Taqi. Such relationship of Kabir with Sufis, and the Sufistic nature of his teaching, prompted writers like R. D. Ranade to construe Kabir as the greatest of the mystics.

Besides these individual Hindu and Muslim saints that have been specified above, Kabir seems to have been associated with a host of saints for whose fellowship he had all words of laudation. Leaving aside his attitude to a guru to be discussed later, we may turn to his attitude to holy men in general.

**KABIR'S ATTITUDE TO SAINTS**

Kabir found association with saints of immense value for spiritual progress as against intercourse with the evildoers which was to be avoided by all means. Kabir, however, did not accept all saints unconditionally; instead he insisted that
one should find out those sincere, true of heart and perfect saints who have themselves tasted something of the blessings of fellowship with God. Intercourse with them is elevating for spiritual life. Thus Kabir says:

You never kept the company and fellowship of sants; Thus with your own hand you have thrown away your life. Tomorrow you will not gain an abode like this; You have not known the companionship of sādhūs (Bijak, Ramaini 44).

If you would be a sādhū, frequent the company of a sādhū who is perfect.
If you press unripe mustard seed, you get no oil nor cakes(Diāk, Sākhī 282).

We have also noticed before that Kabir's mother and wife, remonstrated with him not to keep constant company with ascetics and sādhūs whom he was wont to entertain all the time thus neglecting his own business of weaving. No specific name of any of these people is mentioned anywhere. It is quite reasonable to surmise that among them there were both Hindu sādhūs and Muslim Sūfīs and Panīras.

Recapitulating what we have discussed so far about Kabir's relationship with Hindūism and Islām, we can safely conclude that he had constant intercourse with the representatives of both religions, especially with Rāmānanda and Shaykh Taqī, from both of whom he received those ideas which he used to fuse the two religions. It is in this light of the blend of the two faiths that Kabir is seen by all. And thus he was revered by Hindūs and Muslims alike as is the case with some Sūfīs before him. Hence one writer says, "Rāmānanda's movement provided the Hindū influence which went to the making of Kabir but Islām also contributed largely." Notwithstanding
the double influence, instead of getting lost in the terrain between them, Kabir emerged with a totally new doctrine, which was neither totally Hindūism nor totally Islām, but a combination of the good elements of both. "The famous Kabir was a follower of Rāmānanda," remarks G. Macmunn, "but he developed a teaching that was practically a religion of his own." In the same tone another western writer says, "In Kabir, were mingled elements of both Hindū and Muslim saints, although he himself seems to have belonged to no closed order, whether theological or philosophical, neither to any given sect, nor yet to any one religious household. He was something of a Śūfi and something of a bhākta. Hindūs have revered him as a guru and Muslims as a dīr." 

KABIR FACES OPPOSITION

However, in spite of the great reverence in which Kabir is said to have been held by the Hindūs as well as by the Muslims of his line, it appears that in some circles—and that includes his own family—he was misunderstood. Although there is no mention of any particular person or persons, yet it appears that some people, most probably orthodox Hindūs and Muslims, criticised him and even despised his teachings which appeared to them strange. Kabir evidently felt their rejection keenly, though he held himself up boldly against them, and sought consolation and refuge in God. Thus he says:

Why do the helpless people censure [me],
in whose mind there is no divine knowledge?
Kabir delights in Rāma;
all other concerns are given up by me[sic],
I gather no leaves [to offer to idols] and
I worship no idols.

People say Kabir is mad;
But [only] God knoweth Kabir’s secret (Adi-Granth, Slok 46).
Sometimes Kabir appears to have been the victim of slander, which he took with good humour like other saints. He realised that evil-doers would in the long run suffer while he would remain unaffected. Below is an illustration of Kabir's tolerant attitude to those hostile people:

Slander me, slander me, 0 people, slander me!
Slander is very pleasant to the people.
Slander is my father, slander is my mother,
If one is slandered he goes to Paradise.
The blessing of the Name is settled in his mind
When he, who is of a pure heart, is slandered,
The slanderer washes then my clothes.
Who slanders me, he is my friend.
My thought is in the slanderer.
He is a slanderer who stops the slander.
The slanderer seeks my life.
Slander against me I like and love.
Slander effects my salvation.
To humble Kabir, slander is the best.
The slanderer is drowned: I cross over (Granth, Gauri 71).

KABIR'S RELATION WITH SIKANDAR LUDHI

In connection with the opposition that Kabir appears to have faced mention may be made of his so-called confrontation with Sultan Sikandar Ludhi. The elaborate story of his being brought before the Sultan, and the various types of punishment that the Sultan is said to have inflicted on him, his overcoming them by miracles, and the Sultan's eventual begging for his forgiveness and offer to undergo any penalty that Kabir would impose on him, may be discarded as mere legend designed to embellish Kabir's spiritual greatness in confrontation with a ruler who had the authority to do anything he wished. It may be conjectured that Kabir gave offence to both Hindu and Muslim orthodoxies by the novelty of his ideas. On the other hand, Sikandar Ludhi was famous for his bigotry, for by his orders a Brahmin, who refused to accept Islam though he acknowledged its validity, was executed. Under these circum-
stances, it was not impossible that a combined orthodox Hindu and Muslim delegation took advantage of the opportunity created by the Sultan's visit to Jaunpūr and Bānares in 1494-1396 to wait upon him with the expectation of bringing administrative pressure on Kābir. It is also plausible that the delegation may have remembered what Muslim administrators had done to other heretical Sūfis like Ṣaḥḥār Hallāj. In any event, it is quite possible that the Sultan had a personal meeting with Kābir and found him not guilty of what the Hindu and Muslim religious personalities had accused him of. It may be mentioned here that unlike the Arab-Muslim administration of Baghdād, the minority Indian Muslim administration took special care not to offend the Sūfis and the Šādhus, probably with the sole exception of the Sultan Ghiyās-ud-Dīn Tughluq (1325-1351). The Muslim rulers of India, in fact, tried hard to come as close as possible to the saints, although the latter took care to keep themselves aloof from the administration. This tendency toward separation was altered only by the Naṣrībāndī order at the beginning of the seventeenth century when Shaykh Āḥmad Sirhindī became a prominent figure.

J. C. Archer tells us that the Sultan was satisfied with the belief and conviction of Kābir, and no penalty was imposed on him. If the story is true, it would appear that the matter ended in such a way as to have caused no event of historical importance. Kābir had nothing to do with the authorities, neither did defy them. His sole interest was religion, and he must have told the Sultan that he had found the essence of both Hindūism and Islam.
In connection with the story of Kabir's so-called arraignment before the Sultan, Westcott has made a very interesting observation. According to him, the story-teller of Kabir's life, apparently with sufficient knowledge of the events of Jesus' life, wanted to present some parallels. Thus after an account of the virgin birth, we read that Kabir as a child gave utterance to his mystery; he raised from the dead a boy and a girl; etc. Finally, "the full account of his appearance before Sikandar Lūdhī" maintains Westcott, "presents in many details a striking resemblance to Christ's trial before Pilate."

It has been mentioned before that the books containing these legends are as late as the nineteenth century, such as the Kabir-kasāuti. Therefore, it is not surprising that these writers, who may have been well acquainted with the life of Jesus, would have wanted to show how similar their own spiritual leader's life was. Apparently, having relied on these accounts, George Grierson was led to contend that Christian influence may be detected in Kabir's teaching. At the same time some of the descriptions of Kabir also are reminiscent of Kṛṣṇa, for instance, his "lotus eyes;" still others echo Rāma's putting Sītā through the ordeal of fire to prove her purity after her return from her captivity in Lanka.

At any rate, these legends seem to have no historical value, for they mention the name of Shaykh Taqī who is said to have vindicated the cause of the Muslims and thus has been
instrumental in bringing Kabir before the Sultan. But in no standard history books dealing with the Sultan and his religious policy is there any mention of either Shaykh Taqi or Kabir. These legends are probably fabricated by those admirers who felt it was a pious act to glorify their spiritual hero. They even have coined a poem, ascribed to Kabir, which describes his punishment at the hands of the Sultan. However, Kabir's case is not an exception; adoration and creating of a halo around the head of a dead saint is a well-known universal phenomenon.

**KABIR'S DEATH**

Now, to return to Kabir's life; before his death we have no record of any event of historical significance. All tradition agrees that sometime before his death, Kabir went to Maghar (in the district of Basti beyond the Ganges; about eighty-five miles to the east of Lucknow, and fifteen miles to the west of Gorakhpur), where he died in 1518. Speculations have been made as to the cause of Kabir's leaving Banaras and his going to Maghar. According to one tradition, there was a popular superstition to the effect that all who die at Maghar must be born again as asses; while death at the holy city of Banaras is sufficient in itself to bring salvation. Now, in order to act against such superstitious belief, and to prove it false, it is stated, that when Kabir felt that the time of his departure was drawing nigh, he announced that he was going to Maghar to die. It is further stated that the people urged him not to go to Maghar, and the whole city of Banaras was overshadowed with sorrow and grief at the thought of his departure from their midst. Kabir, however, addressed
them as follows:

0 people, you are simple of understanding.
As water mingles with water, so Kabir will mingle with the dust.
If Maithul is your real abode, then your death will be at Maghar.
One who dies at Maghar will not see death (i.e., will not be subject to samsara).
If he dies elsewhere, he will bring shame on Rama.
'One who dies at Maghar becomes an ass!' A fine thing, you have lost your confidence in Rama!
What is Benares, what the waste land of Maghar, if Rama dwells in my heart?
If Kabir leaves his body in Benares, what credit will it be to Rama? (Bijak, Sabda 103).

On the other hand, another popular account says that it was due to the decree of the Sultan Sikandar Lüdhi, who wanted to remove Kabir, for the sake of peace, from Benares where he was subject to controversy and persecution at the hands of the orthodox Hindus and Muslims, that Kabir left Benares for Maghar. This is probably the substratum beneath the story of his punishment by the Sultan. However, we are not sure whether Kabir was banished by the Sultan from Benares or whether he went to Maghar of his own accord either to remove the superstitious belief from people's minds about Maghar, or just to find a place which would give him more peace than the controversial city of Benares to spend the last days of his life. The matter has been referred to in many verses. In none of the verses, however, is there any allusion to the Sultan's inflicting punishment on him. On the contrary, mention is made of the superstitious belief. In the following verses, Kabir expresses his confidence that it was not the place where a person dwells and dies, but the relationship which he has to God that is the all-important thing. He thus says:
Say, O Rāmā, what is now my state?
People tell me I had little sense to leave Benares.
My whole life is lost in Śīvūrī (Banāres).
At the time of death I have risen and come to Maghar.
Many years I have practiced devotion at Kāśī
Death has come on in the dwelling of Maghar.
Kāśī and Maghar I consider as the same.
How shall I come across by slight devotion?
Saith Kabir, my guru Rāmānanda, Ganeśa, Siva,
and all men, know
That Kabir when dying uttered God's holy name (Granth, Gaurī 15
If the hard-hearted one die at Benares,
he is not saved from hell.
If the saint of Hari die at Haramba (Maghar),
he saves his whole relationship (Granth, Asā 32).
If Kabir leaves his body at Benares,
what obligation is he under to God?
Saith Kabir, Hear, O people, let no one make a mistake;
What difference is there between Benares and the
barren Maghar, if God be in the heart? (Granth, Dhanasārī 3

All these verses are self-explanatory, and thus is no
need of any further explanation as to Kabir's intention in
going to Maghar. There is, however, one point to which attention
may be drawn. The account which says that when he realised
the end of his life was coming close, he announced that he
would go to Maghar to die, is probably designed to parallel
the story of Kabir's death with that of the Buddha who is
said to have foretold the time of his death.

The story of Kabir's death, however, does not end here.
When Kabir reached Maghar, he came to the hut of a sādhu,
situated on the bank of the Ami river. There, lying down, he
told the people to close the door of the hut. In the meantime,
Rajābir Sinha, a disciple of Kabir, having heard that Kabir
had already left Banāres and gone to Maghar to die, marched
to Maghar with his army, and waited his arrival. The Muslim
ruler of the country, Nawāb Bijli Khān, also a disciple of
Kabir, on the other hand, made all preparations to welcome.
Kabir to his domain. The two rulers, it is stated, came down
to the hut where Kabir was staying. Then Raja Bir Sinha is
reported to have said: "Guruji, I will take your body and
perform the rites according to the Hindu religion." But the
Nawab said, "I will never allow this to be done; I will bury
you according to Muhammadan rites!" When Kabir saw that the
two armies were about to start fighting, he admonished them:
"Be careful, do not discuss this amongst yourselves, and do
not use your weapons. He who acknowledges my words will be
pleased."

At this stage there are two versions pertaining to the
actual death of Kabir. According to one, after his death,
while the Muslim and Hindu followers of Kabir were disputing
over the possession of his dead body, he appeared in person
and asked them to lift the shroud beneath which his body was
lying; when they did so, they found nothing but a heap of flo-
wers, of which the Muslims took one half and buried at Maghar,
and the Hindus took the other half and cremated at Kabir Chaura
in Benares.

The other story says that Kabir died after he had talked
to Raja Bir Sinha and Bijli Khan, as has been stated above.
When they entered the room where Kabir had died, nothing was
to be seen except two sheets and some flowers in them. One sheet,
and half of flowers, the Raja took, which he cremated at
Kabir Chaura in Benares; and the other sheet and the remainder
of the flowers were taken by the Nawab, which he buried at
Maghan. It means that the two accounts are essentially the
same. In other words, the body of Kabīr was not seen. In fact, his followers insist that he never had a body but was only a manifestation of glory.

The fact of Kabīr’s death is shrouded in such mystery that we are not in a position to say anything other than what we have described above as gleaned from all available sources. We have no other clue even to dare a conjecture otherwise. It may be mentioned here that a similar story also is told about Nānak’s corpse. In this case it is also stated that the two shrines built by two rival groups where the remains of Nānak were either cremated or buried, were washed away by the Ravi river, lest idol-worship or else an ancestral cult flourish where the factual Nānak died and the formless Nānak had been reborn.

The mention of two rulers, one Hindū and one Muslim, in the story of Kabīr’s death, however, may appear to have been designed to lay the basis on which Kabīr’s followers split up into two rival camps—Hindū and Muslim, for their names do not occur in any standard books on Indian or Oriental biographies, whereas Kabīr’s name is found in almost all records. Of course, it is not impossible that the writers of Indian history could have misread these two names, though it would be unusual because they are reported to have been men of power and position. At any rate, one thing is unmistakably clear, that immediately after Kabīr’s death his followers were divided into Hindū and Muslim camps. There is no contradiction among the writers on this point. Even today the two
separate shrines—one at Maghar under Muslim panths, and the other at Kabir Chaura, Banaras, under Hindu panths—can be seen.

In summary, although Kabir himself has not left any record of his life in written form, there is a collection of his sayings entitled the \( \mathbf{A} \mathbf{j} \mathbf{k} \) which was composed by his disciples about fifty years after his death. The \( \mathbf{A} \mathbf{d} \mathbf{i} \- \mathbf{G} \mathbf{r} \mathbf{a} \mathbf{n} \mathbf{t} \) also contains a large number of Kabir's verses. The two collections seem to have been based on two oral traditions supplied by the followers of Kabir. The two collections being composed and compiled independently, there are variations between them. Although these two collections contain genuine sayings of Kabir, the possibility of some additions made by the followers of Kabir cannot be ruled out. In addition to these contemporary and near contemporary sources, there are numerous references to Kabir's life and activity made by the writers of both medieval and modern periods. A reconstruction of Kabir's life on the basis of information as gathered from all these sources, primary and secondary, including the legends is not impossible.

There are legends about Kabir's birth. These legends seem to have been originated by his Hindu followers. Although these legends have little historical value, they illustrate the religious beliefs of his followers. There are also legends relating to the name "Kabir". These stories appear to have been coined by his Muslim followers who think that the name "Kabir" is something sacred. It must be stressed that the name Kabir was not so rare as the legends have made out. No unnecessary or undue impression should be formed about Kabir just for the
name "Kabîr" as something divine. There were many people named Kabîr.

There are also tales told about Kabîr's relation to Sultân Sikandar Lûdî. Obviously, these stories were designed to embellish the spiritual qualities of Kabîr in confrontation with a secular authority. Many stories are also told pertaining to Kabîr's powers of working miracles. But from the internal evidence, we find that Kabîr did not lay claim to supernatural powers. All the legends are meant to glorify and sanctify the life of a dead saint, Kabîr. This is not an exceptional case, it is true in the case of all dead saints.

Leaving aside the legendary elements associated with Kabîr's life, the hard facts of his life can be outlined thus: He was born in Banares of unknown parentage; he was an illegitimate son probably of a Hindû woman. But he was brought up by a Muslim weaver family of Banares. He was named Kabîr. From his boyhood, he gave expression to spiritual insights. He was mystically oriented, eventually he became associated with many Hindû and Muslim saints of whom Râmânanda and Shaykh Taqî were outstanding. Kabîr did not identify himself as a Hindû or as a Muslim. He was a weaver of Banares, and a son of Allâh and Râma. His mission was to break down sectarian differences and to unite the Hindûs and the Muslims on one religio-social ground by the cord of a new spirituality. By doing so, he also wanted to resolve the communal and historical tension prevalent between the Hindûs and the Muslims.
of medieval India. His spiritual quest did not prevent him to live a worldly life. He raised a family, and earned livelihood by weaving. At the same time, he was a teacher, a preacher of the religious truth that he came to realise out of his mystical experience. But he himself did not belong to any organised religion— theological or mystical. He was one of the ṣāfīs and one of the bhaktās yet different from all of them. He gathered followers from both Hindus and the Muslims.

But the orthodox Hindus as well as the orthodox Muslims, when Kabīr disregarded for their ignorance about the truth of religion, spread the net of hostilities against him. They may even have tried to get him penalised by the Muslim administration on charges of heresy. However, for some uncertain reasons, sometime before his death, he left Banaras and went to Kaghār where he died in 1518 when he was about 75 years of age. There is a legend about the quarrel of his Hindu and Muslim followers over the possession of his corpse. However, since his dead body was not found, his Hindu and Muslim followers divided into two halves the shrouds and the flowers that were found where his body was lying. The Muslims buried their half at Kaghār, while the Hindus cremated their half at Kabir Chaura in Banaras. After his death, it is stated that his son Kamāl was approached by his father’s followers to organise a sect of his father’s followers. But Kamāl rejected the idea saying that such an act on his part would be nothing short of killing the truth uttered by his father, and the killing of father’s truth would be tantamount to
"Merging the father himself spiritually." This, however, did not please Kabir's followers who split up into Hindu and Muslim camps, thus acting against Kabir's wishes. The division among his followers is the violation of the most important principle of Kabir's teaching—the Hindu-Muslim unity—for which he strove.

Notwithstanding this division, Kabir's memory is still as fresh in people's mind as it was during his lifetime. Kabir came to be immortal, not for anything else, but for the sincerity of purpose that he expressed through his teaching.

"Although Kabir himself was scarcely more than a feeble voice in the murmuring crowd," says Archer, "his gospel, nevertheless, proved to be a leaven in the total lump."

Kabir's teaching gave a new dimension to the religious life of medieval India. His teaching represents a kind of religious universalism that was unknown in the religious history of India. He was not a mere syncretist as Professor 'Aziz Ahmad thinks. In fact, his teaching constitutes an interesting subject of comparative religion. Therefore, let us study his teaching in the next chapter, so that we can see for ourselves the real greatness of Kabir."
It has been emphasised before that although Kabir was one of the bhaktas and one of the Sulis, he was different in many respects from all of them. Kabir's uniqueness has been acknowledged by many writers. Comparing him with the bhaktas, S. N. Dasgupta observes: "The bhakti cult preached by the bhaktas of North India followed by and large the line traced in the Gita and the Dhaґavata Purana. But one of them, namely Kabir, followed a different line, though similar to that of the Tamil saints', yet different in its deepest essence."

The main reason for Kabir's uniqueness was his teaching. Unlike all bhaktas and Sulis, he was not only the first true product of the interaction of Hindu-Muslim ideas but he himself was the real pioneer and ambassador of Hindu and Muslim unity. In order to perform this great task, his teaching had to be different from others'. The novelty of his teaching was inevitable, for he tried to divert the attention of the Indians of his time to a religion of the universal path above the sectarian level—a road which Hindus and Muslims could tread together. No Hindu or Muslim could take exception to such a religion, or better to say such a piety.

Also, Kabir lived an exemplary life; his Hindu and Muslim mixed upbringing—two streams—both contributed equally to mould his character and manners. Despite the fact that he was influenced by two socio-religious currents, he was far from being jumbled between them, but rather carved out his own way of living. Most Hindu saints, for example, lived in the
monastery and practised celibacy; similarly, many Muslim saints (Sufi, Darvishes) lived in khanaqah, and some of them, like Hindu saints, practised celibacy, and even lived in forest like Hindu yogis. But unlike all of them, Kabir lived a full family life and earned his livelihood by weaving cloth like an ordinary labourer. Thus Kabir demonstrated that living a family life was not a barrier to spiritual progress. It is the purity of heart, as he persistently insisted in his teaching, that decides and guides a true bhakta.

In the following pages, we propose to deal with the teaching of Kabir. His teaching can be divided into two broad divisions, viz., (1) his essential religious ideas and (2) his mission of reconciliation—or dialogue—between Hinduism and Islam. In the first, we will discuss the leading religious concepts of Kabir, such as the unity of God, bhakti, purity of heart, no authority in religion except God's, freedom from religious formalism, etc. These ideas are unique, for they place Kabir between Hinduism and Islam. In the second, Kabir takes his place between Hinduism and Islam as a reconciler. In playing the role of a uniter, he criticises the externalia of both the religions. In denouncing them, he uses his satirical and allegorical style for which he is famous. In this section we will also meet with those ideas of Kabir which teach how to transcend religious differences in quest of a pure spirituality of inwardness, surrender, truth, sincerity, etc.
However, the two divisions in Kabir's teaching cannot be maintained in a watertight manner, because he was not a systematic and logically consistent thinker and teacher, as we have already seen. The greatness of Kabir's teaching is not to be looked for in its literary perfection but in the spirit that it reveals to us. The great Bengalee mystic-poet, Rabindranath Tagore, said, "All the great utterances of man have to be judged not by the letter but by the spirit—the spirit which unfolds itself with the growth of life in history." Kabir uttered words which came from his heart, his religious experience. These words have been interpreted and reinterpreted since his time, but their meaning has never been exhausted. "The meaning of the living words that came out of the experiences of a great heart", says Tagore, "can never be exhausted by any one system of logical interpretation."

The immortal words of Kabir will continue to be interpreted and reinterpreted as long as our interest in matters of religion persists. Here in this work we will do our best to do justice to his teaching. The criteria of our interpretation of his teaching consist of three crucial points, namely, he was a true product of the interaction of Hindu-Muslim ideas. He wanted to unite the Hindus and the Muslims by a new spirituality which was a synthesis of some elements of both religions, on the one hand, and which showed disregard to both religions—their external rites and observances—on the other. Finally, we will judge the significance of Kabir's teaching in historical perspective.
In passing, it is generally held that in his rejection of external religion, Kabir was more severe towards Hinduism than towards Islam. This notion is the result of inadequate and careless studies of Kabir’s teaching. The fact is that Hinduism has more ritual and ceremony than the simpler religion of Islam. Naturally, Kabir had to reject more Hindu rituals and practices than he did those of Islam, but as regards the contributions from the two religions that are found in his teaching, the Hindu elements exceed the Islamic. It has been emphasised before that Kabir was by no means partial to either religion. The nature of Kabir’s teaching may be summarised in the following words:

He has gazed into the mystery of life and seen the vision of the ineffable light. He brings from the world of beyond a new message for the individual and for society. He dreams of a future purified of inequalities; he preaches a religion based on the only foundation on which faith can stand, namely, personal experience. He brushed aside unhappily the whole paraphernalia of dogma and authority, for his soul is sick of the sorry spectacle of the quarrels of creeds and the worship of empty shells of formal religions. He tolerates no shams and demands reality in the search after God.

In other words, Kabir would teach us that if we care for truth and spiritual life, we should get rid of all artificial hindrances. We should be true to our own self, and be natural. Truth is natural and free from artifice, and we need not look for it in the external world. It is not to be found in vows, garbs, rituals, ceremonies and sectarianism. Truth remains within. We have to find it out by love and devotion. We must not cherish ill-will towards any one not injure any life, for God dwells in every creature. To Kabir, it is the same God; earnestly sought after in all religions which differ
only in the way they call upon Him. This makes futile the religious quarrels that go on between Hindus and Muslims. Therefore, give up all quarrels, we are all children of one God, to whom we must direct out bhakti with heart and soul. We should have our hearts filled with divine love and devotion. This life is not permanent, but temporary. So without losing time in vain pursuits seek refuge with God. We need not seek Him in the external world by performing rituals and ceremonies; we must seek Him within our hearts where He dwells.

**KABIR'S SPIRITUAL AWAKENING:**

Before coming up with any clear concept of God, man and his relations with God, Kabir seems to have been passing through the stages of spiritual crisis and bewilderment. As a positive thinker, we find him confronting the great mysteries of life, and reacting to them. Thus he says:

> The string is broken (life has departed), thy brain destroyed; whither hath thy speech gone? I feel this anxiety night and day; who will explain and ease my mind? (Adi-Granth, Gauri 52).

The answers he heard from Hindu and Muslim religious persons brought him no peace of mind and satisfaction. They appear to him to be too insistent on the externals of religion and the tiresome round of ritual and ceremony, which he despises as a hollow sham. He, however, finds solace for his mind by turning inward:

> Saith Kabir, my attention is directed to that place where God dwelleth night and day; His secret He Himself fully knoweth, He is ever imperishable (Adi-Granth, Gauri 52).

Kabir has described his spiritual awakening metaphorically in the following verses:
Kabir being beaten cried much; in pain he cries [even] more.

[After] a blow has hit the vital part, Kabir remained dead on the spot.

Kabir says, the blow of the spear is easy, in being applied it takes away the breath.

[But he who] undergoes the blow of the Sabda—6 of that guru I am the slave (Adi-Granth, Sloks 182, 183).

The above verses appear to imply that the Sabda (Word) of the guru which brought to him enlightenment seemed like a heavy blow. This expression is reminiscent of what we know of the prophets, like Muhammad and Moses, when they received the first revelation. Kabir tells us that all his former ignorance and wrong ideas were brought to an end (ground), as with a heavy blow, under which he fainted away. The state of Kabir prior to the occurrence of this experience came to an end, and now Kabir finds himself as if he was born with new ideas. This is the spiritual experience which seems to have brought Kabir to his life as a religious teacher and reformer. In another place Kabir has described his spiritual awakening more clearly:

Lo! my brethren, a storm of divine knowledge hath come;

The screens of doubt have all been blown away,

and even the ropes of mammon have not been left;

The two props of indecision (whether man inclines to God or the world) have been thrown down, and the beam of worldly love hath been broken;

The thatched roof of avarice hath fallen to the ground, and the vessel of evil inclinations hath burst.

Saith Kabir, thy slave, O Lord, hath become saturated by the rain (internal happiness) which fell after the storm.

And when next he saw the sun appear (when he saw God after the attainment of divine knowledge), his mind was illumined (Adi-Granth, Gauri and Sorath 43).

After this spiritual awakening, Kabir tells us that he felt so much absorbed in God that he gave up all religious rites and ceremonies which he used to perform before. Thus he
O BROTHER! when I was forgetful, my true Guru showed me the Way.
Then I left off all rites and ceremonies,
I bathed no more in the holy water:
Then I learned that it was I alone—
who was mad, and the whole world beside me was sane; and I had disturbed these wise people.
From that time forth I knew no more how to roll in the dust in obeisance:
I do not ring the temple bell:
I do not set the idol on its throne:
I do not worship the image with flowers.
It is not the austerities that mortify the flesh which are pleasing to the Lord,
When you leave off your clothes and kill your senses, you do not please the Lord:
The man who is kind and who practises righteousness, who remains passive amidst the affairs of the world, who considers all creatures on earth as his own self;
He attains the Immortal Being, the true God is ever with him.
Kabir says: 'He attains the true Name whose words are pure, and who is free from pride and conceit.' (Tagore, poem 65).

Since there is no evidence that Kabir ever practised these Hindu rites mentioned, scholars doubt the authenticity of this poem. It is true that from his very boyhood, Kabir appears to have been opposed to Hindu and Muslim religious rites and ceremonies. The contents of this poem may be taken as expressing Kabir's mind, that is, he would not perform these rites even in his thoughts let alone in reality.

**KABIR'S CONCEPT OF GOD: RĀMA OR ALLAH: THE UNITY OF GOD**

After his spiritual awakening, one of the fundamental ideas which Kabir expressed in clear terms is his concept of God. It is generally held that under the influence of Sufism, Kabir denounced idolatry, image worship and polytheism, and adopted its strong monotheism of Islam. As a result, he at
first taught and emphasised the unity (tawhid) of God. Hence Kabir says:

He is one: there is no second (Bijak, Sabda 43; also cf. Q. 2.255; 3.2-4, 6; 112.1; etc.).
Rāma, Khudā, Sakti, Siva, are one: tell me, pray, how will you distinguish them? (Bijak, Sabda 48).

By the One name I hold fast, this Kabir proclaims aloud (Bijak, Sabda 62).

In heaven, the realms below, in earth and waters, one alone, Rāma, watches over all (Bijak, Ramānī 59).

Saith Kabir, I have searched in heaven, And have seen none equal to God (Adi-Granth, Gauri 34; also cf. Q. 112.3).

The one Name, like the tree of life, saveth mankind. They who are regenerated by God shall never alter.

Saith Kabir, I have recognized God's name (Adi-Granth, Gauri 37).

Having given a simple description of the oneness of God, Kabir tells us that the different appellations of God are only expressions of one and the same truth. According to him, it matters little by what name we call Him. Thus, he says:

Brother! From where have the two masters of the Universe come? Tell me, who has invented the names of Allāh, Rān, Keshab, Hari and Hazrat? All ornaments of gold are made of a unique substance. It is to show to the world that two different signs are made, one is called Namaz while the other is termed Pūja.
Mahādev and Muhammad are one and the same; Brahma and Adam are one and the same, what is a Hindu? What is a Turk? Both inhabit the same earth. One reads the Veda, and the other the Qur'ān and the Khutba. One is a mawlānā (Mawlavi or Mullā) and the other a Pandit. Earthen vessels have different names, although they are made from the same earth.

Kabir says: both are misled, none has found God (Bijak, Sabda 30, also see 97).

As we can see, Kabir's idea of one God and one humanity is truly Islamic. As a matter fact, this is the key conception of Kabir according to which he refused to find any distinction...
between Hindūs and Muslims, and on the basis of this unity in principle and substance, he tried to find a *modus vivendi* between the two communities. By using terms employed by both systems, Kabīr tells us that it is only the difference in names. Finally, in the Upaniṣadic style, Kabīr tells us that the Hindūs and the Muslims are only different manifestations of the same substance. Therefore, they are the children of one God.

Elsewhere Kabīr again takes up the subject of the unity of God, and criticises the Hindūs and the Muslims who conceive of different gods. Thus he says:

Rāma, Khudā, Saktī, Śiva are one. Then to whom do the prayers go? The Vedas, the Purāṇas and the Qurān are only different manners of description. Neither the Hindū, nor the Turk, neither the Jain nor the Yogi is cognizant of the secret (Bījak, Sabā 28, also cf. 48).

In an allegorical verse, Kabīr in his humorous style says:

You are the wife of one, but have become the prostitute of many; say with whose corpse will you be burnt? for you are the wife of many. 9

It means there is one God whom men should love; but what will be the fate of those who love and worship many gods who are false. In the above verses the concept of satī has been mentioned which Kabīr rejected totally. It may be an interpolation; or otherwise Kabīr may have used it because the Hindūs believe in it.

In another place Kabīr elaborates the theme of God's omnipresence and condemns the narrow-mindedness of the two communities who try to keep God confined to their respective places, whereas Kabīr asserts that God is universal and is
present everywhere especially in the human heart. Thus he says:

If God dwell only in the mosque, to whom belongeth the rest of the country? They who are called Hindus say that God dwelleth in an idol: I see not the truth in either sect. O God, whether Allah or Ram, I live by Thy name, O Lord, show kindness unto me.

Hari dwelleth in the south, Allah hath His place in the West. 10 Search in thy heart, search in thy heart of hearts; there is His place and abode.

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The men and women Thou has created, O God, are all in Thy form.
Kabir is the child of Ram and Allah, and accepteth all gurus and pirs.
Saith Kabir, hear, O men and women, seek the sanctuary of the one God;
O mortals, only repeat God's name, and then shall you be assuredly saved (Adi-Granth, Prabhadi 2).

As we can see, in these verses, apart from asserting the oneness of God, His omnipresence, and in a typical mystical tone finding the human heart as the abode of God, Kabir affirmed that he was neither a Hindu nor a Muslim, but a child of the one God who is known by different names. This aspect of Kabir's teaching must be remembered in order to understand him and his mission. In the last verse, he has struck another important note of his teachings, namely, repetition of God's name (dhikr) which is a characteristic feature of Sufi teaching as well as of Rama bhakti. We shall return to this point later.

Although Kabir believes in the unity of God, he uses many names for God, but the name which recurs most in his sayings is Rama. His use of other names occasionally should not delude us that he supported the idea of polytheism. On the contrary, by this means he would bring people to realise
that although they might use different names, there is only one God. Because of the name Rāma, some may have thought that Kabīr was a Hindu. But as R. C. Zaehner says, the "deification of Rāma had already gone so far that his name had become a synonym for God." However, in order to remove all ambiguity and confusion, Kabīr has articulated his conception of Rāma in the following verses:

The Creator did not marry Śītā nor did he make a stone bridge across the waters (Bijak, Sabda 8).

They say the Lord of the world finding inequalities of the weak and the strong came as Rāma. But Kabīr says, before such a one (Rāma) who took birth and died, I cannot bend my head. 

In another place Kabīr says:

Follow the true Sāhib (God) who will uphold you in all your trials.

He was not born in Dasaratha's family and did not oppress the king of Laṅka (Ceylon).

He did not fight with king Bali nor did he kill Hiranyakash, throwing him down on the ground.

Still in another place Kabīr says:

All say 'Rām, Rām,' but there is difference in the saying; one associated with many, another [Kabīr] was absorbed in one.

The above couplet seems to distinguish between Rām, the son of King Dasaratha of antiquity, and Rāma, as used as a title of the one true God. In his verses rejecting the doctrine of avatāra of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, Kabīr has also made it absolutely clear that his God, Rāma, did not take birth in the family of King Dasaratha, as we shall see later. Hence J. C. Archer says, "He sometimes called on God Rāma, but qualified this title—by excluding Śītā or any other consort or companion, and by denying that Rāma was himself an avatāra of God. By
"Rāma," he meant not the epic hero, the son of King Daśaratha, but the True Guru, the one God, the True Name." Thus "Through the principle of the unity of God," says Yusuf Husain, "Kabir did much to elevate the social and moral level of the Hindu society of the time."

It has been emphasised before that Kabir was above and beyond all partisan statement. There is no reason to doubt that he transcended religious differences as he never showed any preference for either of the two religions. But his use of different names for God, mostly Hindu names, and his mention of some Hindu deities and narrations of stories connected with them simply indicate his acquaintance with both the religions. This kind of expression may, however, appear to us as contradiction and inconsistency. This may be the case, but modern standards of scholarship cannot be applied to his words. He was neither a scholar nor a profound philosopher, but a simple religious teacher and reformer, and wanted to reform what he thought was wrong. In doing so, he kept himself completely free from sectarian outlook and dogmatic mentality.

In the above sayings another important point: that, having transcended religious differences, and in his intense desire to see all religions united, Kabir did not make any distinction between the two faiths, and thus accepted all gurus and nārs. This point should remove the doubt as to whether or not Kabir had any association with Muslim dīfs (Sufis). For the synthetic nature of his teaching, Kabir has
won an undisputed recognition as the best representative of
the trend engendered by the interaction of Hindu-Muslim ideas,
though the former ideas were predominant in him. Hence one
writer says, "It seems to have been Kabir's intention to found
a religion that was inhibited by neither dogma, nor scripture,
nor social framework. In spirit he is far more Hindu than
Muslim,..."

Having affirmed the unity of God, in a true Sufistic
vein, Kabir describes God as being near to man:

He(God) whom you seek is near you(cf. Q.50.15).
He is always near to his[sic] devotees and
far from those who do not worship Him.18

KABIR'S CONCEPT OF ONE HUMANITY

Following on his view of one God, Kabir preached the
equality of all men. Egalitarianism is the second great
principle of Islam which Kabir accepted under the influence
of Sufism. When the low-caste weaver Kabir began preaching to
men of high caste the principle of equality of all men, he
was reproached for his daring. Upon this he preached the
following:

As the bubbles of the river are accounted water
and blend with the water of the ocean,
So the man who looketh on all with an equal eye,
shall become pure and blend with the Infinite.
Why should I return to this world?
Transmigration taketh place by God's order;
he who obeyeth it shall blend with Him.
When this fabric of five elements perisheth,
my wandering shall be at an end.
Forswearing sects, I look on all as equal
and meditate on the one name.
I devote myself to and perform the duties
which God assigned me.
If God bestow mercy on me, I shall be absorbed
in Him under the instruction of my guru.
He who in life is in death, and who from death
(beings dead toward God) returneth to life
shall not be born again.
Saith Kabir, he who is permeated with the Name fixeth his love on God (Adi-Granth, Maru 4).

In the penultimate verse Kabir has spoken of that famous doctrine of Sufism, namely, fi Allâh (dying in God) resulting in bi Allâh (living in God eternally).
The doctrine has some similarity with the Buddhist concept of Nirvana, and the Sufis may have taken it from the Buddhist monks of Central Asia as we have discussed. But there is also an implicit reference to it in the Qur'an (55.26). Kabir apparently took this doctrine from the Sufis. The eternal living in God should not be misunderstood for living in heaven or paradise, rather continuance of spiritual absorption in Him, for the Sufis do not hanker for heaven or hell but for God's love.

In another place Kabir speaks of one humanity in the following words:

I and you are of one blood, and one life animates us both; from one mother is the world born; what knowledge is this which makes us separate.
All have come from the same country and have landed at one boat, but the evil influences of this world have divided us into innumerable sects.19

From whence have Hindus and Turks come?
By whom have these ways been started?
Having searched and reflected in thy mind tell me.
By whom have Paradise and Hell been made.20
If your Khuda wished circumcision, he would have sent you circumcised into the world.
If by circumcision you become a Muslim in that case what should you do with your women?
A woman is said to be the half of man; being so, would she remain a Hindû?
If by wearing the sacred thread a man becomes a Brähmin then do your women wear?
They by birth are Shudrins, why should you being a Pandé take the meal placed by them before you?
Whence have the Hindûs and Muslims come?
Who has started these religious systems?
Think well in your hearts who has obtained heaven.
O mad man, give up the illusion of this world.
O brethren, you resist (the warnings of conscience).
Kabir is on the road to God and is marching on to His end, forsaking all partial views. 21

As we can see, Kabir took great pains to try to articulate his view about the unity of human beings. According to him, while the religious differences are only fortuitous the essential humanity is always the same. And when Kabir says that "all have come from the same country", that is, it was all one human, thus one nation, "but the evil influences of this world have divided us into innumerable sects", his conception of the oneness of human beings is in conformity with that of the Qur'an (cf. 2.213). Hence he says:

O Saints! I have seen the ways of both. In their pride the Hindu and the Turk do not recognize me.... The way of the Hindu and the Muslim is the same. The Self-Guru (God) has revealed it to me. Hear what Kabir says: Rama and Khudâ are one and the same (Bijak, Sabda 10).

Finally, in accordance with his concept of one human race, Kabir forcefully and with reasoned arguments denounced the Hindu caste system. In his efforts to convince the Hindus about the reality of one humanity, Kabir traced the beginning of the human race to Adam and says:

Adam who was first, did not know whence came mother Eve.
Then there was no Turk (Muslim) nor Hindu;
Then there was no race, no caste.
If thou thinkest the Maker distinguished castes;
Birth is according to these penalties for deeds.
Born a Sudra, you die a Sudra;
It is only in this world of illusion that you assume the sacred thread.

If you milk black and yellow cows together,
Will you be able to distinguish their milk (Bijak, Amma 62).
KABIR'S CONCEPT OF SABDA

The Sabda (the Word), is one of the most important elements in the essential doctrines of Kabir. As we know, in orthodox Hindu thought knowledge can be obtained by perception and inference. So is the case with Buddhism and Jainism. To these has been added Sabda (word or verbal testimony) which has been accepted as one of the pramanas (proofs, evidences) by the orthodox schools of Indian philosophy. Sabda implies both divine word or inspiration and the word of a trustworthy person, particularly guru. In Islam, the Qur'an—the Word of God—is the first and only authority; no other word is recognised as authentic unless it is in conformity with the Qur'an.

In the case of Kabir, since he clearly rejected the authority of the Vedas as well as of the Qur'an, his doctrine of Sabda cannot refer to any written scriptures. In one place Kabir said, "I neither touched ink nor paper, nor did I take a pen into my hand, to the sages of all four ages Kabir declared his word by mouth (Bijak, Sakh 188). Sabda is thus the mysterious utterance of speech that conveys knowledge of the unknown and leads the wise unto salvation. But from the context of the texts where the term Sabda occurs, undoubtedly it is especially associated with the name of God—the 'Satnam', which is recognised in his doctrines as so powerful. For instance, Kabir says, "I am a lover of the word which has shown me the unseen (God)." Commenting on this saying of Kabir, one writer says, "This is a far simpler thing on Kabir's lips than the Sabda pramana of the schools of philosophy." Speech was obviously the medium through which the expression of the
unknowable is made. However, in some passages Kabir says that the "word" helped him to know God. Here undoubtedly he means inspiration. We have no hesitation in believing that Kabir underwent some mystical experience. Still in other places, Kabir says that the "Word" of the guru opened his eyes and mind to know God; again, in some cases he identifies Sabda with God. In any case, this mysterious doctrine of Kabir must be understood from its context. For the most part it refers to God or an inspired word of God; like the wahy, the inspired word of God Prophet Muhammad and all other prophets received and by no means alludes to either the Vedas or to the Qur'an. Below are some illustrations of his way of using his doctrine of Sabda:

There are many words and there is a great difference between them; accept the true word. Kabir says, one who has found the true word, has no pleasure in this life. By the power of the word the sin of this world is destroyed. The word makes kings forsake their kingdoms. He who has investigated the word has done his work well. Without hearing the word it is utter darkness. Say, whither shall anyone go; without finding the gateway of the word, man will ever be astray. My word is of the word; hear it, go not astray. If man wishes to know the truth, let him investigate the word. There are many words, but take the pith of them; he who takes not the essence, says Kabir, will live a profitless life.

In another place, it appears that Kabir explicitly uses the conception of Word for God. It seems that the theme of his saying resulted from a mystical experience of God whom he found impossible to describe in words; and whom he realised to be beyond all visible forms, unseen unconfined, limitless. No human speech can show forth His fulness:

O how may I ever express that secret word?
O how can I say He is not like this, He is like that?
If I say that He is within me, the universe is ashamed:

...
If I say that He is without me, it is falsehood.
He makes the inner and the outer worlds to be invisibly one;
The conscious and the unconscious both are His footstools.
He is neither manifest nor hidden, He is neither revealed
nor unrevealed;
There are no words to tell that which He is. 27

There is no doubt that Kabir took the conception of Sabda
from Hindûism, but he used it in a different way. This way
of using the doctrine is probably designed to make a distinction
from the Hindû schools of philosophy. At any rate, in the
above poems, all ambiguity has been removed when Kabir, in
the very mood of the Upanisads, says that the Word cannot be
described either this or that, that is, he is neti, neti
(cf. Brhad-âranyaka Upanisad, 3.9.26; 4.2.4; 4.4.22; 4.5.15).

In another place Kabir says:

I have wept for this world but no one has
wept with me; he alone will weep with
me who understood the Word. 28

By citing these verses on the doctrine of Sabda, we
wished to demonstrate how Kabir picked up ideas from Hindûism
and used them in his own way. Similarly, he picked up the
Qur'anic conception of God as the Light (cf. 24.35 ff.). This
light-verse and what follows it have been the most celebrated
verses of the Qur'an for the Sûfis. Thus under the influence
of Sûfism, Kabir conceives God as the Light which has an affinity
for the light of man (cf. Brhad-âranyaka Upanisad, 4.3.6), and
they are inseparable:

Can one light which is absorbed in another
be separated from it?
May that man burst and die in whose heart
the name of God springeth not up!
Dark and beautiful God, my soul is attached to Thee.
When a holy man is found, supernatural perfection
is obtained; this is both union with God
and worldly enjoyment.
He who attentively heareth or singeth God's name,
Saih Kabir, shall certainly obtain the supreme
state at last (Adi-Granth, Gaurī 55).

At this stage we are faced with another important
problem in Kabir's doctrine. There is a great deal of contro-
versy among the modern scholars as to whether or not Kabir can
be regarded as a philosopher. Let us discuss this dispute.

KABIR AND PHILOSOPHY

It has been emphasised before that Kabir was not at all
a philosopher and was unable to maintain a logical consistency
in his utterances. This contention has been affirmed by writers
like F. E. Keay, J. E. Carpenter maintains the same view.
G. H. Westcott says that the impression that Kabir was a
pantheist or a monist is based on two incorrect assumptions:
(1) that he is responsible for all the teachings given by
his Hindu followers at a later age and (2) that all the state-
ments contained in the Bilāk represent his personal views.
According to this writer, Kabir was neither a pantheist nor
a monist but a theist. Philosophy was not an accomplishment
of Kabir. In fact, he deprecated mere philosophical discussions
which lead to nothing. But on the basis of some of Kabir's
sayings like the above quoted ones in which he seems to have
conceived of absolute identity between God and man, and his
discussions on concepts like Sabda, Rāya, etc., some writers,
such as Ahmad Shah, find in his utterances the doctrines of
monism. However, the matter does not seem to be that easy to
decide in either way exclusively. The fact remains that Kabir
did not have any formal schooling, but that does not necessarily
preclude the possibility of his hearing philosophical ideas
from others as he learned many theological ideas from Hindu
and Muslim saints. And it is not impossible that he could have expressed some philosophical ideas, even though he rejected its formal systems. The fact is that he was not interested in philosophical and metaphysical discussions as the Buddha was not. Further, Kabir has not drawn a philosophical or metaphysical conclusion to his concept of God. And whatever philosophical ideas he has expressed, we do not find any consistency in his sayings. At any rate, as a theist, Kabir probably could not adhere to the spiritual monism of Sankara. As a mystic, Kabir's aim was to have a union with God and not to find out the identity of atman and Brahman. Like all mystics, Kabir advocates the doctrine of union with the Divine where the individual self still retains some difference. In this sense, Kabir's formula is close to that of Ramanuja and that of the Sufis. Below is a passage in which Kabir appears to have discarded the famous Upanisadic doctrine of complete identity of atman and Brahman, yet the rejection does not make him a theist exclusively:

33
Tat tvam asi is the preaching of the Upanisads (cf. Chandogya Upanisad, 6.8.7; 6.15.3);
that is their message.
Great is their reliance upon this; but how can they, however mighty, describe Him? (Bijak, Ramanin 8).

Pandits, your thoughts are all untrue;
there is here no universe and no creator;
Nor subtle, nor gross, nor air, nor fire, nor sun,
Nor moon, nor earth, nor water;
Nor the form of light, nor kāl(time) are there:
there is neither word nor body.
There is neither action, nor virtue,
no mantras and no worship at all. 
Rites and ceremonies have no worth at all.
He is one, there is no second (Bijak, Sadba 43; also cf. Q. 2:255, 3:2; ch. 112).

Wherever, wherever one looks, there, there is He the same; He is found in every vessel (Bijak, Sadba 27).
How can I explain His form or outline? There is no second who has seen Him. How can I describe the condition of the unconditioned, who has neither village nor resting-place? He who must be seen without qualities; by what name shall I call Him? (Pījak, Amānī 6, 7; also cf. Adī-Granth, Gaurī 9).

When the fire of avarice is out, and the smoke of desires no longer issueth, 
Then shall man know that one God is everywhere contained, and that there is no second (Adī-Granth, Asā 11).

Here is a conception which embraces all the contraries of life, and transcends them all. In other words, Kabīr's conception of God can be likened partly to that of Islām and partly to the nirguna (attributeless) Brahman of the Upaniṣads. But we certainly cannot put his theology into the realm of the pure monism of Śaṅkara. In fact, although Kabīr has used some Upaniṣadic conceptions pertaining to the Ultimate Reality, yet he has not given his adherence exclusively to "Thou art That". This is not surprising, for the Upaniṣadic conception of Brahman is an abstraction, which is to be contemplated rather than worshipped, for which a personal God possessing attributes (svaguna) is needed. Kabīr being a monotheist and theistic bhākta, advocating personal devotion (bhākta) to a personal God, whom he called Rāma, could not have been in full agreement with monism. The only point of concurrence between him and the Vedānta, or Buddhism, is that God or the Absolute is beyond any description in human language and word.

The God to whom Kabīr directed his bhākta is not a mere abstraction. In other places, Kabīr used attributes to describe Him. He is the saviour, merciful, joyous, beautiful, omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient, perfect, etc. Notwithstanding God is
powerful, Kabir, like all mystics, conceived of Him as One with whom man can have intercourse; and using the expression common in mysticism, especially that of Nammalvar, he declares:

I am Thy son, Thou art my Father;
We both live in the same place(Adi-Granth, Asa 3).

Taking into consideration the diverse ways in which Kabir tried to give expression to his conception of the One God, it must be admitted that his conception of God cannot be judged against any philosophical standard. In fact, he, in line with the Vedanta and the Madyamika Buddhist doctrine, says that He is beyond all philosophy; "for philosophy cannot attain to Him."

There are, however, other verses in which Kabir expressly describes God as a personal God, and conceives of Him as Light in the same manner as the Sufis on the basis of the Qur'an (2:35-36). Thus he says:

God constructed an inaccessible fortress(brain?) for His residence,
Which He illumined with His light(intelligence or consciousness).

He who fashioned continents and different countries,
The three worlds, the three gods, and the three qualities(gunas),
Though styled inaccessible and invisible, dwelleth within the heart.
None can find the limit of the secret of the Sustainer of the earth;
He shineth in the plantain blossom and in the sunshine,
And hath taken His dwelling in the pollen of the lotus.
God's spell is within the twelve petals of the heart
Where the holy Lord of Lakshmi reposeth.
The great God reacheth from the lower to the upper regions of the firmament;
He illumineth the silent realm,
Where there is neither sun nor moon.
He was in the beginning: He is without stain and happy.
Know that He pervadeth the body as well as the universe;
He batheth in Mansarowar (the lake of the heart);
His pass-word is 'Soham' (I am He) (Adi-Granth, Ashtanadi 1).

The earth bloometh, the firmament rejoiceth;
Every heart is gladdened by God's light.
The Lord God rejoiceth in endless ways;
Whithersoever I look, there is He contained (Adi-Granth,
Basant 1; also cf. Q. 2.109)

Kabir appears to have reflected deeply on the nature of
God and the world. The first result of the mystical contemplation
of this vast universe was the intense conviction of the
omnipresence of God. Commenting on the above verses, Carpenter
remarks: "But this was not the monist doctrine of identity.
The ancient formula 'That art Thou' is expressly repudiated.
The reality of the world cannot be denied, for it would
involve the denial of its Infinite Cause." In the introduction
to Tagore's One Hundred Poems of Kabir, E. Underhill observes
that Kabir's idea of God is "the synthetic vision of God",
where the contrast between the Absolute of philosophy and the
"sure true Friend" of devotional religion is carried up to a
higher plane where it disappears in light. The uniqueness of
Kabir's teaching comes out clearly in his synthetic view of
God; and this synthetic view appears to be most appropriate
for Kabir whose mission was to make a synthesis of Hindūism
and Islām.

KABIR'S VIEW OF KARMA AND SAMSĀRA

Like the monotheism and the egalitarianism of Islām
which Kabir absorbed from the Sūfīs, and incorporated them in
his own teaching, he also borrowed from Hindūism some of its
basic principles. He seems to have held fast to two fundamental
doctrines of Hindūism, namely, karma (actions: good or bad).
and Samsāra (transmigration of the soul). Of course, these are not peculiarities of Hinduism alone, rather they are the fundamental principles of the whole Indian spiritual tradition. The goal of the teachings of the Upanishads is to secure moksha (release or salvation) from the cyclic order of life, death and rebirth to which the law of Karma or the results of our works bind us. This twin doctrine seems to have attracted Kabir's notice. According to him, as in the Indian tradition, a man is bound by his actions, and every act is productive of future good or ill. Evil deeds destine a man to punishment by his being born in a lower state of life in his next birth. But the weary round of births and rebirths goes on till the chain of samsāra is cut through the results of good actions, and thus is achieved salvation. Here Kabir speaks on the doctrine of metempsychosis:

I was in immobile and mobile creatures, in worms and in moths; I passed through many births of various kinds. In this way I occupied many bodies, But when, O God, I assumed human birth, I was a Yogi, a Jāti, a penitent, a Brāhmachārī, Sometimes a king, an emperor, and sometimes a beggar (Adi-Granth, Gauri 13)

In another place Kabir tells us that he has found God (mukti) and thus put an end to his transmigration:

Though I have assumed many shapes, this is my last. The strings and wires of the musical instrument are all worn out; I am now in the power of God's name; I shall not have a aim to dance to the tune of birth and death; Nor shall my heart accompany on the drum. I have taken and destroyed my bodily lust and anger; the pitcher of avarice hath burst; Lust's raiment hath grown old, and all my doubts are dispelled. I recognize one God in all creatures; vain wranglings on this subject are at an end.
Saith Kabir, when God was gracious unto me, I obtained Him, the Perfect One (Adi-Granth, Asa 28).

All men bound by their acts transmigrate; attentively consider this (Adi-Granth, Gauri 50).

Since my attention is fixed on God, I no longer suspect that I shall suffer transmigration (Adi-Granth, Bilawal 11).

My dread of transmigration is at an end. Since God displayed His love for me. The light hath dawned, the darkness is dispelled; I have obtained the jewel God by meditation on Him. When He conferreth happiness sorrow fleeth away; The jewel of my heart is absorbed in God's love (Adi-Granth, Prabhati 1).

Elsewhere Kabir says:

Birth is in accordance with penalties for deeds (Bijak, Ramanī 62).

Through wanderings and error man comes again to His house (Bijak, Ramanī 25).

The soul plays in many forms—in various garbs; Men like bees are swept away. After birth and death, it comes again into a body (Bijak, Ramanī 84).

On account of Karma, one appeared in the womb (Bijak, Ramanī 39).

Having wandered through the 84 lakhs of wombs he has come into the world; now having gone out of the body he has no spot nor place (i.e., he is liberated and thus no longer subject to time and space as he was during the samsāric life). Clear away the pain of birth and death, the pleasure of works, that the soul may be liberated from rebirth. 37

As we see from these verses, Kabir has used the doctrines of Karma and Samsāra in the same way as it is used in the Indian tradition. Under the influence of Hinduism some Sufis even before Kabir came to believe in the transmigration of the soul. But these Sufis did not use it along with the Hindu doctrine of Karma, though the idea of good works (a'īn-l-i-sāliha), always mentioned along with faith (īmān), is the recurrent theme.
of the Qur'an, necessary for salvation (mājāt). Kabir's use of the twin doctrine of Karma and Samsāra of Hinduism is another instance of his efforts to fuse the two religions by selecting some fundamental concepts from both religions.

KABIR'S CONCEPT OF MĀYĀ

Kabir appears to have used the concept of Māyā, but not in the same way as Sāṅkara used it. The latter used the concept to delineate the nature of the universe before us. He considers the world from the spiritual point of view as a mere appearance or an illusion and thus not real, in contrast to Brahman which is alone real. But since Kabir accepts the reality of the world around us though he does not recognise in it an eternal value, therefore he asks his followers not to attach themselves closely and affectionately to it. He used the term Māyā, which he borrowed from Hinduism in the sense of force of evil which alienates man from God. Kabir likens Māyā to a cleaver beguiler, full of lascivious charm, an evil woman, a witch, who entangles men with her deceit. It is in this sense that Macauliffe uses the word "mammon" to translate Māyā. It is because men are deluded by Māyā that they are not released from the toils of Karma. Kabir also speaks of men being deceived by Kāl. For example, after ten months you were brought from your mother's womb, and again were beset by Māyā. You have cherished hope of life. Kāl has choked your breath (Bījak, Sābda 89).

In Kabir's verses Māyā has an ethical content. Here the symbol of Māyā is not the "illusion" expounded by Sāṅkara.
According to Kabir, although this world is a fact yet it is the domain of illusion only in the sense that man should not attach himself to it considering this worldly life as permanent. Therefore, Kabir persistently speaks of the transitoriness of this world. God alone is permanent. Let us illustrate how Kabir personifies Maya:

Hail to the woman who hath turned the heads Of every holy men and penitents high and low! She is a miser's daughter; Rejecting God's worshippers she sleepeoth with everybody. At last standing at the saints' door, She saith, 'I have sought your protection, save me!' The woman is very beautifull; Her ornaments tinkle on her feet; As long as man is alive she attacheth herself to him; When he dieth she quickly departeth without waiting for her shoes.

The woman hath conquered the three worlds; She hath made the eighteen Purâns and the places of pilgrimage love her; She hath pierced the hearts of Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiv, And infatuated great kings and sovereigns. There are no bounds to the woman; She is in collusion with the five evil passions. Where the vessels of the five evil passions burst, Saith Kabir, I was delivered theace by the favour of the guru (Adi-Granth, Gauad 8).

In the following verses Kabir describes the universal influence of the Maya and the means of counteracting it:

The fishes in the water are led by Maya; The moths round the lamp are influenced by Maya; Through Maya, the elephant fleeth lust; Creeping things and bumble-bees perish through Maya— My brethren, Maya is so bewitching; That she illudeth all living beings— Birds and beasts are imbued with Maya; She causeth great hardship to the honey-bees; Horses and camels are saturated with Maya; The eighty-four Siddhas are the sport of Maya; The six Jatis are the slaves of Maya; So are the nine Naths, the sun, and the moon; Penitents and the supreme Rishis are lulled by Maya; In the power of Maya are Death and his five messengers; Dogs and jackals are imbued with Maya; So are monkeys, leopards, lions, Cats, sheep, and foxes; Trees and tubers are subject to Maya;
The demigods are saturated with Maya;
So are the ocean, the firmament, and the earth.
Saith Kabir, he who hath a belly is subject to Maya;
But man shall be freed from her influence when
he hath found a saint (Adi-Granth, Sahir 13).

Deceitful Maya hath led captive the whole world, but
I have obtained immunity by repeating God's name (Adi-
Granth, Asa 25).

Maya and Desire are troubles of the world;
But no one thinks so of this.
Maya and Desire are a troublesome noose;
He who escapes therefrom is a true worshipper.
O Saints, that which comes and goes, is Maya (Bijak, Ramani 70).

In the form of a dwarf he did not tempt Bali;
that which tempts is Maya.
For lack of understanding the whole world
is bewildered;
Maya has deluded the world (Bijak, Sabda 8).

God, according to Kabir, is one, and man can have a
relationship of love and affection, and even a union with
Him; but man is in the grip of Karma and Samsara, and deluded
by Maya. The religious systems of the Hindús and the Muslims,
Kabir would tell us, with all their external ceremonies and
observances are of no use to get out of the grip of these
forces. Therefore, Kabir would teach us to give up all rites
and rituals and turn to God surrendering to Him fully with
love and a pure heart. This brings us to other points of
Kabir's teaching. They are bhakti, dhikr, purity of heart,
guidance of a guru, etc., which, according to Kabir, will
alone help to achieve salvation, and not what the orthodox
practices of the Hindús and the Muslims.

KABIR'S CONCEPT OF BHAKTI

Kabir is in the line of succession of those religious
reformers who advocated bhakti or loving devotion to God
as the only means of finding God and thus achieving salvation.
Therefore, *bhakti* is the foundation on which Kabir bases his spirituality or piety. In connection with this, he speaks often of repeating (*dhikr*) the name of God (Rama) which is in the style of the Sufis and in that of the Rama-bhakti. To Kabir, however, this was not a mere magic formula. The mere repetition of the name of God would not bring salvation any more than a man can taste sweetness by repeating the word "sugar". The repetition or remembrance of the name of God with Kabir, seems rather to be a means by which he reminds himself of God's reality and brings to recollection all that the name connotes, and so it helps him to realise his union with God. But the *dhikr* must not be mere lip service; the most fundamental thing that is needed is purity of heart, for God dwells in the heart.

The relation between God and man, according to Kabir, as to all Hindu and Muslim mystics, is love. In this connection, we find Kabir, like the Alvars, using the analogy of husband-wife relation, God being the husband to whom the devotee is attached by love, trust and obedience. Kabir also frequently speaks of "drinking the elixir of Rama", which is a characteristic Sufi style of expressing the deep satisfaction that is obtained by ecstatic union with God. However, the verses of Kabir on *bhakti* present a style that is quite new. The style is at once simple, spontaneous and marked by a passion which is common to Hindu and Muslim mysticism, and we might call it Indo-Islamic in character. Let us illustrate some of these verses:

*Without devotion life is spent to no purpose;*
*Without worshippin' the Lord in the society of the pious[saints], happiness remains in none.*
What is muttering, what austerity, what vows and worship to him in whose heart there is another love.

What muttering, what austerity and control of the passions, what vows and ablutions; so long as the right, loving worship of the Lord is not known.

In another place Kabir considers devotion as the water which has quenched his burning thirst for God:

I have been on fire, and have now found the name of God as water to extinguish it:
The name of God is the water which hath cooled my burning body.
Men go to the forest to chasten their hearts,
But without God they cannot find such water as will do so.
The water of God's name hath saved his burning slave.
From the fire which hath consumed demi-gods and men.
In the terrible ocean there is an ocean of happiness; I continue to drink, but the water is not exhausted.
Saith Kabir, worship God.
God's name is the water which hath extinguished my thirst (Adi-Granth, Gauri 1).

According to Kabir, all are lost without bhakti:

The Hindus kill themselves worshipping idols,
the Musalmans make prostrations;
The former are burned, the latter buried;
but neither sect knoweth anything of Thee, O God.
O my soul, the world is stark blind;
On all sides Death's noose is thrown, but men see it not.
Poets kill themselves reciting verses;
the Kapalikas kill themselves going to Kedarnath;
Jogis kill themselves wearing matted hair;
but they know nothing of Thee, O God.
Kings kill themselves amassing wealth and burying masses of gold;
Pandits kill themselves reading the Vedas, and women in gazing on their beauty—
Without the name of God all these are lost; think and wonder upon this, O man.
Without the name of God who hath obtained salvation?
Kabir giveth his admonition (Adi-Granth, Surat 1).

Again, Kabir says that he requires nothing for salvation but only God's name:

It is through insufficient devotion men go to the heavens of Indra and Shiv and are born again.
What shall I pray for? nothing is stable.
Keep God's name in thy heart;
Fame, power, wealth and greatness
Help no one at the last moment(cf. Q. 3.10).
Say who hath derived any happiness
From son, wife, or wealth(cf. Q. 2.48; 3.10).
Saith Kabir, nothing else availeth me;
The name of God is sufficient wealth for my heart(Adi-Granth, Dhansari 4).

DHIKR(REMEMBERANCE OF GOD)

Turning to the subject of remembering God, Kabir says that salvation can be obtained only by remembering God's name(cf. Q. 76.25) and by loving Him:

Remember God, remember God, remember God, my brethren!
Without remembering God's name the majority of men shall be lost.
Wife, son; body, house, and wealth confer happiness;
But none of these shall be thine when the time of death arriveth.
Ajamal, the elephant, and the courtesan committed sinful acts;
Yet they were saved by repeating God's name.
By brethren, you have wandered in the wombs of pigs and dogs, and yet you are not ashamed.
Why forsake the ambrosia of God's name and eat poison?
Abandon doubt regarding acts which are prescribed as well as those which are forbidden,
and take God's name.
The slave Kabir saith, by the favour of the guru love God(Adi-Granth, Dhansari 5).

In the following verses Kabir tells us that he was not an intellectual but was frenzied with divine love by doing dhikr(reciting and repeating) of God's name:

I am not skilled in book knowledge,
nor do I understand controversy;
I have grown mad reciting and hearing God's praises.
O Father, I am mad; the whole world is sane;
I am mad;
I am ruined; let not others be ruined likewise;
I have not grown mad of mine own will;
God hath made me mad—
The true guru hath dispelled my doubts—
I am ruined, and have lost my intellect;
Let nobody be led astray in doubts like mine,
He who knoweth not himself is mad;
When one knoweth himself he knoweth the one God.
He who is not intoxicated with divine love in this human birth shall never be so.

Salih Kabir, I am dyed with the dye of God (i.e. imbued with God's love) (Adi-Granth, Bilawal).

The ambrosial name I repeat with my tongue;

God hath made me His unbothered slave (Adi-Granth, Gauri).

Deceitful Maya hath led captive the whole world,

but I have obtained immunity by repeating Rama's name (Adi-Granth, Asa 25).

Repeat the name of Rama, thou madman!

the ocean of existence is hard to cross (Bijak, Sabda 5).

In the following verses Kabir says remember God and do Him homage:

Remember in thy heart the Being,

By whose remembrance thou shalt obtain

the gate of deliverance;

Go to heaven, and return not to this world.

Play the trumpets in the house of the Fearless One;

And the unceasing strain shall ever fully resound for thee.

Without remembering Him deliverance can never be obtained.

Heartily bow before the Being,

By remembering whom none may refuse thee;

Who conferr'est salvation by which great loads

of sin drop off,

And thy transmigration is at an end.

Remember Him through whom thou enjoyest thyself,

And an everburning lamp shall be placed within thee—

The lamp (divine knowledge) which rendereth the world immortal,

And expelleth the poison of lust and wrath.

Twine and wear on thy neck the rosary

Of Him by remembering whom thy salvation

shall be obtained.

Remember the Beloved day and night (cf. Q. 76.25),

And thou shalt have no regard for men;

Thou shalt sleep at home in silken bed-clothes,

And thy heart shall be gladdened by a pleasant couch.

Ever remember God in thy heart and sing His praises.

By remembering Him thy troubles shall depart;

And Maya affect thee not.

From the true-guru learn how to remember God;

Remember Him ever day and night.

Standing or sitting, at every expiration and inspiration,

Waking or sleeping, enjoy the sweets of remembering Him;

By remembering God thou shalt be united with Him.

Make the remembrance of God's name thy support;

By remembering Him no weight of sin shall oppress thee.

Neither wrought nor spoken incantations can prevail

with Him;

Salih Kabir, who hath no limit (Adi-Granth, Ramkali 9).
Kabir's sayings on the remembrance of God are very much like those found in the Qur'an and in Sufi literature. In the Qur'an the dhikr of God has been emphasised so much that we are asked to remember God in the morning and in the evening, day and night, standing and sitting, and even in every moment. And in the Sufi theology, the practice of dhikr is emphasised with equal weight along with other primary obligations. In their language it is said: dhikr Allah har dam (remember God every moment).

KABIR'S CONCEPT OF THE PURITY OF HEART

According to Kabir, the mere remembrance and repetition of God's name will lead to nothing. What is needed is the purity of heart. Thus he says:

God cannot be obtained even by offering one's weight in gold;
But I have purchased Him with my soul [heart];
And now that I recognise Him as mine own,
My mind is naturally at ease (Adi-Granth, Gauri 19).

Unless you remove evil from your hearts,
how shall you find God by dwelling in the forest?
They who deem their own homes equal to the forest are perfect among men.
You shall obtain true happiness,
If you lovingly repeat the name of the Life of the world
What avail wearing matted hair, smearing yourself with ashes, and dwelling in caves?
He who hath conquered his own heart hath conquered the world, because he is free from the deadly sins.

Saith Kabir, I now know God; the guru hath explained divine knowledge to me;
I have met God who dwelleth in the heart;
my mind shall now no more wander (Adi-Granth, Maru 2).

Kabir says contemptuously that ceremonies, austerities, fasting and worship of stones, and love for worldly things do not help in obtaining God; but only devotion with a pure and
upright heart God is achieved:

What availeth devotion, what penance, what fasting and worship
To him in whose heart there is worldly love?
O man, apply thy heart to God;
Thou shalt not obtain Him by artifice.
Put away covetousness and the example of others;
Lay aside lust, wrath, and pride.
By the religious practices of the superstitious boasting is increased;
They join together and worship a stone.
Saith Kabir, by devotion I have obtained the Lord;
By becoming simple in heart I have met God (Adi-Granth, Gauric 9).

Then Kabir says that without purification of the heart pilgrimages are of no avail:

The heart is not satisfied with pilgrimages to the banks of sacred streams;
Man remaineth entangled with good and bad acts (Adi-Granth, Gauric 9).

In another place Kabir says that death triumphs over all except God's sincere worshippers:

This world is like a show; none may remain here;
Proceed the straight way, otherwise thou shalt be severely buffeted.
Children, the old, and the young, O my brethren, shall all be taken away by Death.
God hath made poor man like a mouse; Death like a cat enteth him up;
He payeth no regard to rich or poor;
He destroyeth kings equally with their subjects—so mighty is Death!
They who please God become His worshippers, and theirs is a special case;
They neither come nor go (not subject to moksha); they never die; God is with them.
Know in your hearts that by korsakins, son, wife, wealth, and property which are perishable,
Saith Kabir, you shall meet the Lord; hear this, O ye saints (Adi-Granth, Bilawal 1).

KABIR'S LOVE RELATION WITH GOD

Kabir's love poems are very fine indeed. In connection with this, he uses the analogy of husband-wife relations bound by the cord of love. Let us illustrate some of Kabir's mystical love songs recorded in the Bilawal. Speaking of the
nature of love which is his common theme, and about the
sacrifice that the Beloved wants, Kabir says:

This is love's abode, not the home of a dear aunt.
He who severs his head and places it on the ground,
is admitted.
He who severs the head, places it on the ground
then tramples it under foot,
Says Kabir, if such a one be thou, enter thou.
Love grows not in the garden, nor is in the
market sold:
Whoever likes it, king or subject, let him
purchase with his head.
I have drunk the brimful cup of love, the guru
with knowledge hath imbued me.
Of the Word I have sounded the trumpet:
the warrior stands in the field.
One moment that overpowers and at another
that passes away is not love.
The unwithering love that dwells at all time
that is love.
The love that made its appearance, where has it gone?
Everyone had seen it.
Weeping at one moment, laughing at the next,
could that be love.
Love, Love, everyone utters, but love none truly knows.
That which absorbs thee at all the moments,
that is love.

So long as I-ness existed, the Guru could not enter:
with the parting of I-ness, the Guru stepped in.
For, the love of lane is very narrow,
two it cannot contain.
The heart wherein love flows not, deem thou
the burning ghūṭ.
Or deem this body the blacksmith's bellows
which heave though they contain not.
If I heard love in exchange for the head
in market being sold.
I shall lose no time in entering the bargain and
instantly sever my head, and offer it.
Without love there is no peace, without pain
of separation there is no renunciation.
Without the Guru, the blemishes of the soul[heart]
and the mind cannot be wiped out.

Let thy love be like the Chakor's love for the moon.
Even if the severed head falls to the ground;
the gaze still is fixed in the moon.
Great is the love of the fish for water;
aught else falls short of it.
As soon as it is separated from water life departs.
Dost thou want to taste the draughts of love,
and yet maintain pride?
Know the impossibility—two swords in one sheath
have never been seen nor heard.
Kabir has clasped to his heart the cup of love, 
It has permeated every pore of his body, what 
need for addition is left? 
Kabir! Round the oven of love, many a one took his seat. 
They proffered their head, drank, whilst others 
left without getting drink. 
I tried many medicines but none was efficacious. 
like love. 
Love starts in one part of the body, and the 
whole is transmuted to gold. 42.

In another place Kabir says:

All are wives of Rama: unmoving Purusha 
is the Husband(Bilak, Ramaini 27).

Man's love is toward woman and woman's love 
toward man. 
But they who love the Purusha alone are 
few in all the world(Bilak, Ramaini 50).

Through blindness none has rest: not one considers; 
Not knowing the bhakti of Hari, the whole world 
is drowned and dead(Bilak, Ramaini 65).

Still in another place Kabir says that his whole body was 
burning with God's love: it is useless to try to heal any 
particular part of it:

There is no special part of my body to which 
I may apply healing ointment 
I have examined my body but found no such place. 
He who feeleth pain knoweth it; 
The service of God is a barbed arrow; 
I consider all women to be alike; 
Who knoweth which shall be dear to the Bridegroom? 
Saith Kabir, the Husband, forsaking all other women, 
Shall meet her on whose forehead such lot hath been 
written(Adi-Granth, Gauri 21).

KABIR'S CONCEPT OF PRAPATTI: ASLAMA (SUBMISSION TO GOD)

However, Kabir says that bhakti, purity of heart, dhikr 
and love alone cannot help us in obtaining God's grace, we, 
rather, have to surrender ourselves completely to the mercy 
of God who takes care of us. This doctrine of prapatti or 
absolute surrender to God is a common phenomenon of Hindu 
and Muslim mysticism. But it received a special emphasis with
the Vaiṣṇava bhaktas after Rāmānuja. On the question whether or not prapatti is the only means of bhakti religion or one of the means, the disciples of Rāmānuja split up into two schools. The southern school accepted the first alternative, which Kabir has also accepted. This doctrine has reference both in the Gītā (18.56-58, 65-69) and in the Qur'ān (5.119; 9.119; and also cf. 8.17). The Sufis took special interest in these verses of the Qur'ān and interpreted them as evidence for man's obligation to surrender to a loving God who takes the first step towards man, the elect of His creation, to draw him unto Him by thy powerful cords of love. So, in the very mood of the Sufis, and the teaching of the Gītā, Kabir places himself altogether in God's power:

"Thy commands are acceptable to men; I consider not their propriety, Thou art the river, Thou art the pilot, from Thee is salvation. O man, embrace the service of God, Whether He be angry with thee or love thee, Thy name, of God, is my support, as a woman rejoiceth on beholding her son. Saith Kabir, I am the slave of Thy house, preserve me or destroy me (Adi-Granth, Gaurī 67)."

The poor soul of man is tied to this world with many knots. It cannot unloose itself without the help of God.43

As many as are making efforts, they are drowned; the ocean is not crossed by them. Though they be performing works, and many abstinences, their mind is burnt by egotism.44

In the following verses, Kabir says that man should rely on God and practise humility:

Without God what succour hath man? The love of parents, brethren, sons, and wife is all fleeting. Construct a raft for the other world; what reliance can be placed on wealth?
What confidence can be reposed in this vessel, if it be chinked in the slightest? Thou shalt obtain the fruit of all religion and good works if thou desire to become the dust of everybody's feet (Adi-Granth Saran 3).

KABIR'S CONCEPT OF KARMA AND QADR (FATE)

In these verses we have clear evidence that Kabir believed in Qadr as in Karma. In accordance with the idea that man must surrender to God's grace, Kabir, like the Sufis, tells us that man does not have power to do anything. All power belongs to God. The verse of the Qur'an which describes the battle of Badr says that it was not Muhammad who did everything for the victory, but it was God: "So it was not ye who slew them (enemies), but God slew them; thou didst not cast when thou didst cast, but God cast" (8.17). Commenting on this verse, A. J. Arberry says:

These words constantly meditated seemed to the Sufi conclusive evidence that God even acts through the instrumentality of man when He finds man worthy to become His instrument. Just as the miracle of the grovelstones and dust scattered by God into the eyes of the Meccans at Badr decisively influenced the issue in the struggle between faith and unbelief, so at all times God is able and ready to work wonders, in the persons of His saints, to prove the realities of His religion.

Man is only the instrument through which God does His work. This is the idea we have also in the case of the battle of Kurukṣetra where in fact Kṛṣṇa did everything through the instrumentality of Arjuna, or the Pandava brothers, for the sake of Dharma against evils. Kabir, being a mixture of two religions, believed in both the doctrines of Karma as well as Qadr. His faith in fate is further expressed in the following verses:
Whatever I did, you did; I did nothing myself; Should man say, I did it, it was in your strength that it was done. Everything is from God and nothing from His servant; He can change a mustard seed into a mountain and a mountain into a mustard seed; In blessings, O God, thou surpassest all, in Thy dealings with men Thou art without a rival; God is chief of all kings...

Whatever occurreth is according to Thy will, O God; He who understandeth this shall be easily absorbed in Thee (Adi-Granth, Prabhati 1).

In conformity with the same idea of helplessness on the part of man, and God being the All-powerful helper, Kabir teaches us not to be too anxious in taking care of ourselves. God takes care of all His creatures. This attitude of trust in God is an important doctrine of tasawwuf, called Tawakkul fala Allah, which has been enjoined by the Qur'an, and God loves the mutawakkilun (those who trust God and are dependent on Him) (cf. Q. 3.153). Hence Kabir says:

Feel no care, be free from care; the giver is powerful; the beasts of the field, the birds and the insects have neither wealth nor store house.
The tortoise takes care of its egg; without breasts it supplies its needs; so God provides for all and makes provision for the three Lokas (i.e. earth, heaven and hell).

KABIR'S CONCEPT OF GURU-PIR

However, bhakti, love, dhikr, purity of heart and pranattī are not enough by themselves. In order that man may be able to find God and enjoy a spiritual union with Him, Kabir advocates that man needs a path-finder or a spiritual preceptor (guru, pir). This was another idea he took over from Sufism and Hindu mysticism. In Islamic tradition there is no scriptural support for showing reverence to a pir. But the Sufis,
apparently having adopted it from Hindus, gave so much importance to it that they even surpassed the originator of the tradition. During the medieval period in both Sufism and Hindu mysticism the status of a spiritual preceptor was raised to that of divinity. Many preceptors were deified and worshipped. Kabir, however, was different from all of them. Sometimes in his verses, he uses the word guru to mean God whom he also calls the Sat Guru (True Teacher). God is the Great Teacher to whom Kabir would resort for guidance. Still he also believes that the instruction of an earthly guru is valuable, one who himself has experienced enlightenment and union with God, and one who is willing to pass on to others the blessings he has himself received. But Kabir cautions that great care must be taken in choosing a guru, so that a pretended teacher may be avoided. But when a true or right guru is found he must be treated with reverence. Kabir says many laudatory things of this kind of guru as he warns against the false guru. In his estimation, the true guru is one whose love is fixed on God, who recognises his own worthlessness apart from God, who lives for others. For such a one death has lost its terror. He is the true guide and walks in the path of God. Thus Kabir says:

Strain your water before you drink it;
test your guru before you commit yourself to him.
When the guru is covetous, his disciple will be grasping; both employ trickery; both will be drowned in their folly, having boarded the ship of stone. 51

The chela (disciple) whose guru is blind, while he himself is more blind; the blind one gives a push to his blind fellow, they both fall into the well (Gupta, Sakh 155).
Regard your guru as a knife grinder, let him grind your heart; cleansing the heart from all impurity, let him make it bright as a mirror.

He who has chosen a bodily guru (guru in pretension) and has failed to recognize the true guru; time after time he rises and sinks, ensnared in the ocean of existence.

That day is blessed which causes you to meet a holy man; as you embrace him fervently, sin is driven from the body.

Through association with Sadhu comes remembrance of God; that hour is recorded to a man’s credit in his account with God; all the rest is valueless as air.

The Sadhu is the river, love is the water; in that place wash your body; Kabir says, ‘be clean in company with the Sadhus.’

That death which terrifieth the whole world, The guru’s instruction hath set before me in a clear light (Adi-Granth, Gauri 20).

Thou (God) art the True Guru, I am thy novice (Adi-Granth, Gauri 2).

I worship the True Guru, and ever and ever propitiate Him;

For such service I shall obtain happiness in His Court (Adi-Granth, Bhaire 6).

By the favour of the guru thou shalt obtain the wealth of God (Adi-Granth, Asa 15).

In the following verses Kabir speaks about the absolute necessity of a guru:

Can a man without feet ever leap?
Can a man without a mouth burst into laughter?
Without sleep can man repose?
Can one churn milk without a churn?
Can a cow without an udder give milk?
Can one accomplish a long journey without a road?
So the way cannot be found without a true guru,
Kabir saith, and admonisheth all men (Adi-Granth, Basant 3).

As water will not remain without a vessel,
So without a religious guide man shall go to hell.
Burn him who thinketh not on God,
But whose mind is ever absorbed in the field of his body.
As without a ploughman land cannot be tilled,
As without a thread jewels cannot be strung.
And as without a loop clothes cannot be fastened,
So without a holy guide man shall go to hell.
As a child cannot be born without a father and mother,  
As clothes cannot be washed without water,  
As one cannot ride without an equipage,  
As without music there cannot be dancing,  
So without a guru man cannot reach God's court.  
As the bad woman leaving her husband looketh for another,  
thus eager should man be to obtain a guru.  
Saith Kabir, do one thing—  
Become holy and thou shalt not die again (Adi-Granth, Guru 9).

There are innumerable verses and couplets in which Kabir has expressed himself on the necessity of guidance by a preceptor. It is not necessary to quote all of them. The important point to note in this connection is that though his conceptions of guru and dīr and the efficacy of their teaching for spiritual progress are in line with those of Hindu and Muslim mystics, still he would not raise the position of a preceptor to divine rank. But his disciples, after his death, deified him and worshipped him as an incarnation of God.

Having described all the essentials of his teaching, Kabir tells us that salvation can only be obtained by true bhakti, dīkr, pure heart and word of guru:

However great man's exertions without God's name,  
he shall be drowned in the terrible ocean  
and not cross over.  
Thou hast practised thy religious duties and great austerities, yet pride consumeth thy soul.  
Why hast thou forgotten the Lord who is the giver of life and food?  
Human birth is a priceless diamond or ruby;  
thou hast lost it for a kauri.  
Not having thought of God in thy heart,  
thou sufferest from the thirst of covetousness and the hunger of error;  
The intoxication of pride deceipteth those who keep not the word of the guru in their hearts.  
Sinful are they who are led away by pleasure,  
who are tempted by sensual delights, and who enjoy the savour of wine.  
They who by destiny keep the company of the saints,  
float over like iron attached to timber.
Through error I have wandered among human and lower births; I am now weary and overspent with travail. Saith Kabir, on meeting the guru I have felt great joy, and my love and devotion have saved me (Adi-Granth, Gauri 56).

Again:

O my soul, repeat God's name
As did Dharu and Prahlad of old,
O Thou compassionate to the poor,
my reliance is on Thee.
I have therefore embarked all my family on the guru's raft.
If it please God He will have His order obeyed,
And cause this raft to float over.
By the favour of the guru such knowledge hath filled me
That all my transmigration is at an end.
Saith Kabir, worship God;
In this world and the next, everywhere, it is
He alone who knoweth (Adi-Granth, Gauri 61).

Ask not a Sādhu about his caste, but about his knowledge of God;
When you are determining the price of a sword,
there is no need to consider the sheath. 55

KABIR'S SENSE OF HUMILITY

Another aspect of Kabir's essential teaching is his great sense of humility. In that, he considers himself as the humblest of all, a great singer and worthless. He urges people to ponder on their sin or guilt and not to attach themselves to the world which is impermanent and transitory. "Kabir's conceptions of sin and death", remarks Macauliffe, "agree with the general conception of them with a special hint to Islamic idea of sin and emphasis on the transitoriness of the world." The famous verse of the Qur'ān which says:

"Everything upon the earth passeth away; save His face (55.26),
taken by the Sūfis as the basis on which to found their characteristic doctrine of passing away (fanā), of human attributes through union with God. This verse of the Qur'ān is responsible for taking the Sūfis think of the transitoriness of the world which they otherwise consider a dread reality. The world,
according to the Sufis, is a place where an opportunity for service to God is available. But before the mighty Death lays its icy hand on us, we must avail ourselves every moment of our life to serve God. An analogy of all these Sufistic ideas is found in the verses of Kabir quoted below:

A sinner from my birth, in sin from head to foot I lie;  
O generous giver, comforter, but listen to my cry.  
I am the worst of all, every one is good except me;  
who considers himself in this light, he is my friend.

How shall I cross the sea, 0 Master?  
How shall I cross the sea? I am full of my sins.  
How shall I serve and worship Thee, how meditate on Thee?  
only without am I white, just like a heron.  
My nature is a snake's, and I am a great sinner.  
The conscience is foul, an. like a cat.  
I see it to be contrary and crazed, wrapped in the cloak of the six Darfars.  
Kabir says, Listen, 0 men that are mine:  
all are caught in the nose of scheming witch(Slink:  
Sadda 10).  
Though man leave his home for the forest region  
and gather tubers to live on,  
His sinful and evil mind even then abandoneth not misdeeds.  
How shall I be saved? how cross over the great terrible ocean?  
Preserve me, preserve me, 0 God; I Thy slave have... Thing...  
The desire to gratify my evil passions forsaken me not;  
Though I make many efforts to guard myself against them,  
I am entangled in them again and again.  
My life hath passed—youth and old age—  
no good have I done;  
This priceless human life attached itself to a kauri and become like it.  
Saith Kabir, 0 my God, Thou art contained in everything;  
There is none so merciful as Thou,  
none so sinful as I(Adi-Granth, Bialam 3).  
O my soul, thou hast no helper, drag not the weight of others: sins behind thee(Adi-Granth, Ghardi 31).  
In the following verses Kabir says that when the deadly sins are subdued man arrives at a knowledge of the one God and obtains salvation:

When the wick of pride is dry and the oil  
of worldly love is spent;
When the drum of boasting is not heard, 
and the mind is fast asleep,

When the strings are broken,
the rebeck no longer playeth,—
Man hath ruined his affairs, by error—
When man obtaineth understanding he shall forget
Parching, ranting, arguing, and intoning.
Saieth Kabir, the highest dignity shall not be far
from those
Who crush their deadly sins (Adi-Granth, Asa 11).

KABIR’S CONCEPT OF THE TRANSITORY NATURE OF THE WORLD

Kabir was a weaver. Sometimes he expresses his idea of
the world and our existence in it bound by law of Karma in
the language of a weaver:

As a bird percheth on a tree,
such is the world (transitory).
I have drunk the elixir of God
By which other elixirs are forgotten.
Since we are not permanent ourselves,
why should we mourn the death of others?
Whatever is born perisheth;
why should we be sorry and weep for that?
When man becometh attached to holy man,
he drinketh God’s elixir, and is devoted
to Him from whom he hath sprung.
Saieth Kabir, I have thought of God in my heart;
resigning the world remember Him (Adi-Granth, Gauri 64).

No one know the mystery of that weaver,
who came into the world and spread the warp.
The earth and the sky are the two beams,
The sun and moon are two filled shuttles,
Taking a thousand threads he spreads them lengthways;
Today he weaveth still, but hard to reach is the
far off end (Bilak, Ramani 28).

It seems that by threads Kabir alludes to the threads
of Karma, and the fabric into which they are woven appears to
be the human body which is the sum total of conscious and
unconsciousness. This is one instance how Kabir used ideas
borrowed from Hinduism. Again in the very mood of the Sufis,
Kabir says:

What thou seest that is passing away:
Whom thou dost not see, on him continue to reflect.
When in the tenth gate the key (knowledge) is given:
then the sight of the merciful one is obtained. 59

As the stars at dawn pass away, so the world
passes away; these two letters (Ram) do not
pass away, then Kabir has seized. 60

Worldly life is like a dream,
But, believing the world to be real, I attached
myself to it, and abandoned the supreme treasure.
Oh, father, I made love to the courtesan manon,
And she stole from me the jewel of divine knowledge.
With its eyes open, the moth becomes entangled;
the insect regards not the flame;
So, stupid man attached to gold and women heceth
not Death’s nose.
Reflect, abandon sin; and God will save thee.
Saith Kabir, such is the Life of the world;
He hath no equal (Adi-Granth, Asa 27).

In another place Kabir describes the perishable nature
of the world, and of our body which is made of clay (cf. Q. 7.12;
15.26-27,33) in a beautiful song. Thus he remonstrates with
those who think that the human body is something to be embelli-
shed and preserved:

Man in this world is wholly sinful from his very
birth, and there are many ready to claim his body.
The parents say, ‘He is our child and we have
nourished him for our own benefit.’ The wife says,
‘He is my husband,’ and like a tigress wishes to
seize him. The children gaze at him, and like the
god of death, keep their mouths wide open for support.
The vulture and the crow look forward to his death.
The pigs and the dogs wait on the road for his bier
to pass on its way to the burning ghat. The fire says,
‘I shall not leave him, until he is utterly consumed.’
The earth says, ‘I shall obtain him.’ The winds think
of carrying him off. O ignorant people, you speak
of this body as your house; do you not see that a
hundred enemies hang about your throat? Beguiled by
the illusion of this world, you regard such a body
as your own. So many desire a share in your body that
you will live in trouble all your life. 0 madmen,
you do not wake up to a knowledge of this, but repeatedly
say, ‘It is mine; it is mine.’ 61

As we can see, in these verses Kabir’s view of the transitory
nature of the world and human body is very Hindu or Muslim.
KABIR'S CONCEPT OF DEATH

According to Sufi tradition, the fact of death should be remembered as frequently as possible (udhkuru al-mawla kathiran), for remembrance of death, as it may happen any moment, leads one to work for the next world more and more.

In the verses of Kabir on death the same idea is found clearly. In the following verses Kabir says that all must die at last; God's name is their only support:

Jogis, celibates, penitents, anchorites,
They who wander on many pilgrimages,
They who pluck out and shave their hair,
They who practise silence, and they who wear matted locks, must all die at last;
Wherefore worship God.

What can the Jamna (Jumna) do for those whose tongues love God's name?
They who know the Shastras (Sastras), the Vedas (Vedas),
Astrology, and various languages,
Who know written and spoken incantations,
And all medical science, must die at last.
They who enjoy empires, umbrellas, thrones,
Many beautiful women,
Betel, camphor, and highly fragrant sandal,
Must die at last.
The Vedas, Puranas, and Sāraśī (Śārīśī) I have all searched, but there is no salvation anywhere in them.

Saith Kabir, so repeat God's name that transmigration may be at an end (Adi-Granth, 31-5).

In the following verses Kabir says that none may escape physical death, but it brings salvation to the holy men:

Man hearing all the instructions of the Vedas
And the Puranas (Puranis), desires to perform religious ceremonies to overcome death.
Death hath seized all people, even the wise;
The Pandits too depart without hope.
0 man, thou hast not succeeded in thy sole subject
Since thou hast not worshipped the supreme God.
Men have gone to the forests, practised jor,
Performed austerities, and lived on the tubers
And roots they picked up.
The Nādis (Sūtras), the readers of the Vedas,
The Ekshādiś, and the Kondas are all
Enrolled in Death's register.
Lovin: service entereth not into man's heart; he pampereth his body and giveth it to death; he hypocritically singeth hymns, but what can he obtain from God? 

Death hath fallen on the whole world; in his register the sceptical theologian is recorded. 

Smith Kabir, they who know God's love and devotion to God are pure (Adi-Granth, Sorath 3).

What thou art doing tomorrow, do now. 
What thou art doing now, do it at once. 
Afterwards nothing will be done, when death comes on thy head. 63

Death of which the world is afraid, is joy to my mind, by death the full perfect joy is obtained. 64

In the above verses, Kabir seems to have used death in the sense of bodily death, that is, the end of his samsaric life and the beginning of living for ever in union with God.

In another verse the idea has been made further clear:

On the day on which I died, on that day joy sprang up. The Lord met with me, Govind honours his own companion. 65

KABIR'S MORAL AND ETHICAL TEACHING

Corollary to his sense of humility, and his consciousness of the impermanence of the world and everything in it, Kabir teaches us to give up pride, ego, covetousness, anger, etc.

Kabir's moral and ethical teaching can be compared with those of the Buddha, or for that matter with that of any great mystic of the world. His verses teaching morality are simple but extremely penetrating and appealing. Thus he says:

What is the use of greatness? the palm is a tall tree, but none sits under its shade and its fruit is out of reach. 66

The tree bears not fruit for itself, nor for itself does the stream collect its waters; for the benefit of others alone does the sage assume a bodily shape. 67
The pride of intellect is manifold,
now a swindler, now a thief; now a liar,
now a murderer; men, sages and gods have
run after it in vain; its mansion has a
hundred gates.
In pride there is adversity, in sin there is
suffering; in kindness there is stability,
and in forgiveness there is God.
The righteous man does not give up his piety,
though he meets with crores of wicked persons:
even as the sandal tree is not deprived of
its cooling properties though venomous
snakes twine round it.
The black snake is in the heart.
It has deposited venom in the souls of all;
the few who sincerely worship the true God,
will be saved.68

To be truthful is best of all, if the heart be
truthful. A man may speak as much as he likes;
but there is no pleasure apart from truthfulness.
He who has no check upon his tongue,
no truth is in his heart;
with such a one keep not company.
He will kill you on the highway. 69

You call yourselves pandits, virtuous, brave,
generous, and assert that you alone are great;
It is only when this pride of yours is forgotten
that you shall be absorbed in Him from whom
you sprang.
Only he understandeth whom Thou, O God,
causest to understand(cf. Q. 2.272);
how can man obtain permanence without
understanding(Adi-Granth, Gauri 51).

Rawan had to leave the golden fortress and
strongholds which he had made—
O man, why actest thou as it pleaseth thyself?
When Death cometh and catcheth thee by the hair,
only God's name will save thee.
Death and life are the work of God;
this deceitful world is only an entanglement;
Saith Kabir, they who have the elixir of God
in their hearts shall ultimately be saved(Adi-Granth,
Mark 6).

Thou who art saturated with lust, wrath,
and covetousness, knowest not the way of the One God.
Thine eyes are burst, thou seest nothing,
thy soul drowned even without water.
Why walkest thou so foppishly?
Thou art a compound of bones, skin, and filth,
and saturated with evil odour.
Thou repeatest not God's name; in what doubts hast thou gone astray? Death is not far from thee. Whatever efforts thou makest to preserve thy body, shall it last when thy term of life is complete? Nothing resulteth from thine efforts; what can any mortal do? If it be God's will, man shall meet a true guru and repeat the One name. Thou livest in a house of sand and suffest out thy body, 0 simpleton. Saith Kabir, they, however clever, who remember not God are lost (Adi-Granth, Kedara 4).

In another place Kabir says in an eloquent language how he subdued his evil passions by waging a war. At the end of the war, which he won, he obtained salvation:

-o How shall I subdue this beautiful fortress (body), my brother, which hath double walls (doubts and wrong-headedness) and triple moats (three Gunas), whose entrenchments are the five subtle elements, the twenty-five categories (Sākhya conception of body), worldly love, pride, jealousy, and very powerful Maya? I who am poor cannot obtain strength to take that fortress; what shall I do 0 God? Lust is its folding doors; woe and weal its gate-keepers, demented and merits its gates; Anger, which is very quarrelsome, its commander; and the heart its rebelling. The defenders had dainties for their coats of mail, egoism for their helmets, and evil understanding for their bows they draw; Covetousness, which dwelleth in the quiver of the heart, became their arrows; thus the fortress was impregnable.
But I made divine love the fuse, meditation the howitzer, and divine knowledge the shells; I gently lit the fuse with the fire of God's name, and captured the fortress with one shot.
I began to fight assisted by truth and contentment, and battered both its doors;
By the favour of the congregation of the saints and of the guru I made its king a prisoner. By dint of remembering God I, a coward, have cut the noose of Death.
The slave Kabir hath scaled the fortress, and secured an imperishable empire (Adi-Granth, Bhairo 17).

KABIR'S CONCEPT OF THE FINAL GOAL

From these verses we get the clear idea that Kabir, like
other Hindu and Muslim mystics, recognises the final goal of the soul: the union with God for which he was striving. That union being his ultimate goal, he has no desire for heaven or hell, but only for God's love. Thus he says:

For those who know Him not, are heaven and hell;  
They who know Hari have no part in them.  
I take no thought for sin or virtue;  
Neither to heaven nor hell go I (Bhag. Sab. 42).

The men who have no correct notion of the Supreme Being,  
Think of entering heaven by mere words,  
I know not where heaven is;  
Everybody saith he longeth to go there,  
But there is no satisfaction in such conversation—  
The heart is only satisfied when pride departeth.  
As long as man desireth to go to heaven,  
So long shall he find no dwelling at God's feet (Adi-Granth, Gauri 16).

Long not for a dwelling in heaven,  
And fear not to dwell in hell;  
What will be, will be; 0 my soul, hope not at all.  
Sing the praises of God from whom the supreme reward is obtained (Adi-Granth, Gauri 63).

Everybody saith he is going thither;  
I know not where heaven is.  
They who know not the secrets of their own hearts  
Glibly talk of heaven.  
As long as man desireth heaven,  
He shall not dwell at God's feet.  
I know not where heaven's gate is,  
Nor its moat, nor its plastered fortress.  
Saith Kabir, what more can I now say  
Then that the society of saints is heaven? (Adi-Granth, Gauri 16).

How does one obtain salvation or union with God? We have seen so far that Kabir has told us all the means of achieving a spiritual communion with God. Kabir as a cloth-merchant also uses merchants' terminology sometimes in expressing spiritual matters. For example,

Some deal in bronze and copper,  
others in cloves and betel-nut;  
The saints deal in God's name;  
that is my merchandise.  
0 dealers in the name of God,  
The priceless diamond hath come to hand  
and worldly thoughts have fled.
They whom the True One attached to truth,
remain attached to it; truth is their occupation.
They dispatched a load of the true thing,
and it reached God, the storekeeper.
God is Himself the gem, the jewel, and the
precious stone; He is Himself the jewel-er;
He is in every direction... (cf. Q. 2.115).
He seteth everythin in motion;
He is a permanent dealer.
O man, make thy heart the ox, meditation the road,
fill thy sack with divine knowledge,
and load it on the ox;
Saith Kabir, heer O saints, my goods have arrived
at their destination (Adi-Granth, Kedar 11).

These verses are regarded as the finest allegory—by
which Kabir has described his idea about reaching God. In the
final lines, he has told us definitely that his efforts
have borne him fruit, that is, he has achieved a union with
God. Kabir describes his experience of God and union with Him
in many beautiful verses. His concept of union with God is
analogous to what we have seen in the cases of Mansur Hallaj,
Bayzid Bistami and other Sufis who were persecuted and executed
by the state authorities for uttering such blasphemous words.

In the following verses Kabir expresses his longing
to meet his Beloved God, and he uses the analogy of a woman
who longs to meet her husband-lord:

Woman with her eyes filled with tears and heaving
awaiteh her lord;
Her heart is not happy; she retraceth not her
steps in the hope of seeing him.

Why fliest thou not away, O black raven, (70)
so that I may quickly meet my beloved?

Saith Kabir, perform God's service to obtain
the dignity of eternal life;
The name of God is the one support;
Repeat it with thy tongue (Adi-Granth, Gauri 65).

Then Kabir tells us how he found God:

God cannot be obtained even by offering one's
weight in gold;
But I have purchased Him with my soul;
Brahma[sic], however much he talketh,
    hath not found God's limit;
But by my devotion God came to me as I sat at home.
Saith Kabir, I have cast off my wavering disposition;
It is only in God's service I am now a
    sleeping partner (Adi-Granth, Gauri 19).

Kabir feels that he has parted with pride and egoism
and became absorbed in, and one with, God:

O, sovereign God, Thou art very fearless;
    Thou art a raft to save the world, O God.
When I was proud, Thou wert not in me;
    now that Thou art in me I am not proud.
Now Thou and I have become one;
    seeing that we are both one, my mind is satisfied.
When there is worldly wisdom, how can there be
    spiritual strength?
Now I have spiritual wisdom, but not bodily strength.
Saith Kabir, God hath taken away my worldly wisdom,
    and instead of it I have
    obtained perfection (Adi-Granth, Gauri 72).

We have already discussed how at the highest stage of
his spiritual journey a mystic completely loses his sense of
temporal existence and instead feels himself so much absorbed
and united with God that he finds no distinction between
himself and God. It was in such an ecstatic stage of his
spiritual life that Manṣūr Hallaj uttered: "Ana al-Haqq" (I
am the Haqq or God). In these verses, Kabir appears to have
experienced the same experience. According to the orthodox
view of God, this kind of utterance is an open heresy. But
being under a totally different situation, Kabir did not
suffer the fate of Hallaj (cf. sura, pp. 48-51).

In another place Kabir expresses his being one with God:

When a stream is lost in the Ganges,
    It becometh as the Ganges itself (cf. Brhad-āraṇyaka
    Upanisad, 2.4.14);
Kabir is similarly lost in God by invoking Him;
    I have become as the True One and need not go elsewhere.
The perfume of the sandal is communicated to other trees;
They then become as the sandal itself.

So Kabir having met the saints,
Hath become as God (Adi-Granth, Shairol 5).

As we can see, this whole poem has the flavour of the
Upansadic immanent theory of creation. According to this
time, everything emanates from Brahman, and eventually
everything gets reabsorbed in Brahman which is described
as Tājīn (cf. Chandogya Upansad, 3.14.1).

Still in another place Kabir describes his union with
God in terms of a wedding ceremony:

I turned my body into a dyer’s vat and
then dyed my heart-therein; 71
the five virtues I made my marriage guests;
With God I made my marriage circumambulations; 72
my soul being dyed with His love
Sing, sing, ye bridgenwomen, the marriage song; 73
The sovereign God hath come to my house as my husband.
I made the bridal pavilion in the lotus of my heart,
and divine knowledge the recitation of my lineage; 74
I obtained God as my bridegroom;
so great hath been my good fortune.
Demigods, men, saints, and the thirty-three korors
of gods in their chariots came as spectators.
Saith, Kabir, the one God, the Divine Male,
hath wed and taken me with Him (Adi-Granth, Ḍeṣā 24;
also cf. Ḍeṣā 25, 30).

It is interesting to note in these verses that Kabir’s
whole understanding of marriage is essentially Hindī. Although
he himself was married as a member of a Muslim family, but
there is no allusion to the kind of marriages usually found
in Muslim society. The reason is not known; probably there
was no marked difference between Hindī marriage and the
marriage in vogue among the poor Muslims of North India of
those days, particularly those Muslims recently converted.
At any rate, Kabir’s description of his divine marriage is
fascinating. Before him, Nammālvar expressed his passionate
spirituality in terms of husband and wife's relation. But the mysticism of love expressed in the verses of Kabir surpassed all previous expressions. Thus in the following lines Kabir tells us explicitly that God's love for him and his love for God has saved him:

My dread of transmigration is at an end
Since God displayed His love for me.
The light hath dawned, the darkness is dispelled;
I have obtained the jewel of God by meditation on Him.
When He conferreth happiness sorrow fleeth away;
The jewel of my heart is absorbed in God's love.
Whatever occurreth is according to Thy will, 0 God;
He who understandeth this shall be easily absorbed in Thee.
Saith Kabir, all my sins have been blotted out,
And my soul is absorbed in the Life of the world.

In another place Kabir expresses his great satisfaction on feeling that he had obtained salvation:

The sovereign God hath now become my helper;
Having cut away birth and death I have obtained the supreme state.
God hath united me with the guild of the saints,
And freed me from the five deadly sins.
The ambrosial name I repeat with my tongue;
God hath made me His unbought slave.
The True Guru did me a favour
By rescuing me from the ocean of the world.
I have begun to love God's lotus feet,
And God ever and ever dwelleth in my heart.
The sparks of the fire of worldly love have become extinguished,
And my mind hath obtained resignation by the support of the Name.

In sea and land the Lord God is fully contained;
Wherever I look, there is the Searcher of hearts.
It is He Himself who implanteth His service in my heart;
God is obtained, my brethren, according to primal destiny.
The man to whom He sheweth favour succeedeth in his affairs.
Kabir's Lord is the Chreiser of the poor.

KABIR'S CONCEPT OF POVERTY

Once united with God, that is, salvation is achieved, Kabir rejects the need for worldly riches, feeling that he already has the greatest wealth of all—the presence of God.
within himself. Hence he says:

Lay up for yourselves the wealth of God's name,
which fire will not burn, which hot winds
will not dry up,
And which thieves will not approach;
that wealth shall never depart.
My wealth is God, the Supporter of the earth;
He is the real wealth.
Shiva and the four sons of Brahma in their search
for this wealth abandoned the world.

.................................

Saith Kabir, O you who are intoxicated with wealth,
reflect in your hearts and understand this.
In your mansions are hundreds of thousands and
millions of horses and elephants;
in mine is the One God (Adi-Granth, Gauri 58).

Naked thou camest and naked shalt thou depart:
None shall remain—not even kings or rulers.
I have the sovereign God as my nine treasures;
Thou hast the love of property, women, and wealth;
But they did not come with thee, nor shall they go with thee.
What availeth thee to have elephants tied at thy gate?
The fortress of Ceylon was made of gold,
But what did the fool Hanuman take with him?
Saith Kabir, meditate some good acts:
The gambler shall depart with empty hands (Adi-Granth, Bhairo 2).

Then in a true mystical fashion Kabir describes the
nature of poverty and richness. Who is poor? Kabir replies:

Nobody respecteth the poor man;
He may make hundreds or thousands of efforts,
but no one will heed him.
If a poor man go to a rich man,
The latter, though opposite him, will turn his back.
If a rich man go to a poor man,
The latter respecteth, yea, inviteth him;
Yet the poor man and the rich man are brothers:
God's design cannot be set aside.
Saith Kabir, it is he who is poor,
In whose heart the Name abideth not (Adi-Granth, Bhairo 3).

Finally, Kabir expresses his satisfaction for the fact
that he has God's name as his sole property:

Thy name of God is my wealth;
I cannot tie it in a knot, or sell it for my livelihood.
The Name is my field, the Name is my garden;
I Thy slave; O God, perform Thy service and seek
Thy protection.
Thy name is my wealth, Thy name my capital;
I know none but Thee.
Thy name is my kindred, Thy name my brethren,
Thy name my associates, who will assist me at the
last moment.
Smith Kabir, I am a slave to him
Whom God keepeth in the world, but who is
indifferent to it (Adi-Granth, Bhairo I).

In the last lines, Kabir has reminded us that famous mystical
theory of non-attachment to the world, yet to live in the
world until the physical death. "Indifference to the world"
while still living in the world is also a famous teaching of
the Gita. This attitude to the world is a universal mystical
attitude.

Kabir's concept of Jivan-Mukti

Finally, Kabir seems to have been familiar with the
Hindu concept of jivan-mukti (achieving moksa during one's
lifetime), and he says in no uncertain words that he was a
jivan-mukti:

Since my attention is fixed on God, I no longer
suspect that I shall suffer transmigration;
Even in life I am absorbed in the Infinite;
the guru's instruction hath awakened me.
The sound which is produced from bronze
blended with it;
When the bronze is broken, O Pandit,
where will the sound be? 75
At the union of the three breaths in the brain
I have seen Him who is awake in every heart,
And now such understanding hath entered my heart
that I have abandoned the world.
When I knew myself, my light was blended with God's light—
Smith Kabir, I now know God and my mind is satisfied
(Adi-Granth, Bhairo II).

In the following verses Kabir describes the conditions
of those who have obtained salvation during life:

They who abandon praise as well as blame,
who reject honour as well as dishonour,
who consider iron and gold the same,
are the image of God—
Few, O Lord, are Thy servants!
They who abandon lust, wrath, covetousness,
and worldly love behold God's feet.
What are called the qualities of impulse, ignorance,
and goodness are all contained in Thy self.
Only they who understand the fourth degree, have obtained the supreme position; they never entertain love for pilgrimages, fasting, or for the religious ceremonies, purifications, and austerities of the superstitious. By meditating on God, avarice, worldly love, and doubt depart; the darkness (ignorance) of the mansion (heart) in which the lamp of divine knowledge burneth is dispelled; its owner abideth completely fearless, and his doubts have fled; saith Kabir, I am his slave (Adi Granth, Kedara 1).

So far we have discussed the essential teaching of Kabir. His essential teaching set the stage for the other aspect of his teaching, that is, his role as the uniter of the Hindus and the Muslims. But he could not construct a new path or road which could be followed by the two communities equally without cutting clear the old jungle in his way. He could not advocate a new spirituality—a synthesis of the two religions—for them unless he could turn their attention from the externalism of the religions to the pure inwardness of spiritual life. It may be mentioned here that there are indications both in the Upanisads and the Qur'an that mere outward ceremonies is of no use for spiritual progress. For instance, referring to the Chāndogyan Upanisad, ch. 1.12 (A Satire on Priestly Ritual), Dr. Radhakrishnan says: "This section is a satirical protest against the externalism of the sacrificial creed, in the interest of an inward spiritual life."

Similarly, referring to the prayers, in which the Muslims turn their faces towards the Ka'ba (to the East or the West or to other two directions), the Qur'an says clearly that "It is not piety, that you turn your faces to the East and to the West. But true piety is this: to believe in God...." (2.177). Kabir, therefore, attacked fearlessly the externalia of both
Hinduism and Islam which obscured the truth of religion and kept the two communities of India far from each other in the name of religion. For rejecting and denouncing the outward rites and observances of the two religions, Kabir used his satirical and allegorical style.

In passing, it may be mentioned here that we have seen in the previous section that in his utterances, Kabir is not only unsystematic, but there are also many repetitions of the same idea. The reason for such repetitions may have been because what Kabir thought right he repeated time and again; or he expressed the same idea to different persons in different words, or the different reporters narrate the same idea in different words. That means, some of his ideas that we have already met in connection with his essential teaching will be met again in this section.

KABIR'S ATTITUDE TO HINDUISM

Turning to the Hindus, Kabir asked them to give up what Hinduism had been practising for centuries, such as ceremonies, sacrifice, lust for magical powers, image and temple worship, repetition of mantras, pilgrimages, fasts, innumerable gods and goddesses, bathing in the holy waters, religious monopoly of the Brahmans, caste differences, prejudices concerning touchability and food, penances and asceticism and yoga, and sectarianism. He unequivocally condemned the doctrine of incarnation (Avatar). Let us now illustrate these rejections and condemnations in his own words. Below is a satire which he directed against asceticism and other Hindu rituals:
SATYE ON HINDU RITUALS AND ASCETICISM

If union with God be obtained by going about naked,
All the deer of the forest shall be saved.
What mattereth it whether man goeth naked
or wear eth a deerskin,
If he recognizes not God in his heart?
If perfection be obtained by shaving the head,
Why should not sheep obtain salvation?
If, O brethren, the continent man is saved,
Why should not a eunuch obtain the supreme reward?
Smith Kabir, hear, O my brethren,
Who hath obtained salvation without God's name?

(Adi-Granth, Gauri 5).

Kabir, like most Sufis, and unlike many Hindu mystics,
could not approve of ascetic life. As we know, he did not see any incompatibility between spiritual and temporal life.
His life, as a weaver, who wove cloth and sold it in the market to earn his daily bread, is a vivid example of what is known in Islamic tradition "the combination of trade and mysticism." It appears that during his times there were numerous Hindu yogi-ascetics and Muslim faqirs to whom Kabir directed the following condemnation:

How many wear the bark of trees as clothes,
but what avail eth it to dwell in the forest?
What avail eth it to man to offer incense to idols?
What to drench his body with ablutions?
O my soul, I know that thou shalt depart;
O silly one, think of thy fall.
Wherever I look, I see none but those who are entangled in worldly love;
Men of divine knowledge and meditation, great preachers are all engrossed in this world's affairs.
Smith Kabir, without the name of the one God this world is blinded by mammon (Adi-Granth, Gauri 67).

Some have men's locks and hang the black cord on their necks,
And pride themselves on the practice of yoga.
What credit is there in causing your scat to fly?
Crow and kite also circle in the air (Blink, Ramini 71).

Sitting on the air, studying yoga, Vedas, rites and astrology, they are demented....
Kabir says, the hope of the Yogi and the Jangama (ascetic) is withered (Blink, Sabda 26).
Kabir was famous not only for his satires, but also for his witicism. It is said that there were many occasions when his guru, Ramananda, had to bow before his ingenuity. One of the many interesting anecdotes is as follows: Once Ramananda wanted cow's milk to perform a puja (ritual). He sent Kabir to bring it. Kabir went and placed the vessel near a cow which had died and started piling up grass for her to eat. Hours passed and the cow did not oblige. Then Ramananda sent some of his disciples to find out. They went back and reported the curious activity in which they had seen Kabir engaged. On his return, Kabir explained: "O Saint, I thought perhaps a dead cow's milk would be more suitable for the dead ancestors. Unfortunately she does not even eat grass, let alone give any milk." "But surely you know that a dead cow will not eat grass?" Ramananda asked. "But then," replied Kabir, "if a recently dead cow cannot take nourishment, how can your ancestors, so long dead, drink the milk you want to give them?" The Swami had no answer.

The story may or may not be true. However, it does give an idea of the sort of notion that people had of Kabir. His logic was unique and his wit was sharp. In his denunciation of Hindu and Muslim religious practices, he used his peculiar style and his care-free manner. He made use of his witty remarks to expose the hypocrisy that had permeated both Hinduism and Islam.

ANNI-YOGA-AND-YOGI SATIRE?

Of all the Indian religious teachers, Kabir was probably the first and only teacher who rejected the efficacy of Yoga.
After Patanjali's yoga system, all Indian religio-philosophical systems, both orthodox and heterodox, such as Buddhism and Jainism, adopted yoga, although often different from that of Patanjali as a spiritual discipline. Even some Sufis who found a great similarity between their murdahan (silent concentration) and yogic posture adopted yoga discipline, and for that reason many yogis were attracted to those Sufis as we have noticed before. But Kabir openly renounced the yogis and the yoga system. Thus he says:

The Yogi says: yoga is best of all; O brother, it has no rival;
Yogis with plaited hair or shaven head,
with sealed lips or matted locks—
where did these find wisdom? (Bijak, Sabda 38).

The Yogi says that yog and nothing else is good and sweet;
They who shave their bodies, and the Ekshabdis,
say that they alone have obtained perfection.
Without God thou art lost in error, O blind one;
They to whom I go to release myself,
are themselves bound by many toils (Adi-Granth, Gauri 51).

Thou dependest on a club, earrings, and patched coat;
In error thou wanderest in a Jogi's garb;
Put away thy devotional attitudes and thy suspension of breath;
Abandon deception, and ever worship God, O fool.
The wealth thou beggest for, the three worlds have enjoyed.
Smith Kabir, God is the only Jogi in the world (Adi-Granth, Bilawal 9).

It is stated that a Yogi maintained that deliverance could not be obtained without chastening the heart, and that the heart could not be chastened without the practice of yoga. Kabir criticises this view and affirms that it is the truly pious and devoted persons and not the yogis or ascetics who shall be saved:

Without devotion the qualities of the heart cling to the heart.
Who secureth perfection by merely chastening his heart?
What holy man hath succeeded in chastening his heart?
Say who hath saved any one by merely chastening his heart.
Every one thinketh in his heart that he is
going to chasten it.
But the heart is not chastened without devotion.
Saith Kabir, let him who knoweth this secret,
Worship in his heart God,
the Lord of the three worlds (Adi-Granth, Gauri 28).

When I turned my thoughts towards God,
I restrained my mind and my senses,
and my attention became lovingly fixed on Him.
O Bairagi, search for Him who neither cometh
nor goeth, who neither dieth nor is born.

By the favour of the guru I have now obtained
a different understanding; otherwise I should
become estranged from God.
What was near hath become distant, what was distant
hath become near for him who accepteth God as He is.

O Thou devoid of qualities, is there any discriminating
person to whom I may speak of Thee?
Saith Kabir, only he who applieth the spiritual
fuse seeth the blast (Adi-Granth, Gauri 47).

ANTI-BATHING-AND-PILGRIMAGE SATIRS

Kabir uttered strong words against the bathing in
sacred rivers like the Ganges and making pilgrimage there:

They who bathe in the evening and the morning,
Are like frogs in the water.
When men have no love for God’s name,
They shall all go to the god of death.
They who love their purāṇas and deck themselves
out in various guises,
Feel not mercy even in their dreams.

Saith Kabir, why perform so many ceremonies?
Forsaking all other essences quaff the
great essence of God’s name (Adi-Granth, Gauri 5).

He who is foul within will not go to heaven
by bathing at a place of pilgrimage;
Nothing is gained by pleasing men;
God is not a simpleton.
Worship the Lord, the only God;
Serving the guru is the true ablation.
If salvation be obtained by bathing in water,
the frogs which are continually bathing
will obtain it.
But as the frogs so the pilgrims;
they shall be born again and again.
Where there is neither day nor night,
Vedas nor Shastars, there dwelleth the Formless One.
Saith Kabir, meditate on Him;
ye foolish denizens of the world (Adi-Granth, Asa 37).

THERE is nothing but water at the holy
bathing places; and I know that they are useless,
for I have bathed in them (Talore, poem 42).

In thy heart is deception, in thy mouth religion;
False man, why churnest thou water?
What advantage is it to bathe the body
If there be filth in the heart?
If the gourd be washed at the sixty-eight
places of pilgrimage,
Even then its bitterness will not depart.
Thus saith Kabir deliberately—
Chose me to cross over the terrible ocean,
O God (Adi-Granth, Sorath 8).

IDOLATRY DENOUNCED

As regard idolatry, besides Kabir, there were four
other bhaktas, namely, Appar, Basava, Namdev and Nanak, who
condemned it in clear language. The influence of Islam on
these bhaktas has been suggested by all writers. Although
the same influence has been suggested about Kabir's guru,
Ramananda, he does not seem to have denounced idolatry.

However, Kabir had no place for idolatry, for it seemed
logical to him that, if God was one (and he believed in one
God without any ambiguity), the whole basis of idolatry
should perish. He was, therefore, absolutely clear and un-
sparing in his denunciation of the practice:

O mind, you make your gods and goddesses,
and kill living creatures to make
offerings to them (Birak, Sabir, 76).

But if your gods are true, why do they not
take them when grazing in the fields? 79

The images are all lifeless, they cannot speak;
I know, for I have cried aloud to them (Talore, poem 42).
Thou cuttest leaves, O flower-girl;  
in every leaf there is life.  
The stone for which you gatherest the leaves is lifeless.  
Thou art in error, O flower-girl, in this;  
The true Guru is a living God.  
Brahma is in the leaves, Vishnu in the branches,  
and Shiv in the flowers.  
Thou destroyest three gods [according to your own belief]  
in our presence;  
Whom dost thou worship?  
The sculptor carving the stone turned it into an idol;  
and, in doing so, put his foot upon its breast.  
If it were a real God, it would have destroyed him.  
Men cook rice, dal, laapsi, pancakes, kasa;  
The Brahman feasters feast on these things,  
and put ashes into the idol's mouth.  
The flower-girl is in error, and leadeth the world astray; but I go not astray.  
Saith Kabir, God hath mercifully preserved me  
from error (Adi-Granth, Asa 14).

Men make goddesses and gods of clay,  
and offer them living sacrifices—  
As your lifeless gods, so your deceased,  
who ask not for what they want themselves.  
You kill living things, and you worship lifeless things;  
at the last moment (Last Day: The Day of Judgement)  
great shall be your suffering.  
You know not the worth of God's name, and you shall  
be drowned in the sea of terror.  
You waver and know not the supreme God,  
wherefore you worship gods and goddesses.  
Saith Kabir, you have not thought of the Unknowable,  
and have become entangled in the deadly sins (Adi-Granth,  
Gauri and Gora 45).

O shameless man, art thou not ashamed?  
Why dost thou forsake God, and go to someone  
else (to worship idols)?  
It becometh not him whose God is the Most High  
To go to a strange temple.  
That Lord pervadeth all space.  
Is ever present, and never distant.  
Say, O man, what is there not in His palace.  
.........................

Every one speaketh of Him:  
He is omnipotent, our own Lord, and our Benefactor.  
Saith Kabir, that man is perfect in the world,  
In whose heart no other than God abideth (Adi-Granth,  
Gauri and Gora 33).

If by worshipping stones one can find God,  
I shall worship a mountain.  
Better than these stones (idols) are the stones of the flour mill with which men  
grind their corn.  
If God dwell only in the mosque,  
to whom belongeth the rest of the country?
They who are called Hindūs say that God
dwelleth in an idol;
I see not the truth in either sect (Adi-Granth, Prabhat 2).

The following hymn, which is a homily against idolatry,
is said to have been composed by Guru Arjun, the fifth Guru
of Sikhism, from a theme of Kabir:

Vain is his devotion,
Who saith a stone is God.
Idle shall be his labour
Who falleth at the feet of a stone.
My God always speaketh;
He bestoweth gifts on all living things.
He who is blind knoweth not God who is within him;
He is led away by superstition, and entangleth others.
A stone speaketh not, nor bestoweth gifts;
Vain are the ceremonies of idolaters and fruitless their service.

........................................................

Saith Kabir, I proclaim with a loud voice—
Understand me, ye infidels and pagans;
The love of other gods hath destroyed many homes;
The saints of God are ever happy (Adi-Granth, Bhairav 12).

For the sake of bathing, there are many Tirthas,
O foolish mind; for the sake of worshipping
there are many idols,
Kabir says, No emancipation is thus obtained,
emancipation is in the service of Hari. 82

SECTARIAHISM CONDEMNED

But Kabir's condemnation did not stop at idolatry. He
denounced uncompromisingly even practices like the carrying
of the rosary and the using of sectarian marks by the Śālvites
and the Vaiśnavites. Thus he says:

You wear tilaks on your foreheads,
carry rosaries in your hands, and put on sectarian dress:
People think that God is a plaything—
If I am mad, O God, I am still Thine.

........................................................

I gather no leaves and I worship no idol;
Without devotion to God other worship is fruitless.
I worship the True Guru,
and ever and ever propitiate Him (Adi-Granth, Bhairav 6).
In another place Kabir addresses the saints and complains about all the useless things that the Hindus were doing. In this passage he not only discarded all rituals and ceremonies, he denounced even the incarnation and the Vedas:

O Saints, the world has gone mad; If I tell the truth, it comes down upon me to kill me, but believes a lie. I have seen the devout and the pious who regularly bathe in the mornings. They forsake God and worship stones; in them there is not wisdom... They have commenced to worship brass and stones and are proud of their pilgrims. They wear garlands, caps and frontal marks and chaps on their arms, and engage in singing the praises of their gods; they have forsaken God. The beads are of wood, the gods of stone, the Ganges and the Jumna are water. Rama and Krishna are dead. The four Vedas are fictitious stories.

CASTE SYSTEM REJECTED

In his crusade against everything that was meaningless and unreal, Kabir naturally uttered strong denunciatory words against the caste system. It has been acknowledged unanimously that the strongest indication of Islamic influence on Indian thought is the rejection of idolatry and caste system by some Indian mystics, such as Appar, Basava, Namdev, Ramanna, Nanak and Kabir. But unlike some bhaktas, Kabir rejected the caste system for both religious and social reasons. It is in this sense that Kabir is regarded as the revolutioniser of medieval Indian religion and society. And for that contribution W. W. Hunter has compared him with Luther. Kabir simply could not tolerate the division and distinction between man and man or between Hindu and Muslim. He rose above the sectarian divisions that separated men—in this case Hindus and the Muslims—an, believing as he did in one God, sought
to make men realise they were all one family in Him. The simple formula, in accordance with which Kabir tried to fulfil his mission of uniting the Hindus and the Muslims by bringing them into the fold of one religion or spirituality, is that of One God (cf. Q. 2.163; ch. 112, etc.), one humanity (cf. Q. 2.213) and thus one religion—a well-known theory of Islam. Therefore, it follows since there is one God, one humanity and one religion (i.e. to submit and surrender to the will of God), we must not be divided but remain united. This is the Islamic theory of the unity of the believers (Q. 3.103). All submitters are brothers. Thus Kabir says:

Adam who was first, did not know whence came mother Eve. Then there was no Turk (Muslim) nor Hindu;... Then there was no race, nor caste. If thou thinkest the Maker distinguished castes, Birth is according to these penalties for deeds. Born a Sudra, you die a Sudra.
It is only in this world of illusion that you assume the sacred thread. If birth from a Brahman mother makes you Brahman, Why did you not come by another way? If birth from a Turk makes you Turk, Why were you not circumcised in the womb? If you milk black and yellow cows together, Will you be able to distinguish their milk (Bhag. 12)?

Saith Kabir, renounce family, caste and lineage; become an ant, and thou canst pick up and eat the sugar (Adi-Granth, 112).

As we see, Kabir's sayings discarding caste distinctions are considered to be the most prolific and poetic. He urges us to forget our sense of distinctions between man and man and become humble like an ant. And thus he was the most successful religious teacher and reformer in this matter as long as he was alive. But after his death, his followers reverted from his ideals, as we shall see later.
There are other verses which Kabir directed against the Brähmins themselves who consider impurity and caste defilement in almost everything. The Brähmins censured Kabir for not having due attention to caste rules. Thus Kabir says:

There is impurity in water, there is impurity in land, there is impurity in whatever is born. There is impurity in birth, and again in death. God’s subjects are ruined by this impurity. O Pandit, tell me who is pure? Explain to me such knowledge as thou hast on the subject, my friend.

There is impurity in the eyes, there is impurity in the tongue, there is impurity in the ears; standing or sitting, there is impurity, impurity entereth the kitchen. Every one knoweth how to be caught in impurity, but few how to escape from it.

Saih Kabir, no impurity attacheth to those who meditate on God in their hearts (Adi-Granth, Gauri 41).

Again:

Thy mother was impure, thy father was also impure, and impure is the fruit they have borne. The unlucky people came impure, they departed, and died impure.

Tell me, O Pandit, what place is pure Where I may sit and take my food?

My tongue is impure, what it saith is impure, the ears and eyes are all impure.

The impurity of the senses departeth not, O thou who art burning with Brähmanical wrath.

Fire is also impure, water is impure, and impure the place where thou sittest and cookest it. With an impure ladle it is served up, and impure are those who sit and eat it.

Impure thy cow-dung, impure thy cooking-square, and impure the lines which mark it out.

Saih Kabir, that man is pure who hath obtained true knowledge (Adi-Granth, Rasant 7).

There are many stories told about Kabir’s confrontation with the Brähmins on the question of the caste. One of these stories is told with regard to Kamālī, Kabir’s daughter. It is stated that when she was twenty years of age, she was one day drawing water from a well. A Brähmin named Har Deva, asked for a drink, but was afterwards horrified to know that
he had taken water from a weaver's daughter. The matter was
referred to Kabir. The Brahmin complained that the girl had
broken his caste. On that Kabir replied as follows:

O Pandit, think, when thou drinkest water,
In the mud-dwelling, wherein thou sittest,
the universe is contained.
Where fifty-six kotis (BH) of Yadavas perished,
eighty-eight thousand men and munis:
At every step prophets are buried, they decayed
to dust therein.
Fish, tortoise, and crocodile there gave birth;
the water is filled with blood.
The water of the river flows in through its channels;
men and cattle dissolved in it.
The bones are dissolved and the marrow melted;
how else comes the milk?
Thou, O Pandit, thou didst sit down to drink;
yet the earthen pot thou accountest defiled.
Renounce the Vedas and the Book, O Pandit;
all these are fictions of the mind.
Kabir says, Hear, O Pandit; these are
your pious deeds (BH[jk, Sabha 47).

The Brahmin is said to have fallen at the feet of
Kabir and begged his forgiveness and receive him as his
disciple. Kabir accepted him, and Kamali was given to him in
marriage.

INCARNATION DENOUNCED.

Allusion has already been made to Kabir's denunciation
of the doctrine of incarnation. Elsewhere he gives an elaborate
account of this point. Thus he says:

The Creator did not marry Sita nor did he make
a stone bridge across the waters (BH[jk, Sabha 3).

They say the Lord of the world finding
inequalities of the weak and the strong
came as Rama. But Kabir says, before such
a one (Rama) who took birth and died. I cannot
bend my head. 86

Again he says:

The ten incarnations that people talk about
do not concern me, they are merely the reapers
of the fruits of their actions, but the Creator is some one else. 87.

In another place a homily of Ḫābir is found against Krśṇa worship:

Hand (the adoptive father of Krśṇa) became weary wandering through the worlds of the eighty-four lakhs (hundred thousand) of existences; Through his devotion Krśṇa became incarnate; great was the poor man's good fortune.

You who say that God was the son of Hand, whose son was Hand?

When the earth and the firmament and the ten quarters of the world were not, then where was this Hand?

He whose name is the Bright One falleth not into trouble, and under death not birth

Kabir's Master is such a Lord as hath neither Father nor mother (Adi-Granth, Gaṇūr 70).

Still in another place Kabir says:

Follow the true God who will uphold you in all your trials.

He was not born in Veṇaratha's family and did not oppress the king of Lanka (Ceylon).

Jaśoda did not adore him in her lap and he did not enter the womb of Devaki.

He did not fight with king Bālī nor did he kill Hiranyakaśipu, throwing him down on the ground.

He did not assume the form of a boar nor did he destroy the kṣatriyas.

He did not hold the Gēvar Dhhana on the tip of his fingers nor did he remain in the jungle with the milkmaids of Kathurā and Brindabān.

He is neither Shekhrara nor any other stones; he is not fish, nor tortoise, dwellers in the water.

He died not at Dwarawati nor was his corpse buried at Jagnanath.

Kabir proclaims, 'let none follow such teachings; he whom they believe to be of gross and material elements is of subtle principles.' 88

It is interesting to note how thoroughly Kabir was acquainted with the stories of the incarnations of Viṣṇu, especially with the two human incarnations, Ḫaṭ and Krśṇa.

By telling the stories connected with the lives of these two human incarnations, Kabir has certainly shown his personal knowledge of them, and unmistakably he has rejected the
idea of incarnation.

SATI REJECTED

Kabir concerned himself not only with the matters of religion simple and pure, but also with those social evils which the Hindus used to practise in the name of religion.

One such superstition which obtained wide currency in the Hindu society of those days was the practice of Sati, i.e., burning of a widow on the pyre of her deceased husband.

Kabir rejects the idea of salvation by sati, and condemns the practice in the following words:

How can a woman without chastity be a sati?
Or, pandit, see and consider this in thy heart.
If a woman have no love for her husband,
How can her husband's love for her increase?
As long as there is worldly love,
There can be no divine love.
He who in his heart believeth mammon to be real,
Shall not even in his dreams meet God.
Kabir calleth her a happy wife,
Who giveth up to God her body, soul, wealth,
And household (Adi-Granth, Gauri 23).

ANTI-BRAHMIN SATIRES

However, by denouncing Hindu religious rites and practices which he thought were useless and not meaningful for spiritual progress, and thus unnecessary for realising God, Kabir was not satisfied. He then directed the fury of his criticism against the Brahmans, the priest class which, according to Kabir, was responsible for misleading the people by encouraging them to practise all those superstitious practices and ceremonies in the name of religion. There are passages in which Kabir expressed his view to the effect that the Brahmans were cheaters of the people whom they deceived by posing as the pioneers and guardians of religion. They fill their
stomachs with people's money. Instead of feeding the Brahmans, Kabir suggested that food and money should be given to those poor but pious and sincere devotees of God, whom the Brahmans despise for being low-caste.

There is no doubt that during the medieval period the power and prestige of the Brahmans was undisputedly great. The whole land was under the authority of priestcraft and sacerdotalism. Brahmanism, invigorated by its triumph over Buddhism, established its authority over all, until the Muslims invaded the country and gradually extended their influence throughout India, particularly in northern India. But when the influence of Islam began to spread through the length and breadth of the country, especially in the form of Sufism, and a large number of Hindus who found the Muslims and their religion were different from their religion and the pandits were getting converted to Islam, the Brahmans in order to counter this new religious threat tightened the rope of their orthodoxy and began to become more and more dogmatic and narrowminded. This was contrary to the usual catholicism of Hinduism which absorbed all other religions that came to India before Islam. Like Hindu orthodoxy, the Islamic orthodoxy also tried to maintain its separate identity. However, the initial stage of the conflict between the two orthodox systems was followed by a softening of attitude to each other which facilitated assimilation and interaction between the two religions. But before the two orthodoxies could come to any understanding, the mystics of the two systems had already gone far ahead in their process of assi-
milation and interaction. However, whatever efforts Hindū and Muslim orthodoxies may have made to come close to each other, they certainly could not afford to go to the extent that the mystics of the two religions had gone. In other words, while the assimilative efforts on the part of the two orthodox systems touched only the periphery of each religion, the effort on the mystical level involved more than mere surface; it entailed even the fundamentals of religion. Thus for making encroachments on the jurisdiction of orthodox religion, both Hindūism and Islam were opposed to the mystics and saints. "The latitudinarianism, freedom of thought, and intense self-exertion in intellectual and spiritual spheres," says R. C. Majumdar, "which characterized the saints, undoubtedly generated in them a spirit of revolt and criticism, and no wonder that in spite of a frank recognition of their greatness, they or their followers were not always accorded a place within the orthodox fold." So, orthodoxy was opposed to the mystics from the very beginning.

Kabir was, by far, the most revolutionary and courageous of all Indian mystics. By his clear denunciation of the ceremonial practices of Hindūism, he undoubtedly incurred the displeasure of the Brāhmīns. In their turn, they opposed Kabir tooth and nail. Moreover, in teaching and preaching his own doctrines, Kabir was actually running counter to the prestige and influence of the Brāhmīns. There are many references to this in Kabir's verses. They seem constantly to have taunted him with his low caste, but Kabir reproaches them in return for their ignorance of the spiritual truth and
their failure to show the path of salvation. Thus he says:

Why shouldst thou, O Brähman, forget Him
from whose mouth the Veds and the Gayatri issued?
Why shouldst not thou, O Pandit, utter the name
of God, whose feet every one toucheth?
O my Brähman, why not repeat God's name?
If thou utter not His name, O Pandit,
they shall be cast into hell.
Thou callest thyself exalted, yet thou eatest
in the houses of the low, and fillest thy belly
by the exaction of alms.
On the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the half
month thou devisest tales and beggest,
but even with a lamp in thy hand thou shalt
fall into the pit.
Thou art a Brähman, I am a weaver of Banaras;
how can I be a match for thee?
By repeating the name of God I have been saved,
while thou, O Pandit, shalt be lost by
trusting to the Veds (Adi-Granth, Ramkali 35).

Further he speaks:

Bandits have gone astray reading and studying the Vedas;
yet they do not know the secret of their own selves.
Their evening and morning prayers,
their six modes of worship,
and many things like these they consider virtuous deeds.
They made the gayatri (a Sanskrit mantra) to be
recited in all four ages;
Go and ask them who has thus found salvation;
If touched by another you wash your body;
But tell me, who is meaner than you?
These are your good deeds, yet you are
consumed with pride;
From such pride no one will derive any benefit.
He whose Name is the breaker of pride;
How can He tolerate your pride?
They who give up pride of race and attachment
and search for the Word alone,
Renouncing the shoot and seed of all desire,
these men became freed from body
and from space (Blink, Ramvir 35).

They wear loin-cloths (dhūtī) three and half yards
long and sacrificial threads of three strands;
They carry rosaries on their necks and glittering
brass utensils in their hands;
They should not be called saints of God;
but cheats of Banaras—
Such saints are not pleasing to me—
They cut down trees with their branches;
They scrub their vessels, and put them on fires
whose wood hath been washed;
They dig up the earth, make two fire-places, 
and eat up men whole! 
Those sinners ever wander in evil deeds, 
yet they call themselves Apras. 
Ever and ever they wander about in their pride 
and ruin all their families. 
Man is attached to what God hath attached him, 
and his acts correspond. 
Saith Kabir, he who meeteth the true guru shall not 
be born again (Adi-Granth, Asa 2).

It appears that Kabir was not opposed to the name 
Brähmin per-se, rather, his opposition was to a class of 
people who call themselves Brähmins without deserving it. 
According to him, the name Brähmin should only be applied 
to a holy man who meditates on God:

While dwelling in the womb man hath not family or caste; 
All men have sprung from the seed of Brahm [sic]. 
Say, O Pandit, since when hast thou been a Brahman; 
If thou art a Brähman born of a Brahmání mother, 
Why hast thou not come by some other way? 92 
How art thou a Brähman? How am I a Südar [sic]? 
How am I of blood and you of milk (i.e., superior)? 
Saith Kabir, only he who meditates on God 
is a Brähman in my estimation (Adi-Granth, Gauri 7).

ANIMAL SACRIFICE DENOUNCED

Kabir very strongly held the doctrine of ahimsā which 
made him particularly angry at the sacrifice of animals in 
worship or rituals by both Hindus and Muslims. It may be 
recollected that in his boyhood when Kabir rebuked a Mullah 
for slaughtering an animal the Brähmin felt delighted and 
were pleased with him. But now he berates a Brähmin for 
offering animal sacrifice to an idol:

O Pandit, what folly meditates thou? 
Thou shalt be ruined with all thy family 
for not having repeated God’s name; 
O luckless man. 
What avail eth thee to read the Vedas and the Purāṇas? 
It is like loading a donkey with sandal 
whose perfume he valueth not. 
Thou knowest not how to repeat God’s name; 
how shalt thou be saved?
Thou takest life and deemest it religious; tell me, my brother, what thou callest irreligious.
Thou makest thyself out an excellent muni; whom callest thou a butcher?
Menally blind thou knowest not thyself; What shalt thou cause others to know?
Thou sell'st knowledge for money, thy life passeth in vain.
Narad and Vyasa declare—and thou mayest go and ask Shukdev also—
Saith Kabir, too, by uttering the name of God ye shall be delivered; otherwise ye shall perish, my brethren (Adi-Granth, Maru 1).

KABIR'S ATTITUDE TO ISLAM

Turning to the subject of Kabir's attitude to Islam and its doctrines, it may be emphasised that although the whole of his thought is deeply tinged with ideas he has absorbed from Hinduism, his acquaintance with Islamic teachings, customs and ideals was far from superficial. He mentions the Qur'an, the prayer, the fasting of the month of Ramadán, the pilgrimage to Mecca, etc. He must have been also acquainted with some contents of the Qur'an, which he values along with the Vedas, the reading of which, according to his opinion, profits the Muslims as little as does the reading of the Vedas the Hindus. His family used to sacrifice animals on the occasion of Bagra Mela. However familiar Kabir may have been with the Islamic system, it is certain he could not have any relationship with the orthodox section of the contemporary Indian Muslims. It would have been a case of partiality and hypocrisy if he had a cordial relationship with Islamic orthodoxy while rejecting orthodox Hinduism relentlessly.

We have tried to stress that Kabir was above all sectarianism, and his criticism of the two religions was equally severe.

As regards his relationship with Sufism, there cannot
be any doubt that whatever knowledge of Islam he acquired, it was from Sufism. We have discussed this subject before at some length. It will suffice here to re-emphasise that besides Shaykh Taqi, about whom we have learned a lot, Kabir must have been closely associated with many other Sufis and Piras who were in and around Banaras and all over northern India. There is clear evidence that Kabir was associated with a group of saints whom he addresses very often, and many of them must have been Sufis.

As for the Sufi teachings, we have also tried to demonstrate in what ways Sufism differs from orthodox Islam. There is complete unanimity among all writers that there is a good deal of similarity between Sufi teachings and Kabir's. In fact, it was the Islamic or Sufi influence which prompted Kabir, like Nāmdev, Appār, Basava and others, to denounce some fundamental principles of Hinduism, such as idolatry, doctrine of incarnation, caste distinction, and profess a strict monotheism. However, there is no indication that Kabir had any deep knowledge of Muslim theology and religious philosophy. The malévolé of his acquaintance with the Islamic system can be measured from his pronunciation of some of the Islamic terms, such as "mismil" instead of "Bi-ism Allāh"(with the name of God).

Although Kabir, like the Sufis, conceived of an immanent God who dwells in the human heart rather than in heaven, and with whom man can have a relationship of love (hamd) and affection; and his ideas are similar to those of the Sufis,
such as the concepts of Fara and Bada, dhikr, need for the guidance of a guru or nibr, neglect of religious duties, no regard for heaven or hell but only God's love, etc., yet Kabir's teaching differs from that of the Sufis in some respects. For instance, by and large, the Sufis hold the doctrine of predestination(Qadr): that God has destined men beforehand for salvation or damnation. In other words, God is the author of both good and evil. In Kabir's system, on the other hand, are found evidences of both Qadr and Karma. Like Hinduism, he held firmly the doctrine of Karma and Samsara, which means that man's destiny is the result of his own deeds, and he taught that all men, by following the right path of salvation, might obtain moksa (release) from Samsara (transmigration). Simultaneously, Kabir based the foundation of his spirituality on the doctrine of Pramāṇa (self-surrender) to God which, of course, echoes the teaching of the Gita (18. 65-66) as well as of Sufism, in that Kabir prescribes no religious duties save and except whole-hearted devotion (bhakti) to God as we have noticed before.

Besides this, unlike the Sufis, Kabir does not appear to have recognised what is called the Sufi stages (madāmit) in spiritual progress. Unlike Muslim and Hindu-Buddhist mystics, Kabir rejected the practice of rosaries. Finally, Kabir does not appear to have followed the Sufi or Hindu custom of initiating a disciple (murid, chela). Kabir had nothing to do with any such formalism. Instead he welcomed whoever was willing to join his circle by accepting his ideas and ideals. It does not seem, therefore, that Kabir even
belonged to organised Sufism, i.e. owing allegiance to any particular Sufi order, though some writers contend that he belonged to a Sufi order. He was only one of those individuals who found Sufism a better way to practise than shari'ah. But, again, he did not accept everything about Sufism, but only those ideals that he deemed apposite for his purpose of making a synthesis and a compromise with Hindūism. Thus Kabir is considered as an eclectic mystic for his selection of some principles from both Hindūism and Islām.

At any rate, Kabir came in conflict with the Mullahs as he did with the Brāhmins, and he denounced them and their outward religious practices with equal severity, as he did in the case of Brāhmins and their religious observances. It is very important to remember that Kabir had no soft heart for either religion. He was opposed to traditional Hindū as well as Muslim ideas and practices. He not only rejected those traditional ceremonies and observances of both religions, he even rebuked the upholders of those ideas. Thus we can hardly wonder that the outspoken rubukes of Kabir stirred up many enemies from both communities against him. And according to the legends, Hindūs and Muslims joined together to harass and persecute him. With this background, it is not improbable that they made a combined appeal to the Sultan Sikandar Lūdhi in order to silence him.

It may be mentioned here that the first thing of Islām which Kabir rejected even when he was a boy of five or six years of age, was circumcision. Then he denounced the Muslim-
practice of sacrificing animals either for religious purposes or just for eating. Let us illustrate his opposition to the Muslims and their religious observances:

**MU Ś L I N C E R E M O N I E S R E J E C T E D**

I have seen many pîrs and awliyās (saints); they read the Book, (the Qur'ān);
They initiate disciples and give instruction in such knowledge as they have.
They sit them down (as an amusing) full of vanity,
and in their mind is vain glory (Kīlān, Sābdā 4).

O Qāzī, what sort of deeds are thine?
In every house thou orderest the slaughter of buffalos.

Thou knowest not piety, yet thou art called Pīr;
Reading the verses thou teachest the world.

Says Kābir, one was called Sayyid: 97
Himself misled, he misleads the world.
They fast all day: at night they slaughter the cow.

Here murder, there devotion;
how can this please God (Bīyāk, Rabīnī 49).

If birth from a Turk-maker makes you a Turk,
Why were you not circumcised in the womb? (Bīyāk, Sābdā 4).

O Qāzī, nothing is done by mere talk;
It is not by fasting and repeating prayers and
the creed that one goeth to heaven.
The inner veil of the temple of Makka is in man's
heart, if the truth be known.

Just decisions should be thy prayers,
knowledge of God, the inscrutable One, thy creed,
The subjugation of thine evil passions the
spreading of the prayer-carpet;
then shouldst thou know what religion is.
Recognize thy Master and fear Him in thy heart;
despise and destroy thy mental pride.
As thou deemest thyself so deem others,
then shalt thou become a partner in heaven.

Matter is one but hath assumed divers shapes;
in the midst of all recognize God.

Said Kābir, thou hast abandoned heaven and
attached thyself to hell (Mī-Gūntā, Ash 17).

Kābir admonishes another Qāzī:

Thou fastest to appease God,
yet thou destroyest life to please thy palate.
Thou regardest not others as thou dost thyself;
why protest thou?

O Qāzī, thy one God is in thee,
but thou beholdest Him not by thought and reflection.
Mad on religion, thou heedest not, wherefore thy life is of no account.
Thy books tell thee that God is true,
and that He is neither male nor female;
Thou gainest nothing by thy reading and study,
O madman, since thou regarded Him not at heart:
God is concealed in every heart;
reflect on this in thy mind.
Kabir loudly proclaimeth—there is the same God
for the Hindu as for the Muhammadan (Adi-Granth, Asa 29).

Apart from rebuking and criticising the Muslims as a
whole, especially the class of Mullahs and their religious
observances, Kabir appears to have had confrontations with
individual Mullah and Qadi. The following is an expostulation
to a Qadi, probably attached to the royal court, who wished
Kabir to perform the usual Muslim fasts and ceremonies.
Hence Kabir says:

I am God's poor slave, royal state is pleasing to thee;
The Supreme God, the Lord of religions,
ever ordained tyranny (Adi-Granth, Asa 17).

According to a story, a Muslim Faqir or darweš named
Jahan-ast (traveller of the world), having heard of Kabir,
went to see him. Kabir hearing of his coming, tied up a pig
at his door. The Faqir, seeing the pig, went away disgusted.
But Kabir called him back and said:

I have tied up what is unclean at my door,
but you have tied up what is unclean in
your heart. Anger, pride, avarice, etc.,
are unclean; and these are inside you.
What you think to be unclean is not
unclean; but anger is unclean.

The Faqir is said to have become a disciple of Kabir. Kabir
had many confrontations with both Hindu and Muslim religious
persons. It is amazing to note that on every occasion his
enemies were convinced of his reasonings, and eventually they
yielded to his superior intellect.
Some time in his life Kabir appears to have contemplated a pilgrimage to Mecca; but later on he seems to have abandoned the idea. Thus he says:

Kabir, I was going on a pilgrimage to the Kaabah, I met God on the way; The Lord fell a quarrelling with me, 'Who ordered thee to go to that place?' (Adi-Granth, Sloka 197).

There is no indication, however, in what period of his life, or in what stage of his religious experience, this occurred. If it was true, it must have been in the earlier stage of his spiritual life, for there are many verses in which he spoke against making pilgrimage to any place—Mecca or Kasi, as we have already noticed above. In the following couplets Kabir admonishes a Muslim religious man whom he thought was a hypocrite. This man appears to have advised Kabir to make a pilgrimage (haji) to Mecca:

Make thy mind thy Kaabah, thy body its enclosing temple, Conscience its prime teacher; Then, O priest, call men to pray to that mosque which hath ten gates. 99 Sacrifice wrath (tak), doubt, and malice; Make patience thine utterance of the five prayers. The Hindus and the Musalmans have the same Lord; What can the Mulla, what can the Shaikh do for man? Saith Kabir, I have become mad; Stealing my mind away from the world I have become blended with God (Adi-Granth, Bhairav 4).

Kabir being a Sufi of heretical nature, like Mulla, Bistami, Ibn Aby'l Khayr, and others, it is not to be expected that he himself would go to Mecca or would commend any one who undertakes a journey to go on a pilgrimage. Sufis of his nature said that the Kaabah comes to one who has absorbed himself in God's love; and he who has gone astray from the path of God, goes to Mecca. For this reason Adi-Granth, Slok.
198 which describes Kabir's pilgrimage to Ka'bah is considered unauthentic.

However, Kabir's criticism of the Mullâhs and the râdis should not delude us into thinking that he was opposed to them entirely. On the contrary, we find him giving his considered opinion of what a true Mullâh and râdî ought to be, as he did in the case of the Brahmins. Thus he says:

He is a Mullâ who struggeth with his heart,
Who by the instruction of the guru contendeth with Death, 102
And crusheth Death's pride. 103
Salutation ever to that Mullâ!
God is present; why describe Him as distant?
If thou restrain thy pugnacity, thou shalt obtain the Beautiful One.

He is a Qâzî who pondereth on his body,
Who burneth it with divine fire,
And alloweth not his seed to drop even in his dreams—
For such a Qâzî there is no old age or Death—

He is an emperor (Sultan) who knoweth how to draw up his two breaths, 104

Who recolleth his mind when it goeth abroad, 105
Who collecteth the army of breaths in his brain—

Such a one is an emperor, and hath an umbrella over his head.

The Yogis cry out 'Gorakh, Gorakh';
The Hindus repeat 'Ram, Ram';
The Musalmans have Khudd (Urdu and Persian word for God),
But Kabir's God is the All-pervading (Adî-Granth, Bhairo 11).

**KABIR'S DENUNCIATION OF HINDU-MUSLIM RITES AND SCRIPTURES**

In addition to the couplets in which Kabir rebuked the Brahmins and the Mullâhs separately, and denounced their religious observances, which in his opinion were mere forms and deceptions without any value for people's spiritual welfare, there are other verses in which he directs his language of rejection and denunciation towards the scriptures and rites of both religions. Kabir took immense pains to explain his views concerning the scriptures of both religions. He
does not seem to have disregarded these sacred literatures as such, but rather argued that they were misused and misunderstood by the so-called religious persons of both religions. Moreover, Kabir could not like the superstitious regard that the Naulwals and the Pandits showed to the religious literatures though they did not understand them. Thus he says:

Devotion, sacrifice and rosary, piety, pilgrimage,
fasting and alms.

Nine bhakti, Vedas, the Booka (Sur’ân)
all these are cloaks of falsehood.
One goes about with Sâdhas, another
boasts his doings.

Ever they remain in respect and renown—
both sects Hindu and Turks (Bi’jak, Sâdha 113).

Qâzi, what is this book that you discourse on?
You are jangli, and jangli always;—
nothing of wisdom do you know.

Leave these distractions, meditate on Rama,
O foolish mind! (Bi’jak, Sâdha 10; also cf. Sâdha 116).

The Mussalmans accept the Sâriqat; 106:
the Hindu the Vedas and Purâns;
but for me the books of both religions are useless.

A man ought to study divine knowledge to some extent to instruct his heart (Acrostic 5).

The Purâns and the Korâns are mere words;
lifting up the curtain, I have seen.

Kabir gives utterance to the words of experience;
and he knows very well that all other things are untrue (Tarjâne, poem 42).

The Brâhmans yearly perform twenty-four fasts
on the eleventh day of the dark and light
halves of the lunar month.
The Mussalmans fast in the month of Ramâzan;
The latter put aside eleven months of the year,
and say that the Treasure is in one alone.

What availeth the Hindus to bathe at Jommarth in Ursin (Christ),
what the Mussalmans to bow their heads in a mosaic;

With deception in their hearts they repeat prayers;
what availeth then to go on a pilgrimage to Mecca? (Adî-Granth, Kramât 2).

Again:
Turning away from the world I have forgotten
both caste and lineage;
my weavin', is now in the infinite silence (i.e. in
the realms of God).
I have now no quarrel with any one;
I have given up both the Pandits and the Mullahs.
I weave clothes and I wear them myself;
where I see no pride (probably in the society of
the saints), there I sing God's praises.
What the Pandits and the Mullahs prescribed for me,
I have received no advantage from,
and have abandoned.
My heart being pure (freed from the world),
I have seen the Lord;
Kabir having searched and searched himself,
found God within him ('Adi-Granth, Shair 7).

Further:
- Say not that the Hindu and Musalmun books are false;
  false is he who reflecteth not on them.
- If you say that the one God is in everything,
  then why kill fools?
- O priest, say in this God's justice?
- Thy mental doubts forsake thee not;
- Thou seizest and bringest living things,
  and taketh their lives,
  but thou merely killest their bodies of clay.
- Their souls return to the Indestructible;
  say what hast thou killed.
- What avail thy purifications;
  thy rinsings of the mouth (Muslim practice of washing
  their mouth in ablution),
  and thy prostration in the mosque?
- If thou pray with deception in thy heart,
  what availleth thee thy pilgrimage to Mecca?
- Thou are impure; thou knowest not the Pure One;
  thou knowest not His secrets.
- Saith Kabir, thou hast missed heaven,
  and art satisfied with hell ('Adi-Granth, Probhavi 4).

As we see, in these couplets Kabir unmistakably denounced
the religious people for their killing. One of the strongest
indications of Hindu influence on him is his adherence to the
doctrine of ahimsa. Under the same influence some Indian Sufis
became very strict vegetarians.

His rejection of killing, however, has brought
forth another of his important concepts, namely, the animal's
body and its relation to the soul. His idea is that an animal's body, like a man's, is only of clay which perishes, but the soul remains indestructible. At the end of the body, the soul goes back to God in a manner reminiscent of what we find in the Upanisads (cf. Brhad-āraṇavaṇa, 1.2.4; Chāndogya, 3.14.1, 4; 3.12.1); in the Gītā (5.11, 17, 13, 19, 26) and in the Qur'ān (2.28; 3.59; 20.55). This is the great teaching which Prajapati in the Čāndogya Upanisad (ch. 8 sections 7-15) taught Virocana and Indra on the distinction between the bodily self and the atman (soul) which is of divine nature.

As we see from the nature of his teaching in this section, Kabir wanted to clear up those artificial barriers which the two communities created in the name of religion, and by which the two communities separated themselves from each other.

Kabir wished to break down these barriers and preached a new piety acceptable to both Hindus and Muslims. In his intense desire to see the two communities united, Kabir had to reject and denounce all those outward forms which the Hindus and the Muslims performed so scrupulously, but which he deemed to be valueless from the spiritual point of view.

We have discussed the two aspects of Kabir's teachings in some detail. It is clear that his influence was very great on the people of medieval India, especially in North India. "During the middle ages," comments Kabitishvan Sen, "there was in North India not a single movement for freedom, whether spiritual or intellectual, that did not bear the stamp of Kabir's influence." J. N. Farquhar gives a list of as many
as eleven principal sects that sprang from the influence that Kabir exercised by his life and by the songs that made his teaching widely known throughout North India. By far the most important of these sects was that of Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, one of the living religions of India of present time. All of these sects, Farguhar says, were at first monotheistic and non-idolatrous in their worship, recognised no caste distinctions and admitted to their circles both Hindus and Muslims. The drift towards Hinduism, however, soon started; incarnations were recognised and the worship of the purat, and even idolatry was established; and the formation of an order of priests, relaxation in moral and ethical regulations; and even the tendency to caste distinctions came in. The Kabirans thus not only split up into Hindu and Muslim camps, but also introduced all innovations mentioned above. A study of them, which falls outside the scope of this work, may be pursued separately.

However, although these religious sects killed the ideals of Kabir in many ways, his idea of unity and concord between Hinduism and Islam found advocates in the royal court of the Indian Mughals. Emperor Akbar (r. 1556-1605) sought to reconcile the two religions and went to the extent of founding an "Ibadat Khana" (House of Worship) in which representatives of all religions of India, particularly of Hinduism and of Islam were invited to take part in religious debate. Prince Dara Shikoh, the author of "Mizan al-Dahrana" (Combination or Meeting of the Two Rivers), which simply indicates his aim, strove to achieve Hindu-Muslim harmony. Had he succeeded to
the Mughal throne of India, the subsequent history of the Indian sub-continent would have been different from what we see now. There is no doubt that these personages of the royal family were the products of that trend which Kabir set in motion not too long before their time.
CONCLUSION

As has been shown, the history of the interaction of Hindu-Muslim ideas can be traced back as early as the seventh century of the Christian Era. We have also noted that some contacts between Indian mysticism and Sufism had been made even outside India, in Central Asia. The ideas of Abu Yazid al-Bistami and Mansur al-Hallaj testify to this fact. The literary and commercial contacts between India and the Muslim world can also be traced to the seventh and the eighth centuries. These facts we have tried to establish may be recalled in context.

I.

In India, the coming of the Arab trader-missionaries to the South and South-western coasts of India inaugurated the long process of the interaction and assimilation of ideas, manners and customs between the Hindus and the Muslims. The Muslim traders were patronised by Hindu Rajas, who allowed the former to carry out missionary work alongside of their commerce. As a result of these Muslim trader-missionaries' proselytising activity, a large number of Hindus were converted to Islam. Apart from them, many mixed sects and tribes arose in South India, such as the Koiplas, the Labbes, the Navalis, the Ravuttans, the Dedukulas, and others. The presence of a large number of Muslims and their preaching and teaching created an atmosphere of understanding and harmony between the two communities. Eventually intermarriages took place between them.
Conclusion

After the Muslim conquest of Sindh in the early eighth century, the first Muslim ruler, Muhammad bin Qasim, took necessary steps in order to accommodate the Hindus within Muslim rule. His recognition of the Hindus as Dhimmi, and his putting a ban on killing of the cows may be considered as very important concessions granted to the Hindus. The administrative measures taken by the Muslim rulers of India were designed to facilitate understanding and amity between the two communities. Those measures eventually led to the creation of an atmosphere of friendship and concord, as against the initial state of apathy and prejudice between the conquerors and conquered. Evidently, some kind of interaction and assimilation took place between the two communities even on the orthodox level.

II

However, since in India Islam was preached and spread primarily by the Sufis, the serious type of interaction between the two faiths took place on the mystical level, more specifically on the non-orthodox mystical level. On this level of interaction and assimilation some of the fundamental principles of both religions were touched and modified. Hindu and Muslim mystics did not differentiate between Hindu and Muslim in accepting disciples. Likewise, both Hindus and Muslims accepted the mystics of both religions as their gurus or piras indiscriminately. Many Sufis adopted some elements of Yoga while many yogis attached themselves to the circles of the Sufis. In short, the interaction between
the mystics of the two religions gave a new dimension to the religious life of India. Religion was conceived as something above the sectarian level. The universal characteristics of religion were nourished by the mystics, as a result the religious gap between the Hindus and the Muslims was narrowed to a great extent at least on this level.

III

Further, Sufism found in Hindu bhakti mysticism a congenial ground for establishing closer relationship, and initiating processes of integration and even fusion. Although the fundamental ideas of bhakti mysticism are Indian in origin, it appears that they could not have become popular among the Indian masses due to the strong Brahmanic influence on the then Indian society. But the Sufis who believe in similar ideas, gave a fresh impetus to these Indian ideas after their arrival in India. The first contact between Sufism and bhakti mysticism was made in South India after the arrival of those Muslim trader-missionaries of whom mention has already been made. The liberal attitude which the Muslim missionaries adopted towards Islam as well as to Hinduism reflected in their teachings. It is highly probable that due to the similarity between the Sufi teachings and the ideas of bhakti mystics, the former attracted the attention of some Hindu mystics of the Tamil land of the South India. Thus Sufi teachings, it has been suggested, gave an incentive to those Hindu ideas and stimulated them; as a result the spiritual instinct of those Hindu mystics was awakened. This contact
opened the chapter of the interaction and assimilation between them; and it engendered the rise of the bhakti mysticism in the form of a movement—a mass movement of devotional religion at first in South India then eventually it swept through the whole of India. And during the medieval period it remained the most dominant religion of the Indian people.

IV

In the teachings of some South Indian bhakti-mystics, such as Appār, Manikka Vāchakar, Basava, Namālvar, Nāmdev, and others, on whom the possible influence of Ṣūfīsm has been suggested, are found the elements of Ṣūfīsm and bhakti mysticism fused and mingled together. Some of them, it is also argued, due to the preponderance of Ṣūfī influence on them, rejected almost everything of Hindu tradition and culture, such as caste distinctions, idolatry, bathing ritual, pilgrimage, etc., and thus made a significant break with Hinduism. The cases of Appār, Basava and Nāmdev are representative in this respect. They betrayed the strongest Ṣūfī influence on them.

V

In North India and Bengal the Ṣūfī influence was much stronger than it was in the South. The Ṣūfīs who had settled in these regions and preached Islam were more influential than those of the South. The interaction between the two faiths was more widespread in these areas. Guru Rāmāk of the Punjab and Śrī Chaitanya of Bengal can be regarded as the
best examples produced by the interaction.

However, the person who brought the movement of bhakti mysticism from the South to the North was the great bhakti-mystic, Rāmānanda. During his residence in Banaras, he is said to have had regular religious debates with both Hindū and Muslim mystics. He is reported to have been an open advocate of the fusion of Hindūism and Islām. Notwithstanding his unflinching fidelity to Hindū tradition, he admitted to his religious circle disciples from every strata of the society. But the person who is regarded as the best product of the interaction of Hindū-Muslim ideas, on the one hand, and the first true representative of Hindū-Muslim unity and fusion, on the other, was Kabīr, one of the disciples of Rāmānanda.

VI

There are many legends about the birth and naming of Kabīr. In all probability, he appears to have been an illegitimate son, probably of a Hindū woman, adopted by a Muslim weaver family of Banaras. Muslim legends tried to attach special significance to his name, Kabīr. From his very boyhood, Kabīr showed the signs of religious sensitivity. The quest for religious truth was innate in him. Very early in his life, he expressed his disapproval of Hindū as well as Muslim religious rites and ceremonies. Although Kabīr was an adopted son of a Muslim weaver, yet he never identified himself as a Muslim; instead he called himself "a weaver of Banaras."
To be sure, he had no ground to identify himself as a Hindū.
This is the most profound secret of Kabir's life and teaching; that from the beginning he kept himself above denominations. He considered himself a man created by God, who is one without any partner and sharer in His omnipotence. Therefore, it will not be in the spirit of Kabir to categorise him either as a Hindu or as a Muslim. At best we can say that he was a Muslim only by his upbringing and by name. However, mere upbringing or a mere name does not make one a true member of a particular religious system—Islam or Hinduism. It is the adherence which one professes to a particular system by performing its rites and duties that makes one a follower of that system. In the case of Kabir, we have no evidence to show that he ever adhered to formal Islam. The fact remains that in his make-up two streams—Hinduism and Islam—mingled together. Thus the crucial point to remember in the case of Kabir is the fact that throughout his life he kept himself away from the sectarian division of Hinduism and Islam. He was neither a Hindu nor a Muslim exclusively, rather was one of both. But it was puzzling for orthodox Hindus as well as for orthodox Muslims. They opposed him and even despised him for speaking against their established religious systems and age-old traditions. The complexity of Kabir's life and teaching led to a quarrel after his death even among his Hindu and Muslim disciples each wanted to own his body exclusively. However, no solution was found which could keep the two communities of India united for which Kabir worked so hard.
Kabir is widely regarded as one of the most outstanding religious figures of medieval India. He was a reformer and a versatile preacher of religious truth. He is universally recognised as a unique person. He was mystically oriented from his early life. Mysticism appears to have been an inherent element in his nature. It is the mystical inclination of Kabir which helped him to see one God, one humanity and one religion as the facts of the world and our life therein.

The inherent mystical quality of Kabir helped him to regard religion as a matter of personal experience; it is based on the purity of heart, and a wholehearted devotion to God, with a sense of absolute surrender and obedience to His grace and mercy. At some stage of his life, Kabir seems to have undergone a mystical experience like all great mystics and prophets. He heard the Divine Word (Sabda), which caused spiritual awakening in him. This spiritual awakening opened his heart to God and he established a direct relationship with God. Having achieved a direct relation with God, Kabir set himself to the concrete investigation of the religious problems of India. This was an enormous task. In the course of his search for religious truth, Kabir preached the essential doctrines of religious truth. He came to realise that Hinduism and Islam are essentially the same and true. In other words, according to Kabir, religion is characterised by catholicity and universality. Since religion is universal, it is applicable to every individual without any distinction of race and nationality. Thus, Kabir failed to accept the
view that there could be divisions among human beings, such as Hindus and Muslims, on the basis of religion. Therefore, in his efforts to find a common ground of religion for the Muslims and the Hindus, Kabir tried to combine monothelism with monism. This was a great contribution which Kabir made to the religious life of India. However, by propagating and advocating the essential truth of Hinduism and Islam, Kabir certainly did not attach himself to either religion as far as the orthodox category of them was concerned. Rather, by discovering the religious truth which was veiled and cloaked by the outward ceremonies of both Hinduism and Islam, Kabir wanted to unite the two communities for the quest of salvation. The most significant underlying aspect of this attempt on the part of Kabir was to resolve the historical tension prevailing in religious communities of India—Hindus and the Muslims—in the name of religion. In his attempt to achieve this goal, Kabir overtly disregarded all external formalisms of both religions as something useless for spiritual progress in the true sense. For denouncing the observances and rites of both religions, Kabir used his satirical style which is unique. Thus, Kabir preached a new spirituality or piety by which he wished to unify the religious communities of India separated from each other for centuries.

VIII

However, by rejecting some aspects of both Hinduism and Islam, Kabir did not put himself outside the fold of Hindu or Islamic tradition completely. He remained part
of each. In fact, he became the pioneer of a common Indo-Islamic tradition. He only wanted to break down by open denunciation all the artificial barriers which were created by the two communities in the name of religion, and which prevented them from mingling together. And on the ruins of those age-old formal religions, Kabir wanted to evolve a new spirituality, primarily based on *bhakti*, acceptable and practicable equally for both Hindus and the Muslims. But it will be incorrect to maintain that Kabir despised either Hinduism or Islam or both as such. For, in addition to the religious propensity which he appears to have had innate in him, he also closely associated himself with both Hindu and Muslim mystics and imbued deeply in their teachings. Of these saints, the names of two outstanding personalities have been unmistakably mentioned in all records. They were Nasraniya and Shaykh Taqi. The ideas of these holy men gave further impetus to Kabir's religious impulses. Thus, it is fairly clear that Kabir's ideas were moulded by the interaction of Hindu-Muslim ideas as he absorbed them from the saints of the two Faiths. In spite of the fact that Kabir imbued himself with mystical ideas of the two religions, he demonstrated an uncompromising attitude to both Hinduism and Islam.

From the Islamic point of view, by no means Kabir can be regarded as a Sufi belonging to any organized Sufi order of India. He can at best be regarded as an individual Sufi of heterodox tendencies. He, thus, can be compared with Bayzid Bistami and Rangir al-Kallaj, rather than Kufin-ai-Din Chishti and Najam-ud-Din Auliya. And from the Hindu side he can be
Conclusion

likened with bhakti-mystics like Basava, Dāmdev and Rāminanda; and certainly not with Rāmānuja and Śaṅkara. It was a unique character of Kabir’s teachings that he showed no regard to orthodox or traditional religions—theological or mystical. And in this respect Kabir occupied a position different even from that taken by his guru Rāminanda and śihr Shāykh Tāqi, both of them had inclination towards traditional form of religions. In Kabir’s teaching, we find elements, drawn from both Sūfism and bhakti mysticism, blended together in a manner unknown in the religious history of India before.

IX

Some modern scholars, such as Professor ‘Aziz Ahmad, regard Kabir as a mere eclectic and syncretist (cf. supra, p. 221). It is argued that Kabir rejected most elements of both Hindu and Islam and accepted a few elements from both religions. Apparently Kabir was a syncretist. But if we dive deep into the essential teachings of Kabir and try to balance it with the Hindu and Muslim religious elements that he rejected, we will find that Kabir did not seem to be a mere syncretist. But he was the pioneer of a different kind of religious universalism under a given situation with a different objective. For example, Kabir denounced the efficacy of all rituals, ceremonies, rites and observances of both Hindus and Islam without showing any preference or favour whatsoever to either religion, for the two religions put too much emphasis on the externals of religion in disregard to the pure inwardness of spirituality. Moreover, in the assemblies of pilgrims and
other places of festivals, corruptions of diverse nature in the name of religion are crept into the life of the people. Kabir also rejected the validity and the usefulness of the scriptures of both religions, precisely because they were misused and misrepresented by the so-called guardians of both religions, namely, the Brāhmans and the Mullāhs. Otherwise, there is evidence to show that Kabir regarded the essential validity and truth of religious scriptures. Similarly, Kabir openly rejected the position and status claimed by the Hindu and Muslim religious personages, not because of their titles but because of their ignorance about the truth of religion. In fact, Kabir held these self-styled religious people responsible not only for their own ignorance about the essence of religion, but also for misleading the innocent people in the name of religion. Kabir also accused those Brāhmans and Mullāhs for having created an iron wall between the two communities in the name of religion. Thus kept them not only far away from each other, but also involved them in a vain quarrel in the name of religion. In other place, Kabir expressed his opinion as to who should be called a Brāhmin and a Mullāh. Kabir legitimately questioned the origin of the names like Hindū and Muslīm. Kabir maintained that God did not create people differently; that is to say, by birth no one was circumcised to be designated as a Muslīm; nor was one born with a so-called sacred thread to be called a Brāhmin. The fundamental point to be noted here is that Kabir tried to impress with very thoughtful arguments that there could not be any distinction between man and man on the ground of
religion and its symbols, for God has not created Father
Adam and Mother Eve as Hindu and Muslim, rather only as
human beings. Thus, under the spell of Sufi influence, Kabir
denounced unequivocally the concept of two peoples, namely,
Hindu and Muslim, as well as the caste distinctions within
Hinduism itself.

Kabir's quest for salvation was not merely theoretical
but also based on his personal experience. However, theory
and personal experience merged completely in his teaching.
In this respect Kabir is regarded as a great religious figure.

For syncretism, not only the elements of two religions,
but also personal experience Kabir proved himself
as a unique religious reformer and preacher. He called upon
the Hindu and the Muslim to worship One Supreme God, Allah
or Ayyub. Kabir persistently emphasised that the name of the
God is only a linguistic device, but the truth remains that
there is only One God, who is omniscient, omnipotent and
omnipresent. Correlative to this concept of God, Kabir rejected
the Hindu practice of idol-worship as well as Hindu idea
that worship to God should be done only in a temple and
Muslim practice of offering prayers to God only in a mosque.

According to Kabir, it is futile to try to keep God confined
to temple or mosque, or to go to some particular places,
such as Hindu Kasi and Muslim Mecca, on a pilgrimage to
worship God there. As against these practices of Hinduism
and Islam, Kabir in a true mystical vein boldly declared:
that God exists everywhere, particularly in human heart.

In contradistinction to Hindu-Muslim religious rites and practices, which Kabir denounced as useless and thus had no value for spiritual progress, he declared that the purity of heart was the essentially necessary element for worshiping God and thus for achieving salvation. And by worshiping Kabir meant nothing but a single-hearted bhakti to be directed to One Supreme God with a sense of absolute surrender (ihsan) or sana'at and trust and dependence (lawa'qil) on God's mercy and care. In his essential doctrines, Kabir fused the elements drawn from both Hinduism and Islam. In a true mystical fashion he united the Hindu and the Muslim, not to attach themselves to the love of this world which he likened with a deceiving woman. The love for the world (lu'lu') blinds us continuously to Paradise (al-firdaus). In order to achieve mazaaq or habit, Kabir tells us, we should remember (dhikr) God all the time, and get the guidance (hidayat) of a true preacher or mued. In his essential teaching, Kabir laid down the dogmas by following which one can obtain salvation. And salvation to Kabir, as with all mystics, is a union with God and to live with Him eternally.

Taking into consideration all the important elements that are found in the essential teachings of Kabir, it can be concluded that he developed his ideas consequent to his being influenced by both Hindu mysticism of the bhakti tree and Sufism of heterodoxy, apart from the orthodox.
that was innate in him. His ideas were the combination of Hindu and Muslim ideas. Thus, Kabir's life and thought represent a significant new development in comparative religion in which he brought to the consciousness of mankind a truth about religion which they had forgotten by practising excessively the outward rites of religion. Kabir was the true product of the interaction of HindUISM and Islam. He was the pioneer of Hindu and Muslim unity. The type of teaching he preached amply fits his objective. Hence he said:

Kabir is a child of Rama and Allah, and accepteth all gurus and pirs.

This is one of the reasons why the study of Kabir's life and teaching is so fascinating.

Despite all odds and difficulties which Kabir faced in achieving his life-mission, he was quite successful during his lifetime. His teaching was appealing and influential as can be assessed from the number of sects which arose under his influence. After his death, although in some quarters his ideas fell into abuse, the impetus of his teaching continued for many years and found in other quarters appropriate advocates who tried to implement the ideas of Kabir.
HISTORY OF THE INTERACTION OF HINDU-MUSLIM IDEAS

1 Although these places were the principal centres of Muslim political power, there has never been a Muslim population in these areas larger than other rural areas. Even in the case of Mysore, where Tipu Sultān, in modern time, is said to have forced conversion to Islam, the ineffectiveness of royal proselytism may be measured by the fact that Muslims are scarcely 5 percent of the total population of the state.


3 According to the Lahore Resolution, which the All-India Muslim League passed in 1940, a Muslim state, namely, Pakistān, was created on Indian soil consisting of those geographically contiguous areas where the majority of the population was Muslim. Northwest Frontier Province, Baluchistān, Sind and the western part of the Punjab formed West Pakistan. Eastern Bengal and a part of the district of Sylhet (of the province of Assam) constituted East Pakistan (Bangladesh since December 16th, 1971). These areas had never been centres of Muslim political power. The case of Sylhet is particularly interesting, for there is no evidence to show that any Muslim ruler had ever lived in that district. Nevertheless, the majority Muslim population of that district over-


6. "Tribute" or "Protection-tax." The tax was levied on those non-Muslims (dhimmis) who lived in Muslim territories. While the pagans had the choice only between Islam or death, the professors of scripture (ahl al-kitab) may obtain security and protection for themselves, their families and properties by paying the jizya. The tax has been enjoined by the Qur'an 9.29: "Fight them, that believe not in God and the last day and who hold not as forbidden what God and His apostle have forbidden, and do not profess the true religion, those that have scripture, until they pay the jizya in person in subjection."

According to the Qur'anic description of ahl al-kitab,
the Hindus are not "People of the Book." Therefore, they could not have expected protection from the Indian Muslim government by paying *jizya*. However, the contacts between the Hindus and the Muslims resulted in softening the attitudes of the latter towards the former. Therefore, for consideration of accommodation, though repugnant to the law of Islam, the Muslim rulers of India granted their Hindu subjects the status of Dhimma and by levying poll-tax protected them. For further information on *jizya*, see C. H. Becker, "Dizya", Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam (1931), pp. 91-92.

7. Ikhān, 11th.


9. Ghaznīnī, written by Muḥammad ʿAlī b. Hamīd b. Abū Bakr Kūrī in twelfth century, tr. Mirza Kālihī Beg, Firdūsī, 2 vols., Karachi, 1960, is a local chronicle of Sindh. For an account of this work, see S. C. Majumdar, "The Arab Invasion of India", Journal of Indian History (JIH), Madras, X, Supplement, pp. 11 ff. Majumdar considers it as a valuable record with more details than others, though less reliable. Extracts of Ghaznīnī have been translated by Elliot and Dowson, I, 131-211.

10. Cf. The Classical Age, p. 457; also see S. N. Dhan, "The Arab Conquest of Sind", Indian Historical...
Quarterly(III), Calcutta, XVI, 596-97; K. A. Ganji, "The Advent of the Arabs in Hindūstān, their relations with the Hindus; and the Occupation of Sindh", Proceedings of the All-India Oriental Conference (PIOC), X, 403.


12 Balādhūrī (d. 279/392) is one of the earliest Muslim writers on India. His famous work: Kitāb Fīṭah-ull-Buldān, tr. P. K. Hitti and R. C. Kurgotten, is considered to be a masterpiece, and has universally acquired the status of an authority on Indian subjects. R. C. Majumdar considers it a work with less details but more reliable.

13 B. K. Gosvami has done a great job in analysing different terms of the Vedic literature such as "upāsanā", "dhājana", "sraddhā", etc. These terms, according to Gosvami, expressed in marakara, yadun, etc., archanā are nothing but different ways of expressing bhakti to the Divine (cf. The Chakti Cult in Ancient India, 2nd ed., Varanasi, 1965, p. 2). This is perhaps one of the best and most comprehensive books on ancient Indian Bhakti.

14 For preliminary information about the subject, see A. Grierson, "The Birthplace of Bhakti", JIC, XII (1911), 800-801.


16 The whole bhakti movement begins from the sixth or
the seventh century of the Christian Era up to the fifteenth century has been discussed in details in ch. III.


22 *cit.*, p. 29.


Ibn Battutah (1304/1377/78), was born at Tangier and died at Fez after having travelled as far as India and China. Ibn Battutah stands last in the long list of the Arab and Persian geographers and explorers who came to India, such as Sulayman at-Tajir (d. 238/852), Abū Dulāf Ḥisār al-Fārābī (d. 332/943), Buzurg ibn Shahyar (d. 298/910), al-Istakhari (d. 311/922), Ibn Hawqal (d. 320/932), al-Maedisī (d. 376/988), al-Birūnī (d. 421/1029) and Abū l-Ḥasan al-Kas̄swī (d. 303/915). The last named visited Kūtān and Kanṣūra in the North and travelled into the South up to Ceylon and Ceylon. His famous book, Murūj al-Dhahab, contains an account of India and mentions names of different places unmistakably. Sulayman at-Tajir is said to have explored the Indian Ocean, rounded the whole coastline of India and visited Ceylon and Konkan. The book of his travels entitled Sīlṣalat-ut-Turāfītīr was translated into French and published in Paris (1715). Ibn Battutah also stands in the list of those who did not come to India but wrote on the authority of travellers, namely, Abū Zayd Ḥasan (d. 295/878), Ibn Rostu (d. 291/903), Qulun枷, ibn Jaʃar (d. 297/909), Zakāriyā Ḥawwārī (d. 632/1234), al-Qalāḏarī (d. 278/892), Ibn al-Ǧadīd (334/946), al-Idrisī (d. 551/1154) and Yaḏūt (d. 528/1130). Many of these have made important contributions to
Indian geography, Indian customs and traditions, manners and habits and religion and philosophy. Some of them like Sulaymân al-Tajir, Kāfīdī, al-Bīrūnī and Ibn Battūtah have earned immortal fame, their respective works having become classical. These facts help us to understand that India and the Muslim world were never separated from each other. The Muslims took immense interest in knowing about India. The contacts between India and the Muslims remained continuous since the beginning of Islam.

27 Zahārī Iṣṭāwa, p. 182 cited by Ikrām, p. 132.
28 Or. cit., pp. 11-12.
29 Ibid., p. 21.
30 Thomas, F. W., Mutual Influence of Muhammadans and Hindus in India, Cambridge, 1872, p. 12.
31 Studies in Islamic Culture in the Indian Environment (hereafter referred to as Studies in Islamic Culture in India), Oxford, 1924, p. 73.
32 Indian Islam: A Religious History of Islam in India, Bombay, 1930, p. 175.
33 Sachau, pp. 19-20.
Bomby, 1960, pp. 616-17.


37 The stars were, of course, important to the Arabs because of their desert life, but no scientific study of them was undertaken until this time. Islam added its impetus to the study of astronomy as a means for fixing the direction in which prayer should be conducted. The famous al-Khawārizmī (d. 850), based his widely known astronomical tables on al-Fazārī's work and syncretised the Indian and Greek systems of astronomy adding his own contributions (cf. ibid., p. 117).

38 Cf. ibid.; also see De Bary, W. T., Sources of Indian Tradition, New York, 1958, p. 378; L. C. Rajmandar, "Intercourse with the Outside World", in The Classical Arc, p. 640.

39 Cf. Ibrāhīm, p. 15; also see The Classical Arc, p. 640.

40 See Ibrāhīm, p. 15; also cf. W. Cureton, "Indian Physicians at Baghdad", JRAI, VI (1841), 165-19; S. F. Darwin, Fox, "Hindū Culture: Its Mission to the West", Arama Pāth, II (1931), 786-34.

41 Cf. W. Wright, "Syriac Version of the Kalīlah wa-Dīnah with Translation", JRAI, III. S., VII (1979), Appn. 1. According to P. T. Nitti, the basis of the al-Farīdī Lawlah (Thousand and One Nights) was a Persian work.
containing several stories of Indian origin (cf. History of the Arabs, p. 414). Obviously, it alludes to Panchatantra which is a collection of fables containing wise maxims. It was first translated in the sixth century from Sanskrit into Pahlavi, and then from Pahlavi into Arabic and Syriac (cf. Winter- nitz, K., Geschichte der Indischen Literatur, Leipzig, 1905, 1909, 1920, 3 vols., tr. Mrs. S. Kellor (History of Indian Literature), Calcutta, 1927, Vols. I & II). However, the Arabic translation made the work well-known all over the Muslim world, and it was translated into Persian, Hebrew, Latin, Spanish, Italian, etc. (cf. The Classical Arc., p. 640).

42. Cf. ibid., p. 289; also see Ikrām, p. 15.

Referring to a Pahlavi work, "R. C. Inamdar tells us that half a century before Harsha-varman (c. 607-647) and Pulakesin II (cf. Harsha and Pulakesin II in The Classical Arc., pp. 105-106), an Indian king named Devavarman (Devavarman), sent an embassy to the Persian King Khusru I with rich presents and a set of chessmen with boards. Persian poet Nirdawi says in his famous book Shams of the sovereign of Khusru II that ambassadors from the sovereign of Harsha-varman to Khusru I (Amursiran) with a chessboard and begging him to solve the secrets of the game. Other Persian and Aramaic writers state that Dethap (i.e., chess, from Sanskrit Satyaprapta) came into Persia from India, and there appears to be a consensus of opinion that
may be considered to settle the question. Thus we have the game passing from the Hindus to the Persians thence to the Arabs in seventh century, and from then directly or indirectly, to various parts of Europe subsequently (cf. *The Classical Arc*, p. 127; also see G. B. R. "Chess", *Encyclopedia of Britian*, V(1971), 457-62).


Cf. R. C. M. S. Juddar, "Northern India During A. D. 657-726", in *The Classical Arc*, pp. 167-69. During Omar's Caliphate (623-40) as many as three naval expeditions were sent against India; one against Tanch (Than near Bombay). The other two expeditions were aimed at Saurashtra (Saurashtra, Anti-Saurashtra), a seaport at the mouth of the Indus. The Arab historians record a victory, but according to *Ismat*, the Muslims were defeated and their leader was killed at the battle of Dehel (cf. 1621, p. 159). However, these expeditions were in the nature of raids, and probably no conspicuous success was achieved. Also see Elliot and Jusso, I, 115-15.
See "Influence of Islam on Indian Culture", p. 32; also cf. J. Duncan, "Historical Remarks on the Coast of Malabar, with some Descriptions of the Manners of its Inhabitants", Asiatic Researches, V(1797), 1-36.

The Classical Arc, p. 456.


Majumdar is not willing to accept the view that the Muslims settled in the coastal areas in large numbers as early as in the seventh century, but affirms that in the beginning of the eighth century a large number of Muslim settlers are found in Sind (cf. The Classical Arc, pp. 456-57).

Cf. ibid., pp. 169-70; also see Majumdar, R. C., Ancient India, rev ed., Delhi, 1964, p. 264; Elliot and Dowson, I, 115-18.


Ibid., p. 267.


Cf. Arnold, pp. 267-68; also see Titus, pp. 37-38.


Cf. op. cit., p. 40; also see C. P. Brown, "On Malabar, Coromandel, Calicut, etc.", JHS, X. S., V(1871), 147-48.

58 Cf. cit., p. 263.

59 Cf. ibid., p. 269; also see Mahdi Husain, pp. 185-96.

For a description of the whole Malabar coast as given by Ibn Battuta, see ibid., pp. 176-96.

60 Referred to in Studies in Islamic Culture in India, p. 77.

61 See Innes, p. 190, referred to by Arnold, p. 269.

62 Medieval Indian Culture, p. 12.


64 See ibid., p. 13.

65 Cf. o. cit., p. 41, referred to Fuch al-Buldān, 1, 129-36.

66 O. cit., p. 277.

67 Abūr Razzāq al-Samarkandi was sent on this mission in 1441 by the Timurid Sultan Shīh Būkhārī in response to an appeal made by a Muslim ambassador who had been sent by the Zamorin of Calicut to this Sultan. The ambassador requested the Sultan to send an envoy to invite the Zamorin Liaq to Islam. Abūr Razzāq was chosen to perform this task, but on his arrival there, he received a cordial reception, and after staying there for about six months, abandoned his mission and returned to Qurāshān (see Matla' al-Sā'dayn wa-Kalma al-Sā'rayn, London, India Office No. No. 2704, Vol. 173), referred to by
The naval expeditions to India have been mentioned.

As to the Muslim advance to India by land, we find that the first shock of their invasion was felt equally by the three border kingdoms of Kabul, Zabol and Sindh (see *The Classical Age*, pp. 167-68). The Arabs made persistent efforts for more than half a century to subdue Kabul and Zabol beginning from 650 to about 710. Although these territories could not be brought under the direct control of the Muslim government of Damascus, the rulers of those kingdoms became Arab tributaries.

Having failed to effect a victory against Sindh by naval expeditions, the Arabs planned to try by land. During the Caliphate of Ali (656-61), an expedition was sent against India (cf. 668). The Muslims advanced up to Kikan or Kikanah without any opposition. (Kikan was a state in the hilly region round Bolan Pass, and is referred to by Huien Tsang as a kingdom whose people led pastoral lives amid the great mountains and valleys in separate clans, without any ruling chief. It was, however, according to Sinke-fu, included in the central division of Sindh, under the direct administration of the king). The Muslim army was unsuccessful, and the commander of the army was killed in
603 (at the beginning of the Umayyād Caliphate).
During the following twenty years, no fewer than six expeditions were sent against Kīkān without permanent success. The only solid gain of the Arabs during this period was the conquest of Ḥakrān (cf. _The Classical Age_, p. 169).

Reference has already been made to the immediate cause which led to the Muslim expedition to India, and the eventual conquest of Sindh by them (cf. p. 21). Before Muhammad b. Qāsim's expedition, it seems there were two expeditions sent against Sindh. The first was under 'Ubaydullāh, while the second was led by Budayl. Both the expeditions against Debal were unsuccessful and the commanders were killed (cf. _Ibid._, p. 170).

60 On _cit._, p. 31.
70 Titus, p. 150.
71 Cf. D. B. Macdonald, "Dhimma", _SEI_, pp. 75-76. The term "Dhimmi", according to the Islamic canon law, includes only the Jews and the Christians (the People of Scripture); the Sabaëans are also included only in a wider sense. However, by an interpretation, some include the Zoroastrians but the Qurʾān does not make it explicit.

73 Cf. _The Classical Age_, pp. 45-50. The Charter is stated thus: As for the rest of the people (Muḥammad b. Qāsim had already offered pardon to some Brahmins
on condition that they would find out the queen of Bahr and produce her before him), a tribute was fixed on them under the rules laid down by the holy Prophet of God (may the blessings of God be on him and his descendants). He who received the honour of Islam and became a convert was exempt from slavery as well as tribute and was not injured. Those, however, who did not accept the true faith were compelled to pay the fixed tribute (jizya). These latter were divided by him into three classes. The first and highest class had to pay 48 dirhams of silver in weight per head. The second, or the middle class, had to pay 24 dirhams in weight, and the third, or the lowest class, had to pay 12 dirhams in weight only. He then dismissed them with the following words: "I let you go this day. Those among you who become Muslims and come within the fold of Islam shall have their tribute remitted, but those who are still inclined to be of their own faith, must put up with injuries (gazanā) and tribute (jizya) to retain the religion of their fathers and grandfathers." (cf. ibid., referred to Chach-nāma, I, 164-65); also see Ikrām, p. 11; H. R. Haig, "On the Sites of Brāhmānād and Mansūra in Sindh; with Notes on others of less note in their Vicinity", JRAS, XVI (1894), 281-91.

75 The Classical Ace, p. 458, quoted from Chach-nāma.
76 Cf. ibid., p. 460.
77 Ikrām, p. 17.
78 The letter of Ḥajjāj reads as following: "Because after they have become dhimmis (protected subjects) we have no right whatever to interfere with their lives or their property, do, therefore, permit them to build the temples of those they worship. No one is prohibited from or punished for following his own religion, and let no one prevent them from doing so, so that they may live happy in their own homes" (Chach-nāma, I, 168-69, cited in The Classical Ace, p. 460).
79 Ibid., p. 461.
80 Ibid., p. 462.
81 Ibid.; p. 457.
82 Cf. ibid., p. 176. The sea-port of Debēl cannot be definitely identified. According to some, it occupied the site of modern Thathar, while others locate it at Bambor on the north bank of the Gharo Creeks, and 3½ miles to the west of the village of Gharo in the taluk of Mirpur Sakro (cf. The Classical Ace, p. 170).
85 Referre to in ibid., p. 18.
87 Sachou, p. 22.
88 See Kajumdar in The Delhi Sultanate, p. 86.
89 Cf. ibid., pp. 146, 147.
90 Studies in Islamic Culture in India, p. 82.
91 Cf. ibid.
92 See The Delhi Sultanate, p. 105.
94 Studies in Islamic Culture in India, p. 83.
95 Sen, K., Medieval Mysticism of India, London, 1929, p. 10. The term "Zabākā" in Hindi means "one.
who is in the path of realisation". The equivalent word in Arabic and Persian and also in Urdu is ""Abid".


97 "The Medieval Mystics of North India", in The Cultural Heritage of India, 2nd ed., Calcutta, 1953, IV, 387, also see 553-54, 615.
NOTES

THE INTERACTION OF HINDU-MUSLIM IDEAS ON THE MYSTICAL LEVEL


6 Cf. Archer, J. C., Mystical Elements in Mahomed, New Haven, 1924; also see Sūfīsm, pp. 13, 24-26, 28-29.

7 See Essai sur les origines, p. 85; D. B. Macdonald, "Dhikr", SFI, p. 75.


9 Op. cit., p. 40; also see Sūfīsm, p. 28; Mystics of Islām, p. 68.

10 Sūfīsm, p. 17; also see D. B. Macdonald, "Tawhīd", SFI, pp. 586-87.

11 Sūfīsm, p. 12; also see R. A. Nicholson, "A Historical Enquiry Concerning the Origin and Development of Sūfīsm (with a List of Definitions of the Terms 'Ṣūfī' and 'Taṣawwūf', Arranged Chronologically", JRAS, N. S., XXXVIII (1906), 303-43.


13 Nicholson, R. A., Studies in Islamic Mysticism (hereafter referred to as Islamic Mysticism), Cambridge, 1921, p. 11; also see Fazlur Rahmān, ch. 1x, "Ṣūfī Organizations", pp. 150-56.


16 Ibid.

17 Mystics of Islam, p. 115.

In fact, the idea that a Sūfī does not hanker after hell or heaven but for God's love can be traced even before Rābi'a. Hasan al-Baṣrī (642-723), for instance, is quoted to have said: "I have not served God from fear of hell for I should be a wretched hireling if I served Him from fear; not from love of heaven for I should be a bad servant if I served for what is given; I have served Him only for love of Him and desire for Him" (cited by De Bary, Jr. T., Sources of Indian Tradition, New York, 1953, p. 142; also see Anonimus, "al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī", SEI, p. 136; A. A. Nicholson, "The Goal of Muhammadan Mystics", JNAS, XLV (1913), 55-68.

18 See Sūfīsm, pp. 53-54; -------, "Dhū 'l-Hūn", SEI, p. 77; also cf. Esna i serv a deriv a, p. I87.


Cf. Hindu-Muslim Mysticism, p. 91.

See ibid., p. 48.

See Masson, L., Al-Hallâj, Martyr mystique de l'Islâm,

Nicholson, R. A., A Literary History of the Arabs,

Bhagí, p. 221.

Asoka: The Buddhist Emperor of India, 3rd ed., Oxford,
1919, p. 42. The Rock Edict XIII, published with
the rest of the Fourteen Rock Edicts in 256 B.C.,
gives a detailed list of the countries to which the
imperial missionaries of the Law of Piety had been
dispatched. The missionaries were sent into the
domains of Antiochos Theos, King of Syria and
Western Asia (B.C. 261-246); Ptolemy Philadelphos,
King of Egypt (B.C. 285-247); Hages; King of Cyrene

The Ceylonese chronicles, the earliest of which
was composed by Buddhist monks about six centuries
after the Edicts, give a list of the countries and
add the names of the missionaries (cf. ibid., p. 44).

Also see Gokhale, B. G., Asoka Muniya, New York,
1966, pp. 79-80; Rajumdar, R. C., Ancient India,
rev. ed., Delhi, 1964, p. 111; J. K. Kamarappa,
"Buddhist Missionaries of Asoka", Arvok Path,
II (1931), 77-79.

"Intercourse with the Outside World", in The Classical
Arc. Vol. III of The History and Culture of the
Indian People, Bombay, 1954, p. 527.
29 Cf. ibid., pp. 29-33.
30 See ibid., pp. 640-41.
31 Ibid., p. 630. The Arab conqueror of Balkh captured Khālid’s mother in 705. The son was converted to Islam and founded the famous Barraki family. Khālid ibn Barmak came to occupy the highest office under the Caliph, and his son and two grandsons practically ruled the ‘Abbāsid Empire from 786-803. They were instrumental in introducing Indian astronomy, mathematics, medicine, and other sciences into the Muslim world.

32 Mystics of Islam, p. 16.
34 Cf. Muhammad and Islam, p. 16.
36 Mystics of Islam, p. 17.
37 Ibid.; also see Muhammad and Islam, pp. 174-75.
39 Hindu-Muslim Mysticism, pp. 94-95.

41. Sufism, p. 22.

42. *Revelation and Reason*, p. 90.

43. *Miftāh al-Salātī, Cairo, 1323/1906*, XII, 152.

44. *Hindū-Muslim Mysticism*, pp. 93-94.

45. The text reads as following: Ta kuntu uladīnahu rā yadīmu bihi fardāhu wa kāmī yuʿallimūnī al-uffīzīn wa harāʾīn sarīf, p. 177.

46. Quoted in *Hindū-Muslim Mysticism*, p. 94; also see *Revelation and Reason*, p. 95.


49. See *Studies in Islamic Culture*, p. 124.


51. Cited in *ibid.*, pp. 17-18; also see *Revelation and Reason*, p. 95.

Ibid., p. 19. The definitions of āḏām as a moral state and that of Nirvāṇa as given by Professor Rhys Davis have been compared and shown that apart from the doctrine of Karma, which is alien to Sūfīsm, they agree almost word for word (see ibid.).

 Cf. Revelation and Reason, pp. 96-103.

Ibid., p. 97; also see Harnai sur les origines, p. 245.


 See Revelation and Reason, p. 91.


 Hindu-Muslim Mysticism, pp. 119-20.

 Ob. cit., p. 50.


Ibn al-ʿArabī, ʿAbdul Karīm Jīli, Ibn al-Fārīd and Abū Saʿīd ibn Abū al-Khayr incorporated his ideas in their works; and Junayd, the famous Sūfī came to his defence, as did al-Hujwīrī, when he was accused of being a heretic.


For more information about Fālqī, see ibid., p. 12; ----, La passion d'al-Fālqī, extraits inédits de l'Islam, Paris, 1922; ----, "Fālqī", 321.

66 Cf. Kitāb al-Tawāsīn, p. 129; also see Tara Chaudh, p. 70.

67 See Prācīni Upanisads, p. 515; Guāndama's Kartīkā,
1.6–9; Br-Veda, 10.121; Prāṇa Upanisad, 1.4; also
of Bhād-Āranyaka Upanisād, 1.7.1; 1.4.3.

68 See Atharva Veda, 10.7.7, 3; 11.1.13; Saṁyatha Brāhmaṇa,
6.1.6; Deussen, P., The Philosophy of the Upanishads,

69 See Daśgupta, S. N., A History of Indian Philosophy,
Cambridge, 1929, I, 260.

70 Cf. Chaudhury, p. 53; Tara Chaudh, pp. 70–71.


72 Quoted in Chaudhury, p. 58.

73 See Kitāb al-Tawāsīn, p. 174.


75 Islāmīc Mysticism, p. 79; also see dārīm, pp. 59–60;
Personality in Sūfīsm, p. 32; ———— in Terms
of Islām, p. 217.


77 Cf. Islāmīc Mysticism, p. 61; also see M. Smith, "Abū
Ṣaʿīd b. Abī Al-Khayr: The Orament of the Mystic
Fath", Arvān Fath, II(1931), 540–46. For the docri-
nics of Abū Ṣaʿīd, see Arvān al-Tawhīd, Il Yatirī
al-Shaykh Abī Ṣaʿīd (The Secrets of the Unity. According
to the Teaching of Shaykh Abī Ṣaʿīd), comp. Muhammad
al-Kundawwār, ed. V. A. Zhukovskiy (Persian Text),
St. Petersburg, 1899.
78 Islamic Mysticism, pp. 61-62.
79 Quoted in ibid., p. 62.
80 Quoted by De Bary, p. 414.
83 See Arnold, p. 259, 266, 265; also see Majumdar, R. C. (ed.), in The History and Culture of the Indian People, Vol. VI: The Delhi Sultanate, Bombay, 1930, pp. 271-72; Studies in Islamic Culture, p. 36.
84 Arnold, p. 266.
85 Cf. ibid.
86 Ibid., p. 250.
87 Ibid., p. 275.
88 Cf. ibid., pp. 276-77.
89 See ibid.; also cf. V. R. Haire, "Ibn Batuta in Sind", JRAS, IV: 8, XIX(1897), 392-412.
90 Arnold, pp. 277-73.
92 Arnold, p. 273.
93 Some think that Mullah Ali was the first Bohra missionary whose proselytising style has been greatly
extolled by the Shī'ah historians (cf. Arnold, pp. 279-80).


95 K. B. Faizullah Lutfullah suggests that Nur Sattar came to India rather later, in the reign of Shīma II (1179-1242) (see Arnold, p. 278).

96 For example, a community of Muslims in southern India, namely, the Āvattans (they are found chiefly in the Tamil-speaking districts of Madura, Tinnevelly, Coimbatore, North Arcot and the Nilgiris), ascribe their conversion to the preaching of missionaries whose tombs are held in veneration by them to the present day. The most famous of these was Sayyid Nathār Shāh (969-1039; The Imperial Gazetteer of India, XXIV, 47, spells his name Nādir Shāh; but Qādir Ḥusayn calls him Ḥathād Vālī), who after many wanderings in Arabia, Persia and northern India, settled down in Trichinopoly, where he spent the remaining years of his life in prayers and works of charity, and converted a large number of Hindus to the faith of Islam. His tomb is much resorted to as a place of pilgrimage, and the Muslims renamed Trichinopoly Nathār Nagar, after the name of their saint (see Madras District Gazetteer: Trichinopoly,
Madras, 1907, I., 338; Qâdir ʿUsayn Khân, South Indian Musalâms, Madras, 1910, p. 36 referred to by Arnold, p. 270.

Sayyid Ibrâhîm Shahîd (born about the middle of the twelfth cent.), whose tomb is at Ervadi, was a militant hero who led an expedition into the Pandaya kingdom, occupied the country for about twelve years, but was at length slain; his son's life was, however, spared in consideration of the beneficent rule of his father, and a grant of land to him, which his descendants enjoy to the present day (cf. Arnold, p. 270).

Another group of Muslims in southern India, namely, the Dedukulas, who live by cotton cleaning and by weaving cloth, attribute their conversion to Bâbâ Fâkhru-ud-Dîn, whose tomb they revere at Penukonda (see Arnold, p. 271). Legend says that he was originally a king of Sištân, who abdicated his throne in favour of his brother and became a religious mendicant. After making the pilgrimage to Mecca and Kâdîm, he was hidden by the Prophet in a dream to go to India; here he met Nâther Shâh of Trichinopoly and became his disciple and was sent by him in company with 200 religious mandicants on a proselytising mission. The legend goes on to say that they finally settled at Penukonda in the vicinity of a Śrâvâṇa temple, where their presence was unwelcome to the Râjâ of the place, but after some tests of their religious character, especially
Bābā Fakhr-ud-Dān's miracles against a Brāhmin, the Rājāh became a Muslim, and his example was followed by a large number of inhabitants of the neighbourhood. The temple of the place was turned into a mosque (see Qādir Husayn Khān, pp. 39-42; Madras District Gazetteer: Ānumbūr, I, 193-94 referred to by Arnold, p. 271; also cf. H. F. Sinclair, "Notes on Castes in the Dekhān", Indian Antiquary, III (1874); 184-90).

From Malabar Islām was taken by the missionaries to the Laccadive and Maldive Islands. The date of the conversion of the first Muslim Sultān of the Maldive Island, Ḥunād Shāhūrāja has been conjectured to have occurred about 1200. According to Ibn Battūtah all the inhabitants of the Islands were converted Muslims. The story of the spread of Islām in the Islands is told thus: There was a demon, who used to visit the Islands and take the life of a young girl. The people of the Islands were perturbed in fear of the demon. But a Moroccan Muslim, most probably a Sūfī, named Abūl Bārākāt the Berber came there and settled in the Island of Mahāl. One night he dressed himself like a girl and waited for the demon to come and to take "her". But Abūl Bārākāt was reciting the Qur'ān all the time. When the demon came to take the girl as usual, he was terribly frightened and fled, not to come again. Thus Abūl Bārākāt freed the people of the Islands from
the threat of the demon. The King of the Islands, Shanurāja, asked him to stay there. Eventually the King accepted Islām and the rest followed him. Ibn Baṭṭūtah resided in the Maldives Island during the years 1343-44 and married the daughter of the Wazīr (minister), who was the grandson of the Sultan Dāvūd, who was a grandson of the Sultan Ahmad Shanurāja.

From the story of the spread of Islām in those Islands, Arnold suggests that it is quite possible that the Muslim merchants had introduced Islām into the Island as much as three centuries before Ibn Baṭṭūtah’s visit, and the process of conversion must undoubtedly have been a gradual one (see Bell, H. C. P., The Maldives Islands, Colombo, 1883, pp. 23-25, 57-58, referred to by Arnold, n. 2, p. 273; The Rehla of Ibn Baṭṭūtah (India, Maldives Islands and Ceylon), tr. & compl. Māhu Ḥusain, Baroda, 1953, pp. 197-213).

The introduction of Islām into the Laccadive Islands is attributed to an Arab preacher, popularly known Mumba Mulyaka. His tomb is still extant at Androth. He probably reached these Islands some time in the twelfth century (cf. Arnold, p. 273).

The Deccan also was the scene of the labours of many missionaries. We are told that by the tenth century the Arabs were settled in large numbers in the towns of the Konkan. Under the Muslim dynasties of the Bahmanī (1347-1490) and Bijapur (1489-1685)
Kings, a fresh impulse was given to Arab immigration, and with the trader and the soldier of fortune came the missionaries (Ṣūfīs) seeking to make spiritual conquests in the cause of Islām, and win over the unbelieving people of the country (cf. A. K. Nairne, "Musalmān Remains in the South Konkan", Indian Antiquary, II (Oct. 1873), 278-83, 317-22; III (July, 1874), 181-82).

One of these Arab preachers, Pīr Kābūr Khamdayn, came as a missionary to the Deccan as early as 1304, and among the farmers of Bijāpur are to be found descendants of the Jains who were converted by him. About the close of the same century, a celebrated Ṣūfī of Gulgarga, Sayyīd Makhduṁ Gisūdarāz, converted a number of the Hindūs of the Poona district, and twenty years later his labours were crowned with a like success in Belgaum (cf. Bombay Gazetteer, X, 132; XVI, 75; XXI, 218, 223; XXIII, 232, 501 referred to in Arnold, p. 274). For the spread of Islām in Madura, see C. J. Rodgers, "Coins of the Musalman Kings of Na'bar", JAS, LXIV (No. 1: 1895), 49-52; Shams-ud-Dīn Ahmad, "Some New Dates and Variety of the Coins of the Sultāns of Madura", JAS, N. S., XXX (1934), 63-69; Iqbal Hussain, pp. 225-33.

97 Quoted in Medieval Indian Culture, p. 43.
98 Ibid.
100  The Indian Muslims, Montreal, 1967, pp. 10-18.

101 See ibid., p. 16; also cf. R. C. Bramley, "The Rajātās and Merātās of Rājpūtānā", JASB, N. S., II(1906), 209-222.


104 Quoted by Chaudhury, p. 129.

105 Cited in Mystics of Islam, p. 105.

106 Mīzāmī, K. A., Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India During the Thirteenth Century (hereafter cited as Aspects of Religion and Politics in India), Bombay, 1961, p. 263.

107 Cf. ibid., pp. 239-40.

108 Cited in Aspects of Religion and Politics in India, p. 263.


110 See De Bary, p. 510.

111 Cf. ibid., pp. 511-12, 513.
112 See Husain Khan, pp. 531-82.


114 Cf. Asvalayana, Grhya Sutras, 3.4.4; 22.2 in The Sacred Books of the East, ed. Max-Muller, XXIX, 641; Chandogyya Upanisad, 6.14.2; Manu, Dharma Sastra, tr. George Buhler, (The Laws of Manu), New York, 1969, pp. 57, 73.

115 For "Shaykh", "Murshid", and "Nurid", see L. Kassignon, "Tariqa", STI, p. 573; and for "Pir", and "Qutb", see W. M. Patton, "Pir", Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics (ERE), X (1918), 430-43; also see --------, "Saints and Martyrs (Muhammadan)", ERE, XI (1920), 63-68; for "Guru" see G. A. Grierson, "Bhati-Karya", ERE, II (1910), 539-551; also see Tara Chand, pp. 81-82.


118 Ikrām, p. 131; ----------, Ab-i-Kauthar, Lahore, 1952, p. 236; Sījī, Amīr Ḥasan, Fawā'id-ul-Furūād, Delhi, 1865, p. 49; Sen, K. M., Medieval Mysticism of India, London, 19291, p. 35.
119. See Studies in Islamic Culture, p. 135; Sen, p. 36;
Nujeeb, pp. 165-66.

120. Cf. Studies in Islamic Culture, p. 137.

121. See Sen, pp. 36-37.

122. Referred to in Studies in Islamic Culture, p. 135.

123. Ab-i-Kauthar, p. 500.


125. The complete article of faith in Islam runs as follows:
"I believe in God, and in His Angels, and in His
Books, and in His Prophets, and in the Last Day,
and in the Fate: good and evil being from God, and
in the Resurrection after death. The Qadriya was
the first Muslim sect who talked about Free Will
as against Predestination, while the Jabarite's
were the absolute believers in the doctrine of Pre-
destination (see D. B. Macdonald, "Kadar", and
"Kadariya", SEL, pp. 200-201.

126. See Sufism, p. 21.

127. Edgerton, F. (tr.), The Bhagavad Gita, New York, 1984,
p. 90; also see Radhakrishnan, S. (tr.), The Bhagav-
Dasgupta, S. N., Hindu Mysticism, New York, republi-
cished, 1959, p. 147.

128. See ibid., p. 124.

affected by Music and Singing" (translation of the
Eighth Book), namely, "The Book of the Laws of

130 Cf. *supra*, pp. 35-38. Of the seventeen Ṣūfī orders prevalent in India in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, mentioned by Abū'l Fazal (A’in-i-Akbarī, Delhi, 1965, III, 369-400), eight—the Ḥabībī, the Junyādī, the Tūsī, the Chishti, the Suhrawardi, the Qādirī, the Naqshbandi and the Firdausī—were orthodox and closely integrated with the sharī‘ah.

131 *Cf. cit.*, p. 83.


134 Cf. Crooke, W., *The Popular Religion and Folk-Lore of Norther India*, Delhi, 3rd reprint, 1958, I, 47; also see Sen, p. 37. According to Sikandar-nāmah, Khvāja Khizir was a Muslim saint, who presided over the well of immortality, and directed Alexander of Macedon in his vain search for the blessed waters. The fish is his vehicle, and hence its image is painted over the doors of both Hindus and Muslims,
While it became the family crest of the late royal house of Awadh. Among Muslims a prayer is offered to this Khwājah at the first shaving of a boy, and a little boat is launched in a river or a tank in his honour. The same rite is performed at the close of the rainy season, when it is supposed to have some connection with the saint Ilisha, that is to say the prophet Elisha.

Another legend represents Khizir to be of the family of Noah, who is also regarded by rural Muslims as a water deity in connection with the flood. Others connect him with St. George, the patron saint of England, who is the Ghergis of Syria, and according to Muslim tradition was sent in the time of the Prophet Muhammad to convert the king of Mausil, and came to life after three successive martyrdoms. Some consider him as the companion of Moses, and the commentator Husayn says he was a general in the army of Dhūl Qarnayn (he of the two horns) or Alexander the Great. In fact, the legend is associated with the Qur'ānic verse 18.60-62 (cf. H. L. Dames, "Khidir", SEI; pp. 232-35; also see B. A. Gupte, "Acceptance of a Muhammadan as a Hindu Saint", JASI, LXXI(No. 3: 1903), 87.

135 Cf. Sen, p. 38; also see T. W. Arnold, "Saints and Martyrs (Muhammadan in India)", EBR, XI(1920), 58-73.

136 See D. S. Margoliouth, "Pāndī Pir", SEI; p. 457.

137 Op. cit., p. 263; also see Titus, p. 139.


142 See Farquhar, pp. 101-111.


144 Quoted in Bhagi, p. 113.


146 Cf. Sen, pp. 31-35. Malik Muhammad Juyasi (d. 1546) was the disciple of the Chishtiya Sūrī Khwaja-ul-Dīn. Malik studied Sanskrit poetics with Hindu pandits and wrote under the inspiration of Kabir's teaching. The Padmavatī is a beautiful Hindi poem treating allegorically the relation between the Divine Spirit and the individual human soul.

Hasan Nizārī was the descendant of Nizām-ud-Dīn Auliya. Nizām contends that according to the Qur'ān, God sends His nāsīm-ubhars (messengers) in all parts of the world. How can this be untrue with regard to India? So Rāma, Kr̲ṣṇa and the Buddha are the nāsīm-ubhars of India, and the teachings of these seers carry authority.
147 *Cf.* cit., p. 172.

148 Aspects of Religion and Politics in India, p. 262; also see Mujeeb, p. 161.


150 *Hindū-Islām Kṛṣṭiśām*, p. 3.


152 See *Hindū Kṛṣṭiśām*, pp. 119-20; also see Gokarnā, B. K., *The Bhaṅka Cult in Ancient India*, 2nd ed., Varanasi, 1965, p. 3.


154 *Cf.* supra (pp. 44-48, 51-52, 59). Shaykh Muḥyī-ud-Dīn Ibn al-‘Arabī (1165-1240) expounded the doctrine of *Wahdat al-Wujūd* (Unity of Being, or Ontological Monism). His conception of "*Wahdat al-Wujūd*" seems to be an extension of the Islāmic doctrine of "*Tawhīd*": i.e. the doctrine that "there is nothing in existence except God." Ibn 'Arabī's system is regarded as an overt monism. He asserted the identity of the Ṣan' and Khālī—the Creator and the created. According to him, God is the unity behind all the plurality and the reality behind all phenomenal appearances: "There is nothing but God, nothing is existence other than He; there is not even a 'there' where the essence of all things is one."
The teachings of Ibn al-'Arabī were generally condemned by the orthodox Sūfis who found in its complexity and unreconciled contradiction a great danger to mystical theosophy. However, in fourteenth century his doctrine came to India, and Shaykh Sharīf-ud-Dīn Yehya Manerī, who belonged to the Firdawsīya order of Sūfis which was a branch of the Suhrwardiyya order, was the first Indian Sūfī to attempt to reconcile the doctrine of Ibn al-'Arabī with the šari'ah.

In 'Arabī's system implies the immanence of the Divine Being. He was aware of the danger that lies in it, that it might lead to polytheism which he rejected. In order to escape this danger, he laid emphasis on the principle of love, which binds all beings together. Thus, according to him, the highest manifestation in which God is worshipped is love.

Any way, Ibn al-'Arabī's Ḥadīt al-'alāmī was challenged for the first time by Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindī in India in the early seventeenth century, who evolved, as against 'Arabī's, the doctrine of Ḥadīt al-Shuhūd (Phenomenological Monism) as explaining the correct relationship between man and God, or say, between Creator and the created (for 'Arabī's doctrine see his al-Futūḥat al-Makkiyya, Bulaq, 1224 A. H.; Cairo, 1329 A. H.; T. H. Heir, "Ibn (Al-) 'Arabī", FBI, p. 146; Medieval Indian Culture, p. 56; for Sirhindī's doctrine see Friedmann, Y. R., "Shaykh

What is interesting for us in explaining Ibn al-'Arabi's doctrine and that of Sirhindī is that the former corresponds to the doctrine of Sāṅkara while the latter is at par with Rāmānuja, though no visible relationship can be traced. These may be the results of indirect influence of Vedānta mysticism on Islamic mysticism.

155 The Delhi Sultanate, p. 554.

156 Cf. Sri Aurobindo, Essays on the Gītā, New York, 1950, pp. 27-28, 35; also see Medieval Indian Culture, pp. 6-8; \textit{The Influence of Islam on the Cult of Bhakti in Medieval India}, Islamic Culture, VII(1933), 64-45.

INTERACTION THROUGH BHAKTI LYSTICISM

1. Cf. Pāṇini Sūtra, 4.3.95.


4. Ibid., p. 19.

5. Ibid., p. 22; also see G. A. Grierson, "Bhakti-farga", Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics (1925), II(1910), 539.


7. Dharmody, p. 23; also see F. W. Hopkins, "The Epic use of Bhagavat and Bhakti", JRAI, XLIII(1911), 727-38.

8. See Burrow, n. 279, p. 24; G. Ramakrishnan, S., An Etymological and Comparative Lexicon of the Tamil Language (Tamil and English), Chunnakan (Ceylon), 1933; I, pt. 111, 185. On the authority of Tolkanappiyar, the oldest grammarian of Tamil, Dharmody tells us that the term annu is defined as "the love or attachment that creates a sense of mental satisfaction of pleasure in one's wife, parents, and relatives and that cements or binds them together"

10 Cf. on *cit.*, pp. 8-9.


12 "Bhakti-Marga", p. 539.

13 For fixing the dates of *Sandilya* and *Narada Sûtras*, we are guided by J. H. Farguhar's dating. He says that both these *Sûtras* are clearly dependent on the *Bharatapura*, for which his suggested date 900 A.D. is usually accepted (see *An Outline of the Religious Literature of India* (hereafter cited as *Religious Literature of India*), Delhi, 1967, pp. 232, 233-34).

14 Quoted in *Bhag†, M. L., Medieval India: Culture and Thought*, Ambala Cantt. (India), 1965, pp. 164-65.


18 Ibid.


24 Barth, p. 211.


29 One of their theses is that there is a parallelism between the legend of Jesus and that of Krishna: (see Barth, pp. 219-20; also cf. "Shakti-Marga", p. 550; Rev. C. E. Abraham, "The Rise and Growth of Christianity in India", in *The Cultural Heritage of India*, IV, 547-70.


33 Referring to F. Fawcett, Humayun Kabir informs us that the writer in his notes on the people of Malabar suggests that the growth of bhakti in south India was due mainly to the influence of Islam. Fawcett also points out that Christianity was then not sufficiently important to influence Hindu thought. He cites the tradition that the Raja of Kaladi, where Sankara was born, had been converted to Islam at the time of Sankara’s birth (see Humayun Kabir, p. 587; also cf. F. Fawcett, Narayars of Malabar, Madras Government Museum Bulletin (Anthropology), Madras, 1915, Vol. III, No. 3, reprinted from the edition of 1901; ----, “A Popular Kopila Song”, Indian Antiquary, XXVIII (1899), 64-71). Those who are opposed to Christian influence, contend that though the possibility of the existence of a small community of the Christians cannot be ruled out, the large number of Muslims who took to vigorous missionary work, and who had support from the local Rajahs were certainly in a better position than the “poor and destitute Churches of the Malabar and Coromandel Coasts” (see Barth, p. 212).


36 The History and Culture of the Indian People, Vol. VI:
37  Ibid.


43  See *Religious Literature of India*, pp. 187, 196; also see S. S. Pillai, "The Saiva Saints of South India", in *The Cultural Heritage of India*, IV, 339-48.

44  Among the purāṇas that directed primarily toward the worship of Śiva are the *Vāyu*, *Liṅga*, and *Kurma* Purāṇas.

45  *Religious Literature of India*, pp. 196-97.

46  Pillai, p. 342; also cf. Dhavamony, pp. 150 ff.; Berry, pp. 48-49.

47  Quoted in Dhavamony, p. 150.

48  Ibid., p. 151.

49  Ibid.


51  Cited by Dhavamony, p. 153; also see Kingsbury, p.


53 Quoted by Dhavamony, p. 152; also see *Hinduism*, p. 131.

54 Cf. *Religious Literature of India*, p. 197; also see Dhavamony, p. 158.

55 See *ibid*.

56 Cited in *ibid*., pp. 159-60.


61 Quoted in *Living Religions of India*, p. 30.

62 *Religious Literature of India*, p. 256. An inscription of Rājarāja shows that he introduced them into his magnificent temple at Tanjore, sung by a special choir, quite distinct from the priestly ministrants.

Nambi's name is also associated with the formulation of a large body of Tamil scripture, which is called the *Tirumurthi* (the Sacred Books).

Nambi collected most of the Saiva hymns then in existence and grouped them in eleven books; and the collection was completed by the addition of a twelfth in the twelfth century. The contents are:

(a) The *Tevarām*, (b) The *Tiruvāchakam*, (c) the *Tiru Isaiya*, (d) the *Tirumutram*, (e) Miscellaneous Poems, including Nambi's own works, (f) the *Periya Purāṇam*, or Great Legend, a Liberal Sanctorum.
forming the Twelfth Book.

Pattinattu Pillai (probably lived in the tenth century) is the author of some beautiful devotional verses, which, along with the work of several minor authors, found a place in the sacred canon. There are also a large number of poems highly monotheistic and puranic character of a later date, though erroneously attributed to Pillai (see Religious Literature of India, p. 256).  

63 Heykanda lived on the bank of the Pennar river to the North of Madras. He also translated twelve Sanskrit Sūtras from the Raurava Åkāra into Tamil verses. To this work, which is known as Śiva-Jñāna-Bodhī (Instruction in Knowledge of Śiva), he added a few notes in Tamil prose, and a series of logical analogies also in prose in support of his reasoning (see Religious Literature of India, p. 257). One of his disciples, named Kanavāčakam Kaṇḍāṇ, wrote Umni Vilakkam, a treatise in fifty-four stanzas consisting of questions and answers on the main points of Siddhānta teaching. Another disciple, named Aruḷanandi, wrote the Śiva-Jñāna-Siddhi, a famous work in two parts, of which the first is a criticism of other Indian school of thought, including Buddhism and Jainism, while the second is a full statement of Śiva Siddhānta teaching (see ibid.).

[Other relevant information]
Lectures on Saiva Siddhānta, Madras, 1959.

65 They are: Tirunāvukkarasu(Appār), Māṇḍapamandhar, Sundaramurti and Kānikka-Vāchakar who respectively represent the four main paths of Saivism, viz., the paths of ēryā, krīvā, yona and jñāna, otherwise known as the Dāsa-marra, Satputra-marra, Sahyamarra and Sat-marra, i.e. the path of the servant, the path of the good son, the path of the friend, and the good (or true) path.

66 Quoted in The Cultural Heritage of India, IV, 346-47.

67 Bhandarkar thinks it came into existence about a century earlier (see op.cit., p. 134). The Lingayatās themselves also believe that the sect is extremely old, and that it was only reorganised in the twelfth century. But Farquhar suggests that although most of the elements united in the sect are old, the sect itself came into being in the middle of the twelfth century (cf. Religious Literature of India, p. 259).

Scholars have usually held that the founder of the sect was Basava, but J. F. Fleet believes that Ekāntada Rāmāyya of Ablur whose career is mentioned in an early inscription, was the real leader, and that Basava came in as a political and military auxiliary. The tradition is that the sect was founded by five ascetics—Ekūrama, Panditārādhya, Javāga, Narula, Visvārādhya—who are held to have sprung from the five heads of Śiva, incarnate age after
age. These are believed to be very ancient and Basava is said to have been the reviver of the faith. Yet the early literature shows that the five were all his contemporaries (cf. Religious Literature of India, p. 260; also see J. F. Fleet, "Epigraphic Researches in Mysore", JIAAS, XXXVII (1905), 239-312).


71 Cf. Religious Literature of India, pp. 259-60.

72 On cit., p. 15.

73 Ibid., p. 16. He laid down seven rules of conduct (v. 235); they are reminiscent of Islamic code of conduct.

74 Ibid.

75 Ibid., p. 19.

76 Ibid. One of Basava's disciples is Allamā Prabhu. The term "Allamā" seems to be very interesting in our context. It is an Islamic term, means highly learned; from ḥalim (sg.), ḥalāmā (pl.); the learned ones. Allamā is used in superlative degree, e.g. the poet-philosopher Dr. Muhammad Iqbal is usually
mentioned in Hindustani language as 'Allamā Khānzmārd Iqbal. Although we do not know what this term means in Kanarese, yet the influence of Islam has been suggested in adopting such a name.

77 V. 527 cited in Deveerappa, p. 20.
78 Quoted in ibid., p. 21.
79 V. 103 cited in ibid., p. 24.

The six sthalas are the six stages of spiritual progress, through which the Līnagayat passes in seeking union with Śiva: (a) bhakti, (b) mahāsā, (c) prasāda, (d) prāṇāśila, (e) śārana, and (f) rikva.

82 On. cit., p. 304.
83 Ibid., p. 305; also see Barth, pp. 209-10.
84 Cf. on. cit., p. 134.
85 See Religious Literature of India, p. 264.
87 On. cit., p. 119.
90 Hunashal, pp. 186-87.
91 Ibid., pp. 192-93.
Ibid., p. 194.

92 Basava's silence about Islam may be explained in two ways: (1) he did not know Islam well enough to be critical about it, or (2) he was too willing to accept the ideas of a new faith uncritically. We have no evidence to accept or reject either hypothesis.


95 "Tamil Popular Poetry", p. 102 cited by Tara Chand, p. 127.


97 Ibid.

98 See *Hinduism*, p. 128.


100 For the list of the twelve Ālvārs, see *Ibid.*, p. 188.

101 The dates of the Ālvārs are given differently *(cf. *Ibid.*, ns. 1 and 2, p. 188)*; also see *Hindu Mysticism*, p. 149.


104 Quoted by Tara Chand, pp. 23-24.


107 Quoted in *Hinduism*, p. 128.
108 Cf. ibid., p. 129.
109 Religious Literature of India, p. 240.
110 Cf. Bhandarkar; p. 50.
111 Under Netrānādī, a school of combined Sanskrit and Tamil scholarship arose at Śrīraṅgam, whence he is called the first Āchārya of the sect. The study of the Prabandham was one of the chief parts of the curriculum, and a series of commentaries was written on them. Yāmūnāchārya's chief books are the Siddhitray, which seeks to establish the reality of the human soul; the Āramanramāṇya, on the authority of the Vaishāvya Āgamas; and the Gitārtha-saṅkrāma, an exposition of the Bhrāmatī, all in Sanskrit. In these works is found the earliest statement of the Viśistādvaīta philosophy, of which Rāmānuja is the classical exponent (see Religious Literature of India, p. 241).
112 Cf. op. cit., p. 51.
113 Ibid.
114 Of his books, the following three are of special philosophical importance: (1) the Vedārtha-saṅkrāma, which seeks to show that the Upaniṣads do not teach an absolute monism, (2) the Śrībhāṣya, a commentary on the Vedānta-sūtras, and (3) the Gitā-bhāṣya, a commentary of the Bhrāmatī.
115 Cf. Bhandarkar, pp. 52-55; also see Thibaut in the Sacred Books of the East (SBE), XXXIV, xxvii ff., abridged in Religious Literature of India, pp. 342-43.
116 The Patanjali Yoga is called Astaṅga-Yoga (eightfold discipline). They are: (1) abstinence, (2) observance, (3) posture, (4) breath-control, (5) withdrawal of the senses, (6) fixed attention, (7) contemplation, and (8) concentration.

117 They are: (1) purification of the body by the use of unpolluted and unprohibited food, (2) chastity, (3) constant practice, (4) the performance of five great rites and ceremonies according to one's means, (5) virtues, such as truth, uprightness, compassion, charity, non-destruction of life, (6) hopefulness or absence of dependancy, and (7) absence of cluterness (cf. Bhandarkar, p. 55).

118 Cf. ibid., pp. 54–55.

119 Ibid., p. 57.

120 Yusuf Hussain, p. 10.

121 Religious Literature of India, pp. 241–45.


123 For these dates, see Religious Literature of India, p. 245; also see Bhandarkar, p. 52.


125 See Keith, p. 572.


127 Ibid., p. 548; also see Magña Alphonse, "The Early Spread of Christianity in India", Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, Manchester, X(1926), 435–51.
These are believed to be very ancient and Basava is said to have been the reviver of the faith. Yet the early literature shows that the five were all his contemporaries (cf. Religious Literature of India, p. 260; also see J. F. Fleet, "Epigraphic Researches in Mysore", JNAS, XXXVII (1905), 789-312).


Cf. Religious Literature of India, pp. 259-60.

O. cit., p. 15.

Ibid., p. 16. He laid down seven rules of conduct (v. 235); they are reminiscent of Islamic code of conduct.

Ibid.

Ibid., p. 19.

Ibid. One of Basava's disciples is Allama Prabhū. The term "Allama" seems to be very interesting in our context. It is an Islamic term, means highly learned: from fālim (sg.), ʿulama' (pl.); the learned ones. Allama is used in superlative degree, e.g. the poet-philosopher Dr. Muhammad Iqbal is usually
mentioned in Hindustani language as Allama Muhammad Iqbal. Although we do not know what this term means in Kanarese, yet the influence of Islam has been suggested in adopting such a name.

77 V. 527 cited in Deveerappa, p. 20.
78 Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 21.
80 Hunashal, 3. ..., *The Lingayat Movement: A Social Revolution in Karnataka*, Dharwar, 1941, p. 43.

The six sthalas are the six stages of spiritual progress, through which the Lingayat passes in seeking union with Siva. (a) bhakti, (b) mahayana, (c) prasada, (d) prasaliina, (e) sarana, and (f) sikva.

82 *op. cit.*, p. 304.
83 *ibid.*, p. 305; also see Barth, pp. 209-10.
85 See Religious Literature of India, p. 264.
90 Hunashal, pp. 186-87.
Bashāva's silence about Islam may be explained in two ways: (1) he did not know Islam well enough to be critical about it, or (2) he was too willing to accept the ideas of a new faith uncritically. We have no evidence to accept or reject either hypothesis.


98. Ibid.

99. See Hindūism, p. 128.

100. Religious Literature of India, p. 187.

101. For the list of the twelve Ālvārs, see ibid., p. 188.

102. The dates of the Ālvārs are given differently (cf. ibid., ns. 1 and 2, p. 188); also see Hindū Mysticism, p. 149.


104. Ibid.

105. Quoted by Tara Chand, pp. 93-94.

106. Cited in ibid., p. 94.

107. Quoted in Hindūism, p. 128.
168. Cf. Ibid., p. 529.


171. Under Rāmānuja a school of combined Sanskrit and Tamil scholarship arose at Srīraṅgam, whence he is called the first Āchārya of the sect. The study of the Prabandham was one of the chief parts of the curriculum, and a series of commentaries was written on them. Yāmānpūrṇārya’s chief books are the Siddhitraya, which seeks to establish the reality of the human soul; the Abhā, on the authority of the Vaishnava Āgamas; and the Gītā-rtha-saṅgraha, an exposition of the Bhāgavatprīta, all in Sanskrit. In these works is found the earliest statement of the Visistadvaita philosophy, of which Rāmānuja is the classical exponent (see Religious Literature of India, p. 241).

172. Cf. on cit., p. 51.

173. Ibid.

174. Of his books, the following three are of special philosophical importance: (1) the Gītā-rtha-saṅgraha, which seeks to show that the Upanisads do not teach an absolute monism; (2) the Gītā-bhasya, a commentary on the Gītā-sūtras; and (3) the Gītā-bhasya, a commentary of the Bhāgavatprīta.

175. Cf. Bhandarkar, pp. 52-55; also see Thibaut in the Sacred Books of the East (SBE), XXIV, xxvii ff., abridged in Religious Literature of India, pp. 242-43.
116. The Patanjali Yoga is called Aṣṭāṅga-Yoga (eightfold discipline). They are: (1) abstinence, (2) observance, (3) posture, (4) breath-control, (5) withdrawal of the senses, (6) fixed attention, (7) contemplation, and (8) concentration.

117. They are: (1) purification of the body by the use of unpolluted and unprohibited food, (2) chastity, (3) constant practice, (4) the performance of five great rites and ceremonies according to one's means, (5) virtues, such as truth, uprightness, compassion, charity, non-destruction of life, (6) hopefulness or absence of dependency, and (7) absence of elation (cf. Bhandarkar, p. 55).

118 Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 54-55.


120 Yusuf Husain, p. 10.

121 *Religious Literature of India*, pp. 244-45.


123 For these dates, see *Religious Literature of India*, p. 245; also see Bhandarkar, p. 52.

124 "Bhakti-Marga", p. 549.

125 See Keith, p. 572.


J. H. Farquhar, "The Apostle Thomas in South India",
Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, Manchester,
XI (1927), 32 ff.; Hunter, W. W., The Indian Empire,


129 Ibid., ns. 4 and 5, p. 549.


132 Hindu-Muslim Mysticism, p. 16.

133 Ibid.

134 They are: (1) ānukulyasya sañkalpa, (2) pratikulyasya
varjanam, (3) rakṣisvatitti viśvāso, (4) gōttvava-
raṇam tathā, (5) ātmānikṣena, and (6) kāranve sa-
vidhā saranāvatiḥ (cf. Bhandarkar, n. 2, p. 55; also
see Keith, p. 573).

135 Cf. G. A. Grierson, "Prapatti-Marga", ERN, X (1918), 151.


137 See ibid.; also cf. Keith, p. 573. For further informa-
tion, see Indian Theism, pp. 110-11.

138 Cf. ibid., p. 110; also see A. Govindaçarya, "The Astādaśa-
Bhedas, or the Eighteen Points of Doctrinal Differen-
tces Between the Tengalais (Southerners) and the Vajga-
galais (Northerners) of the Viśistādvaita Vaiṣṇava
School, South India", JRSAS, XLII (1910), 1103-12.

139 Religious Literature of India, p. 220.

140 Ibid., pp. 229. Different dates have been suggested for
this Purāna (see also pp. 231-32).

141 Religious Literature of India, p. 229. This element can
be studied in the Bhaktiratnavali (Necklace of Bhakti Gems), a collection of bhakti passages from the Bhagavata Purana made by an ascetic named Visnu Purī, who belonged to the school of Nātha. He arranged them according to subject in thirteen groups, translated into Bengali by Lauriya Krāna Dāsa early in the fifteenth century (cf. ibid., n. 1, p. 363).

142. Ibid., p. 230.

143. According to a tradition which appears in the Bhakta Maha of Nabhajī (1600 A.D.), Jñānesvara was a disciple of Viṣṇuswāmi, the founder of the Rudra-Sampradāya, one of the four schools of the Bhakti-Marga, whose philosophy was a synthesis between polytheism and monotheism.

Jñānesvara is said to have been the author of the following works in Nāraṇi: (1) on the Gitā called the Jñānesvarī which runs to 10,000 couplets (date 1290), (2) Harīvath, a collection of 28 hymns, (3) Amritanubhava, an Advaita Śaiva philosophical work.


144. There is a local tradition to the effect that Nāmdev and Jñānesvara met at least once, while in the Bhakta-Maha they are presented as master and disciple.
In view of this, Namdev has usually been placed at the end of the thirteenth, and the beginning of the fourteenth century. But in consideration of the polishness of his kirtani, Bhandarkar is willing to date him a century later (see op. cit., p. 92).

A number of his hymns are included in the Adi-Granth, and he is regarded as one of a few bhaktas who, coming just before Ramananda, prepared the way for him. And Ramananda is said to have flourished in the second and third quarters of the fifteenth century (1440-1470); so that Namdev's rise to prominence would be somewhere about 1460 to 1430. Baleswar Prasad, a prominent scholar of Hindu literature, mentions 1423 as his floruit, which agrees fully with the above reasoning and also with Bhandarkar's conjecture. This chronology is finally established by one of Namdev's own disciples (cf. Naenicol, N., Psalms of Maratha Saints, Calcutta, 1919, p. 41; also see Religious Literature of India, p. 299).

He seems to have been quite influential in the Punjab, for a shrine dedicated to him still in use at Ghuman in the Gurdaspur district (cf. Macauliffe, H. A., The Sikh Religion: Its Gurus, Sacred Writings and Authors, Oxford, 1909, VI, 39).

Cf. Religious Literature of India, p. 299.

Quoted by Macauliffe, pp. 24-55.

Hindu Mysticism, p. 52; also see Hinduism, p. 138.

Quoted by Bhandarkar, p. 152.
152. We have no reference to Karnakhas and Ajmal. Putam is believed to be that nurse whom Kans sent to destroy Kṛṣṇa by applying poison to the nipples of her breasts. Kṛṣṇa, though an infant, squeezed her to death. With her last breath she said: "God, let me go." For mentioning the name of God thus at once she obtained salvation.

155. Rice boiled in milk and sugar. It is a common dessert in the Indian sub-continent, served usually along with some other sweets.

158. For more information about Nāmdev's doctrines, see *ibid.*, pp. 54-58; also see K. V. Gajendragadkar, "The Maharashtra Saints and their Teachings", in The Cultural Heritage of India, IV, 356-76.

160 Religious Literature of India, p. 307; also see The Delhi Sultanate, p. 536.

161 Indian Theism, p. 131.

162 Cf. The Delhi Sultanate, p. 568. One of his favourite disciples was a Muslim devotee named Haridasa.


165 He was given the name 'Nânak Mirâkâri or Mirânkâri, i.e., 'Nânak, servant of the formless one.' He is also known as Guru Nânak, Bâbâ Nânak and Nânak Bhân. While guru is a Sanskrit word meaning 'spiritual preceptor', the last two Hindi and Persian, and also Urdu words, meaning father or one worthy of reverence, and 'king' or 'chief' respectively. These names indicate his being a mixture of Hindu and Muslim ideas. All three, however, are used in Indo-Pakistan sub-continent to designate a mystic.

Nânak was the founder and the first of the ten gurus of the Sikh community. Wherever representations of him are found, he is invariably shown as an old man with flowing white beard, obviously, symbolising his character for great wisdom. For Nânak's life, see

166. Indira Theisen, p. 144.
168. Granth is a Sanskrit word means, 'Book'; while Adī means 'ancient' or 'old'. Sāhib, an Arabic, Persian and Urdu word, means 'Lord'. The Sikhs look on this Book as their 'Lord' whom they must obey. It is a collection in Punjabi, Hindi, and even Persian, of religious and moral poems and apothegms composed and uttered by Nānak and other religious teachers, e.g. Kabīr and Nāmdev. It was compiled in 1604. Also see Nānak's Japī, tr. Gurdīp Singh Randhawa, Delhi, 1970.

169. See Archer, J. C., The Sikhs In Relation to Hindus, Moslems, Christians, and Ahmadīyas: A Study in Comparative Religion (hereafter referred to as The Sikhs), Princeton, 1946, p. 73.


172. Cited by Youngson, p. 182.
174. The Sikhs, p. 73.
Ch. III

335

Notes

175 Cited in ibid., pp. 73-74.
176 Ibid., p. 74.
177 Quoted in ibid., p. 75.

*Janmākhyā* cited by Yūsuf Hussain, pp. 28-29.

179 Rāmaḍatta was the original name which was changed to Rāmānanda by his teacher, Kāghanānanda, who taught him Śrī Vaiṣṇava system (see G. A. Grierson, "Kāmaṇḍis, Rāmāwats", *PRINT*, X(1913), 569-70). Widely divergent dates have been suggested for his activity, e.g. 1299, by Grierson in *ibid*. But it seems possible to fix his date approximately within narrow limits, taking into consideration some known dates of his disciples. His disciple, Pīpā, for example, was born in 1425, while another disciple, Kābīr, seems to have lived from 1440-1519. Hence it will not be too far from truth to fix his floruit approximately between 1400-1470. This date places Rāmānanda 350 years after Rāmānuja, which fits well the interval between them (cf. J. N. Farquhar, "The Historical Position of Rāmānanda", *J.R.A.S.*, LII(1920), 185-92; LIV(1922), 373-80.

180 Cf. op. cit., p. 100.

181 See "Rāmānandis, etc.", p. 569; "Bhakti-Marga", p. 546.

182 Cf. op. cit., p. 143; also see pp. 144 f.

183 See Religious Literature of India, pp. 323-25; Bhandarkar, p. 67; *R. G. Cauliffe*, VI, 100-105.

184 "Bhakti-Marga", p. 546. The twelve disciples were:
(1) Anantānanda, a Brāhmaṇa; (2) Sukhānanda, a poet (his hymns are famous, and have been collected in a volume entitled the Sukhāśāṅga). (3) Surāśurānanda, husband of No. 12 disciple (through him, Tulsi dāsa traced his descent from Śāṅgamāna). (4) Naishāhariyānanda; (5) Pīṭā, a Rājput rājah of Gaṅgāra, (6) Kabir, (7) Bhavānanda, (8) Sena, (9) Dhanu, a simple peasant belonging to the Jāt caste, (10) Ṣāi Dāsa, (11) Padmāvatī, a woman, and (12) Surāsāri, wife of No. 3.

185 "Śāṅgamānas, etc.", p. 570.
186 Religious Literature of India, p. 325.
188 Medieval Mysticism of India, London, 1929, pp. 3-4; also see ———, "The Medieval Mystics of North India", in The Cultural Heritage of India, VI, 387.
189 Cf. Religious Literature of India, p. 325.
190 Sen, in The Cultural Heritage of India, VI, 387.
THE LIFE OF KABIR


5. The word Bjäjak means: (1) essence or seed, (2) an invoice, and (3) a key to a hidden treasure or a document by which a hidden treasure can be located. It is the third meaning which is probable here. It is said that in the neighbourhood of Banares, there is a group of people who are in the habit of burying treasure for safety, and the place of concealment is remembered by the secret sign of a chart which is called Bjäjak. This custom may have been in use elsewhere. For sure, it is still used by the fishermen of Bangladesh. It was evident in the film called Jago Huwa Savira, an academic-award-winner-film, depicting the life of fishermen of the then East Pakistan. Kabir seems to have been familiar with the
name 

found this name as a suitable title for his (Kabir's) verses which were considered to reveal the hidden treasures of religious knowledge. There is a verse which says:

The \textit{Bijak} tells the secret of that treasure which is hidden; the word tells of \textit{jiva} (soul or life); few are they who understand (\textit{Bijak}, \textit{Ramayani} 37).

According to Ahmad Shah of Kanpur, Hindi of the \textit{Bijak} is the dialect spoken in the neighbourhood of Banaras, Mirzapur and Gorakhpur. But G. A. Grierson maintains that the language of Banaras, Gorakhpur and East Mirzapur is one form or another of the Bhojpuri dialect of Bihari, and that there is not a single form typical of this language in the \textit{Bijak} (see J. Beames, "Notes on the Bhojpuri Dialect of Hindi Spoken in Western Bihar", \textit{JRAS}, N.S., III (1868), 483-508). Keay says that the language is really old Awadhí, a dialect of Eastern Hindi used in West Mirzapur, Allahabad and Awadh, and similar to that used by Tulsi Das in his famous \textit{Rama Charitmanas} (see Keay, p. 51).


\textit{Ibid.}

Cited in \textit{ibid.}, p. 52.
10 Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 67. For Kabir's contributions to Hindi literature and his place therein, see Keay, pp. 63-67; also see G. A. Grierson, "Tulasi Dás: Poet and Religious Reformer", *JRAS*, N.S., XXXV (1903), 447-66.

11 Chaupáis: a verse of four lines in a particular metre.

12 Quoted in Keay, p. 53.

13 Cited by Westcott, p. 49. This edition contains 83 Ramáinis, 113 Sábdas, 33 Hymns of various kinds and 364 Sákhis. To these have been added 60 Sákhis found in other editions.

14 See Keay, p. 53. This edition has 115 Sábdas, 445 Sákhis, 83 Ramáinis and 31 poems of various kinds (see Westcott, pp. 48-49).


16 The variations in the number of verses included may be seen at a glance in the following table:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Rájah of Réwáhi</th>
<th>Prem Chánd</th>
<th>Púrán Dás</th>
<th>Ahmad Sháh</th>
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<tr>
<td>1868</td>
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<td>1905</td>
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<td>Adi Mángal</td>
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<td>Sayar Bijak</td>
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<td>383 Sákhis</td>
<td>mentary Sákh</td>
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(cf. Keay, p. 74).
Op. cit., p. 56. No copies of the Bījak is now available

In these two recensions the first two Ramainīs are differently placed. According to a tradition, there were two divoined disciples of Kabir named Joggō Dās and Bhaggo Dās. Before his death, Kabir wrote his Bījak and gave it to their mother to be preserved. After Kabir's death, the brothers quarrelled about it, and each wanted to have the Bījak to himself. In order to reconcile them, their mother said that each should have the Bījak with this difference; one should begin with the words: Jīva rūp (Ramainī 1 in Ahmad Shāh's edition) and the other with Antar Jyoti (Ramainī 2) (see Keay, p. 55).

"Ādi" means "Old or Original"; and "Granth" means "Book". It is called Ādi-Granth (Original or Old Book) to distinguish it from the Granth of the tenth Guru, Govind Singh, which was compiled at a later date (see H. A. Rose, "Granth", ERE, VI, 389-90).


See op. cit., p. 27.


Op. cit., p. 58; also see Archer, J. C., The Sikhs: in Relation to Hindus, Moslems, Christians, and Ahmadiyyas; A Study in Comparative Religion (hereafter
cited as The Sikhs, Princeton(N.J.), 1964, p. 53.

24 Cf. The Delhi Sultanate, p. 563; also see Westcott, pp. 28, 48.


26 Cf. ibid.


28 Cf. op. cit., p. 59.

29 See ibid., p. 60. There are other poems which are said to have been uttered by other persons who addressed them to Kabir, e.g. Gauri 18; Gutar 12; Bilavalu 4; Gaund 1 and 5. Asa 33, which refers to Kabir's wife, is said to be partly by his mother. There may be other verses in this connection. Asa 13 appears to be an eulogium on Krishna; the opening lines being:

My pilgrimage is to the bank of the Gomti,
Where dwelleth the yellow-robed priest.

This poem, with such words in it as "with my rosary on my neck" cannot probably be attributed to Kabir, for he denounced the efficacy of pilgrimage and use of rosary. Again, for instance, Gaund 4 and Bhairau 8 refer to the miraculous escapes of Kabir from drowning in the Ganges, and from being trodden down by a wild elephant when he was punished by Sikandar Ludhi. They are probably not genuine poems of Kabir, for he does not seem to have had any fascination for playing miracles. These poems have probably been composed by those disciples of Kabir who themselves believed in
miracles, and by composing poems in the name of Kabir, they wanted to glorify his spiritual achievements.

Furthermore, Basantu is full of mythology, and the Supreme Being is spoken of as becoming incarnate. This poem is perhaps not by Kabir, because he clearly denounced the concept of incarnation.

30 Keay, p. 61.
31 Ibid.
33 New Delhi, 1968, pp. 57-59.
34 Cf. Religious Literature of India, p. 334.
35 Kshiti Mohan Sen's translation is in four volumes and contains 341 poems. The hundred poems translated by Tagore are taken from the first three volumes, which contain 264 poems (cf. Keay, p. 62).
36 Ibid., p. 333; Keay, p. 62.
37 Poems 1 and 69 can be compared partly with Adī-Granth, Prabhātī 2; and Bijak, Sabda 43, 48, 62.
39 Cited in Westcott, p. 3.
41 Cf. Westcott, p. 23.
43 Referred to by Ikrām, S. M., Muslim Civilization in India,


46 Cf. ibid.

47 Cited in Westcott, p. 23. Khāzīnat-ul-Asfiya was published in Lahore in 1868, but now out of print and no copy of it is available.

48 Quoted in Westcott, pp. 18-19; also see Tara Chand, pp. 149-50 cited from Sitaram Saran Bhagawan Prasad, Bhakta Nala, p. 465.

49 According to one account, Nabhajī wrote his account of the bhaktās in Sanskrit and asked his disciple, Prīyā Dās, to provide it with a commentary. Prīyā made a beginning and then handed over the MS to Gobardhan Nāth. Finally, the commentary was completed by Narāin Dās, a disciple of Gobardhan Nāth, and published in 1769 (see Westcott, p. 19).

50 Referred to in ibid; also see Tiwari, pp. 19-23.


52 Religious Sects of the Hindūs, n. 1, p. 36.

53 Ibid.


57. The Sikhs, p. 51.


60. Religious Literature of India, p. 332.

61. Cf. supra, pp. 120-25, 144-46.


64. Ibid., pp. vii-xv.

65. Ibid., pp. xv-xvii.

66. Ibid., p. xix.

67. See Tiwari, p. 2.

68. See Westcott, p. 3.

69. See Tiwari, p. 3.

70. Cf. ibid.; also see Westcott, p. 4.

71. See op. cit., p. 28.

72. As regards the Lahur Talao or Talab, Macauliffe tells us that it is a lake about a mile and a quarter long, and an eighth of a mile broad. At the time of his visit in December (ca. 1906/7) it was, except for some rushes here and there, covered with a russet weed, on which aquatic birds alighted and sported. On the margin of the lake is a small temple, sacred to Kabir. It is maintained by some monks, who, according to Macauliffe, are proud of their knowledge of Sanskrit literature. Hard by is the tomb of Niru,
Kabir's foster father (see op. cit., p. 123).

Cf. ibid., pp. 122-23; Key, p. 9; Westcott, p. 4.

Ibid. In the Kabir Kasauti this phrase occurs:

Sewak hokar utre is pirthi wimanhi (becoming a servant he descended upon this earth).

Cf. Tiwari, pp. 3-4.

See ibid., p. 4.

Cf. Westcott, n. 9, p. 3.

This text of the Bhakta Malā is printed in W. Price and Tarini Charan Mitra's Hindee and Hindostanee Selections, Calcutta, 1827, I, 84. The text reads: "Alī hulāhā ne pava" (i.e., Kabir was found by a weaver named 'Alī).

Quoted in Tiwari, p. 5.

Ibid.

Ibid. The Kabirpanthi books also say that Nirū and Nīmā had been bhangis (scavengers) in a former life. Their son, Sudarśan, was a great devotee. So in the following birth the two became Brāhmīns and lived in a town called Chandvar, their names being Narahari and Lachchima. Their love of God was rewarded and Kabir incarnated himself as their child. But since they were unable through nescience to recognise him he disappeared. The grief was too much for them. They both died and were born at Kāśī as weavers and went under the names Nirū and Nīmā (see ibid.).

See Westcott, p. 2; also cf. Machwe, p. 10.

Quoted in Tiwari, p. 7.

85 Cf. op. cit., p. 122.
86 Quoted in Westcott, p. 5.
87 See Tiwári, p. 1; Keay, p. 10; Westcott, pp. 4-5.
88 See op. cit., p. 124.
94 See Machwe, p. 9.
95 Cf. Westcott, p. 2; Keay, p. 27; Machwe, p. 15.
96 Cf. G. A. Grierson, "Bhaktî-Marga\textsuperscript{,} p. 546; \textquotedblright Râmânandîs, Râmâwâts\textquotedblright, *ERF*, X, 569.
97 Cf. *Religious Literature of Indiâ*, p. 331; also see J. N. Farquhar, "The Historical Position of Râmânanda", *JRAS*, LII (1920), 185-92; LIV (1922), 373-80; Sitā Râm, "The Historical Position of Râmânanda", *JRAS*, LIII (1921), 239-.
99 See Dasgupta, p. 157; Westcott, p. 2.
100 See *ibid*.
101 Sultan Sikandar Ludhí had been engaged in wars in the area covering Jaunpûr and Banares between the years 1494-99. He went to Banares at least once (cf. Vol. III: *Turks and Afghans*, ed. Sir Wolseley Haig, Delhi,

102 See Keay, p. 10.

103 Tiwārī, p. 7.

Also called Ḍādi (not to confuse with Muslim judge).

In Behgali he is called Khalīfah and Usta, the man who performs circumcision. It may be mentioned here that at the present times in most cases circumcision is done in the hospital if a boy is born there.

Since circumcision is not ordained by the Qur'an, it is a sunnat-i-muakkida (a first grade custom of Islam which tantamounts to fard-i-fāin or absolutely obligatory on all Muslims). Therefore, it has the force of universality. However, the mode of the old custom is undergoing modifications.


It may be mentioned here that Kabīr uses different names, such as Hari, Sat Guru, or only Guru, Govind, etc., for one God, although "Rāma" is the one that recurrently occurs in his poems.

106 Cf. Keay, p. 32; also see Westcott, p. 22. But the latter gives a different version. He says that Muslim tradition considers Kabīr, like other Sūfis, as a married man, but does not give his wife's name, whereas Hindu tradition mentions the name Loī as his disciple.

107 There is another verse where Loī may be the speaker asking for Kabīr's forgiveness. Or Kabīr is the speaker addressing God—the former is the wife and the latter
is the Husband (cf. Adī-Granth, Asā 35). This is supported by the use of similar language elsewhere. Obviously, it is an expression typical of Mammālvār.

108 Cf. Westcott, pp. 7-9; also see Keay, p. 15. The legend says that a sādār found her floating in the Ganges, wrapped in a woollen cloth (loid), whence the name Loi.

109 Cf. Keay, p. 34; Machwe, p. 12.

110 See Keay, p. 34.


112 There are two Kāmāl legends: According to one story, one day when Kabīr was walking on the banks of the Ganges with a certain Shaykh Taqī, the corpse of a child was seen floating by. Shaykh Taqī challenged Kabīr to raise it to life. This he did, and taking it home he adopted it as his own son. The Shaykh said, "You have indeed shown great perfection (kāmāl)." So the boy was named Kāmāl. According to another story, Kabīr caught sight of the child floating down the stream in the Ganges, wrapped in a blanket (kāmālī, or kammal, kambal), and he cried out "kamāl, kammal." So he named the child Kāmāl, which is a corruption of Kammal or Kambal (cf. Westcott, pp. 9, 21; Keay, pp. 15-16, 35). About the later life of Kāmāl, little is recorded. Like his father, he is said to have been a renowned bhaktā, and a man of deep spiritual experience, and a poet of high order (see Sen, K. M., Medieval Mysticism of India, London, 119291, p. 51).

A verse in the Adī-Granth says as follows:
Kabir's family was ruined when his son Kamal was born. Geasing to remember Hari, he brought home wealth
(cited by Keay, p. 16).

It is also stated that Kamal opposed his father's teaching, and composed verses in refutation of it. Some tradition says that Kamal became the guru of Dhadu, the founder of the Dadhapanthi sect. One story connects Kamal with Shaykh Taqi, and says that as he differed from his father, Kabir, the Shaykh gave him (Kamal) permission to settle at Jalalpur, about ten miles from Jhusi (see ibid.). About twelve miles from Jhusi, the tomb of a certain Shaykh Kamal is shown; but it cannot be certainly identified as being that of Kabir's son (cf. ibid., p. 35).

Like Kamal's legend, a similar story is told about the coming of Kamali. According to some accounts, she was a child who had died in the house of a neighbour and Kabir raised her to life; according to others, she was the daughter of Shaykh Taqi, who had already been eight days in the grave (see ibid., p. 16).

According to a tale, when Kamali was twenty years of age, she was one day drawing water from a well. A Brahmin, who was thirsty, asked for a drink, but was afterwards horrified to find he had taken water from a weaver's daughter. The Brahmin rebuked her for breaking his caste. The matter was referred to Kabir, who replied thus:

O Pandit, think, when thou drinkest water,
In the mud-dwelling, wherein thou sittest,
The universe is contained,
Where fifty-six kotis of Yadavas (one koti: ten
millions. The Yādavas were the tribesmen of Kṛṣṇa) perished, eighty-eight thousand men and munis (sages):
At every step prophets are buried, they decayed to dust therein.
Fish, tortoise, and crocodile there gave birth;
the water is filled with blood.

Thou, O pandit, thou didst sit down to drink;
yet the earthen pot thou accountest defiled.
Renounce the Vedas and the Book, O pandit;
all these are fictions of the mind.
Kabir says, hear, O pandit; these are your pious deeds (Bijak, Sabda 47).
The Brāhmin, named Har Deva, fell at Kabir's feet, begged his pardon and became Kabir's disciple. Kabir accepted him, and Kamāli was married to him (cf. Keay, p. 17).


114 Cited in Keay, pp. 13-14; Macauliffe, p. 128.

115 Quoted in Keay, p. 31.

116 For example, see Adi-Granth, Slok 60; Sorathi II cited by Keay, pp. 38-39.

117 See Macauliffe, p. 124; Keay, p. 29.

118 Cf. Ibid., p. 28.


120 Religious Literature of India, p. 331.

121 Cf. supra, n. 112, p. 197.

122 Westcott, p. 12; Keay, p. 36.
Manikpur is situated on northern bank of the Ganges, between Fatehpur and Allahabad. It was for a short time the military headquarters of Sultan Sikandar Ludhi. Near Manikpur, but on the southern bank of the river is Kara, generally known as Karā. Manikpur, at that time a city of considerable importance, the Muslim capital of the surrounding country Karā. Jhusi stands near the confluence of the Ganges and the Jumna in the immediate neighbourhood of Allahabad (see Westcott, pp. 24-25).

See ibid., p. 26; also cf. Keay, p. 37.

Ramanī of the Bijak reads as follows:

Through Manikpur Kabir passed,
There he heard of the fame of Shāikh Taqī.
At the place which is called Jauṇpur,
And at Jhusi I heard the names of many pirās.
There are written twenty-one pirās.
They all were giving discourses in the name of the prophēt.
When I heard the talk, I could not refrain myself:
Seeing these graves, ye are gone astray.
The works of the friend of God and of his prophet;
Followed by you in practice only, are become unlawful.
O Shāikh Aqāri and Shāikh Sakardī, listen to my words.
See the beginning and the end from age to age with open eyes.

Pathway to God: In Hindi Literature, Bombay, 1959, p. 10.
Religious Literature of India, p. 331.
The Sikhs, p. 49. Italics are mine.

The persecution of Kabir by the Sultan Sikandar Ludhi figures in all the accounts, but the stories of this vary greatly (cf. Keay, pp. 20-23; Westcott, pp. 10-11,
20; Tiwari, pp.

132 The name of the Brähmin is given as Bodhan who was from Bengal (cf. Haig, W. (ed.), The Cambridge History of India, Vol. III: Turks and Afghans, Delhi, 1958, p. 240; Pandey, A. B., Early Medieval India, Allahabad, 1960, p. 413; Westcott, p. 20).

133 Sultan Sikandar Ludhí had been busy in wars in the area covering Jaunpur and Banaras between the years 1494 to 1499, and he seems to have visited sometime between 1494-96 (cf. Haig, pp. 238-40).

134 The Sultan was averse to the Sufis, particularly to Shaykh Nizám-ud-Dín Avliyá of Delhi, who was the head of Chishti order of that time. It is said that when the Sultan was returning from his campaign to Bengal, he sent an order to the Shaykh to quit the city of Delhi before his arrival. The Shaykh, when warned by his friends of the approach of the Sultan, almost to the suburbs of the city, is said to have uttered: "Dilhí hunaj dūr ast (Delhi is yet far off)."

The Sultan died accidentally at Ghiyás Púr, by the falling of a wooden structure in which he was halting as the last station before his entry to the city. The cause of the accident has been described variously. The religious belief is that it was a curse of the Shaykh Nizám whom the Sultan wanted to harass (see The Delhi Sultanate, p. 58).

135 Cf. Freedman, Y., "

137 See op. cit., p. 5; Keay, p. 10.


139 For a list of the Kabirpanthi literature produced within the last one hundred years, or so, see the bibliography in Kachwe, pp. 57-59.

140 See "Modern Hindúism and its Debt to the Nestarians", JRAS, XXXIX (1907), 325.

141 Cf. Westcott, p. 4.


143 See Adî-Granth, Bhairau 18 cited by Keay, p. 43; Adî-Granth, Gaund quoted in Macauliffe, pp. 132-33.


145 All three quotations are cited in Keay, p. 24.

146 See Westcott, p. 15.

147 Cf. Keay, p. 25.

148 See Westcott, p. 5.


150 Cf. Beale, p. 204.

151 Kshitimohan Sen tells us that according to Dr. Fuhrer's researches, which are recorded in his Monumental Antiquities and Inscriptions in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh, Kabir's shrine exists in Khirni.
in Basti on the river Ami. This rauza (shrine), according to this writer, was built by Biji Khan in 1450 and was repaired by Nawab Fidai Khan in 1567 (cf. Sen, p. 88). The latter date may be accepted as the date of construction instead of repair, and the former date may be rejected (see Machwe, p. 9).

152. Cited by Sen, p. 91.
THE TEACHING OF KABIR


3. Ibid., p. viii.


6. Quoted by Keay, F. E., The Religious Life of India: Kabir and his Followers, Calcutta, 1931, p. 46. M. A. Macauliffe translates the two Sloks as follows:

   "Kabir, they who are subdued by worldly love utter many cries, but different is the cry of the pir: Kabir who was struck on a vulnerable spot fell where he stood (Slok 182).

   Kabir, slight is the stroke of a lance; though struck by it man may breathe for a time; But he who can endure the stroke of the Word is a guru, and I am his slave (Slok 183): cf. The Sikh Religion: Its Gurus, Sacred Writings and Authors, Oxford, 1907, reprinted New Delhi, 1963, VI, 306.

7. According to a belief in Islam, when Prophet Muhammad received his first revelation, he was so gripped that he was feeling feverish. He rushed to his wife Khadijah, and asked her to wrap him with blanket. It is also commonly held that on some occasions when Muhammad was receiving revelations, he would be gripped by a feeling of pain, and in
his ears there would be a voice like the reverberation of a bell (see Watt, W. M., *Muhammad: Prophet and Statesman*, London, Oxford, 1961, reprinted 1967, p. 18). And according to a biblical story, recorded in the Qur'ān, Moses was struck by his first experience of God's ray at the foot of the Mount Sainai. In this verse Kabīr appears to be telling that he had some experience like those of Muhammad and Moses. Kabīr was not the first mystic to express such an experience.

8. Literally khutbāh means "speech", but technically it refers to that speech which the imām (leader) of the Friday congregational prayer delivers from the pulpit. Usually it is a printed speech. But the modern imāms deliver khutbāh prepared by themselves in their own languages with relevant references to both the Qur'ān and the Hadīth.


10. By "South" Kabīr might have meant the Jagannath temple at Pūrī, Orissa, or southern India which took the initiative for the bhakti movement in the medieval period. "Allāh hath His place in the West"; by this Kabīr refers to Indian Muslims' attitude to their holy place in Mecca which is to the West of India. Also see Tagore, R., *One Hundred Poems of Kabīr*, London, 1962, poems 1 and 69.
11 Hinduism, p. 140.
12 Cited by Tara Chand, p. 163.
13 Quoted by Westcott, p. 39.
14 Cited in Ibid., p. 65.
17 Hinduism, p. 140.
18 Cited by Westcott, p. 31.
19 Ibid., pp. 35-36.
20 Ibid., p. 36.
21 Ibid.
23 Cited by Westcott, p. 69.
25 See Keay, pp. 87-88; Carpenter, J. E., Theism in Medieval India (being the "Hibbert Lecture, Second Series", delivered in 1919, London) appended to Westcott, pp. 127-28.
26 Quoted by Westcott, pp. 44-45.
27 Tagore, poem 9; also cited by Carpenter in Westcott, pp. 124-25.
28 Ibid., p. 45.
30 In Westcott, p. 118.
32 See Keay, pp. 71-73.
33 "Thou art That" i.e. Thou (the human soul: \textit{atman}) art one with That (Divine Spirit: \textit{Brahman}).
34 Cited by Carpenter in Westcott, p. 130.
37 Cited by Westcott, p. 40; also see \textit{Adi-Granth}, \textit{Gauri} 62 in Macauliffe's translation, p. 175.
38 The \textit{Sufi} practice of the \textit{dhikr} and its Qur'\textaddashnic basis have been discussed before (cf. supra, p. 35). About the existence of \textit{dhikr} (remembrance) in the \textit{Rama-bhakti}, I was told by my supervisor, Dr. J. G. Arapura, but I could not check it for myself.
39 Cited by Westcott, p. 32.
40 According to Hindu tradition, one who does good deeds may go to heaven, but will be born again and again as soon as the merits of those good acts are exhausted. But immortality is achieved only by acquiring the correct knowledge (\textit{jñ\'ana}) of the Absolute. Therefore, the emphasis in the Upanisads is on the \textit{jñ\'ana} or the \textit{Brahma Vid\'ya}. As against this theory of the Upanisads, the mystics, who conceive of a personal God, the stress is on the union with God rather than on going to heaven.
41 This saying of Kabir alludes to a famous \textit{Sufi} theory, namely, man \textit{‘arafa nafsahu faqad-‘arafa rabbahu
(who has known himself, certainly has known his God).

This Sufi theory has a corresponding reference to the Upanisadic teaching, that is, he who knows himself, knows the Self (cf. Chandogya Upanisad, 7.15.1).

42 Quoted by Munshi, K. M., Sufis, Mystics and Yogis of India,
43 Cited by Westcott, p. 32,
44 Ibid., p. 41
46 The doctrine of Karma is often misinterpreted. According to Dr. Radhakrishnan, the interpretation of Karma as implying a denial of human freedom which is generally regarded as the basis of all ethical values, is not correct. But when rightly viewed the law of Karma does not conflict with the reality of freedom. According to this learned author, Karma is the principle of science which displaces belief in magic or the theory that we can manipulate the forces of the world at our pleasure. The course of nature is determined by the operation of immutable laws.

The theory of Karma recognises the rule of law not only in outward nature, but also in the world of mind and morals. "Rita manifests itself equally in nature and in human society." "At a time," contends Radhakrishnan, "when people were doing devil's work under divine sanction and consoling themselves by attributing everything to God's will, the principle of Karma insisted on the primacy of the ethical and
identified God with the rule of law. "Karma is not a mechanical principle but a spiritual necessity. It is the embodiment of the mind and will of God." (The Hindu View of Life, London, 1927, ninth impression, 1954, pp. 72-73). In other words, in the final analysis, according to Radhakrishnan's interpretation, Karma seems to be identical with Qadr.

47 Cited by Westcott, pp. 64-65.
49 Quoted by Westcott, p. 64.
50 Cf. Chândogya Upanisad, 6.14.2; Mahâbhârata, Sânti Parvan, 108.17.
51 Cited by Westcott, p. 54.
52 Ibid., p. 52.
53 Ibid., pp. 58-59.
54 Kauri is a small shell. Nowadays it is used for playing a game named after it. But it is said that once upon a time it was used as coin of very little value. I am not sure, if there is any history behind it.
55 Cited by Westcott, p. 63. This verse tells us clearly that saints, Hindu or Muslim, are above and beyond the distinctions of caste or nationality. They belong to no particular religion; they are the devotees of God and thus free citizens of God's world. The verse also makes it clear that a man is to benefit from the company and guidance of a saint, who has experienced God's knowledge. It is useless to try to know
whether he is a Hindu or a Muslim. This being his attitude, Kabir must have benefited from the association of both Hindu and Muslim saints.

57 Cited by Westcott, p. 52.
58 Ibid., p. 47.
59 Ibid., p. 36.
60 Ibid., p. 44.
61 Ibid., p. 30; also see Adi-Granth, Gauri 11, 16; Sorath 2; Maru 7.
62 "Naadi" literally means "the caller", here it refers to those Jogis who go about playing a small pipe.
63 Cited by Westcott, p. 33; also see p. 57.
64 Ibid., p. 42.
65 Ibid.
66 Ibid., p. 66.
67 Ibid., p. 47; also see p. 59.
68 Ibid., pp. 32, 33, 34.
69 Ibid., p. 40.
70 According to a superstitious belief, if a raven come to a woman's casement when her husband is absent, she says: "Fly away, O raven." If it fly away in obedience to her order, it is an omen that her husband will soon return. Here in Kabir's verse the word "raven" is understood to mean man's evil passions.
71 Kabir presents himself as a bride and God the Bridegroom.

It is probably usual on occasions of marriage for
people in some regions of India to have their clothes dyed. To be sure, in both Hindu and Muslim marriages colourful clothes are used, or white dresses sprayed with colours are used. Similarly, both bride’s and bridegroom’s hands and faces are also dyed either with henna or with other stuff. These are all Hindu customs; but in India the Muslims adopted them under the influence of Hinduism.

According to Hindu custom, the bride and bridegroom circumambulate fire, in some places seven times and in other places four times, on the occasion of marriage. Before the circumambulation, the officiating Brahmin ties the clothes of the two persons. In fact, the circumambulation is the final confirmation of the marriage. So far I know, this particular Hindu custom is not usually seen in Muslim marriages.

On the occasion of marriage a few women get together and sing songs fitting the occasion. Some of these songs depict bride’s departure from her father’s home. These songs are so melodious that they bring many listeners into tears. This Hindu custom has been taken over by the Indian Muslims and is practised almost universally in the Indian sub-continent. In some parts of Bengal, the practice goes to the extent of hiring some women, particularly the eunuchs, for singing for the whole night.

It is called Uchar, or Gotrachar, a panegyric on the families of the bride and bridegroom intoned by
the ministering Brähmin. A similar panegyric (khutbah) is recited in Muslim marriages, but in that no reference is made to the families of the marrying couple. It is composed of a few Qur'anic verses in praise of God for enabling them to get married, and His grace is sought so that the marrying couple may be able to lead a happy and prosperous conjugal life.

75 Of the left and right nostrils and their junction.

Trikuli sandhi also includes gvana, the knower; gvan, the means of knowledge; and gerva, the subject of knowledge. Devout men endeavour to unite all three.

76 By "fourth degree", Kabir seems to have alluded to the Upaniṣadic theory of four states of knowing the Self (Brahman). According to this theory, there are four states, viz., the waking, the sleeping, the dreamless and the turvya. At this state or stage, the individual self completely realises the Universal Self. In other words, in the turvya state the individual self or soul (atman) gets united with the Universal Self (Brahman). Or, it may refer to the four degrees of salvation, namely, saλon (heaven); samip (being near God); sarup (assuming God's form); and sayuj (being absorbed in God), which Kabir mentions in Adi-Granth, Maru 5.


79. Cited by Keay, p. 73.

80. "Dāl" means lentil; "Lapasi" and "Kasar" are both made from clarified butter, flour, and sugar, but the former is made liquid by the addition of water. They are both Indian puddings.


82. Ibid.

83. Ibid.

84. A "Koti" is ten millions. The Yādavas were the tribesmen of Kṛṣṇa.


86. Quoted by Tara Chand, p. 163.

87. Ibid.

88. Quoted by Westcott, pp. 38-39; also see V. No. 64 in Westcott.


91. The History and Culture of the Indian People, Vol. VI: The Delhi Sultanate, Bombay, 1960, pp. 54-6-49.

92. Kabîr seems to have been acquainted with that story of the Satapatha Brâhmana of the Rg-Veda X. that the four castes have sprung from the four parts of the
Puruṣa, the Brāhmin being the superior to all others, came out of Puruṣa's mouth. The Kṣatriya from the arms; the Vaiṣya from the thighs and the Śūdra from the feet of the Puruṣa. Kabir questions why they were born of woman?

93 Cf. supra, p. 193
94 See supra, pp. 203-204.
95 Cf. supra, pp. 191-92.
96 Cf. supra, p. 193-94.
97 The Sayyids claim to be the descendants of the Prophet Muhammad. Sayyids along with Shaykhs, Murtuhs and Pathans are the four classes of Muslim aristocracy recognised in the Indian society during the Muslim rule in India.
98 Cited by Keay, p. 18.
99 Evidently, the allusion is to our body. There are some songs, especially in Bengali, called mā'arfatī (gnostic) in which reference is made to human body as a cage with nine gates (one mouth, two noses, two eyes, two ears, one rectum and one urinal or genital). But Kabir mentions of "ten gates", the tenth gate may refer to either naval or to consciousness. If it is the latter, it will be in line with the Indian philosophical mode of dividing human body into different components.
100 According to the Islamic method of sacrificing of an animal, Bismillāh-i-Allahu Akbar (in the name of God Who is Great) must be uttered loudly. Kabir, being
an unlettered person, could not pronounce it correctly; instead he pronounces it as "mismii", and to this formula he makes allusion by calling it "sacrifice wrath."

101 In Islamic tradition this is called "jihād bi'l-nafs" or "jihād bi'l-qalb" (striving with heart and soul in the way of God). For more information about Jihād (ordinarily translated as "War" or "Fighting"), cf. D. B. Macdonald, "Djihād", Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam, p. 89; Hedayetullah, M., Sayyīd Ahmad: A Study of the Religious Reform Movement of Sayyīd Ahmad of Rāe Bareli, Lahore, 1970, pp. 88-89.

102 We have discussed Kabīr's opinion about death. His concept of death is in the vein of that of the Sūfīs. Accordingly, rememberance of death and contentment with physical death is a well-known mystic ideal in every religion. As against this, conquering the fear of spiritual death is the goal of all religion.

103 The theme of the story of Nāciketas' confrontation with Yāmā (Death personified) is how to conquer the fear of death, i.e. spiritual death, which means to be united with God. In other words, a liberated soul is beyond the power of death. In this verse Kabīr hints to that secret which enables one to crush the power of death (cf. Kathā Upaniṣad, 1.1.7-29 in Radhakrishnan, pp. 595-611).

104 "Two breaths" alludes to that mystical spiritual exercise which is done in the murāqabah. With the word "Allāh"
the breath is taken in and with the word "Hu" the breath is given out.

105 This probably refers to yoga practice in which many breaths are involved.

106 "Tarīqat" is the Śūfī "path" as against the "Shari'at" of orthodox Islām. We have discussed the difference between them (cf. supra, p. 37). Śūfī path is paralleled with the Buddhist Noble Path. Here it is clear that Kabīr rejected the tarīqat of the organised Śūfīsm as he did the shari'at of orthodox Islām.

107 "The Medieval Mystics of North India", in The Cultural Heritage of India, IV, 379.

108 Religious Literature of India, pp. 334-35; also see The Living Religions of the Indian People, pp. 144-45; Indian Theism, p. 136; Archer, p. 49.

109 See Keay, chs. vi, vii, viii, ix; Westcott, pp. 66 ff.; Religious Literature of India, pp. 335-36.


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