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## BHAKTI MOVEMENT

An important landmark in the cultural history of medieval India was the silent revolution in the society known as the Bhakti Movement. The term '*Bhakti*' symbolises '*devotion or passionate love for the Divine*'. Its meaning has, however, evolved with time, along with the concept of Bhakti itself. Since the times of the Indo-Aryans and the sacred texts, i.e., the Vedas, the meaning of Bhakti as a tradition has varied. The Vedic period, with its focused image of the rishi or the seer (a visionary figure who was able to communicate with and about the various gods of the Vedic pantheon through a complex system of rituals; Moksha could be attained through the precise performance of these rituals), did contain the seeds of the Bhakti movement, but it was clearly not the true depiction. This process of 'adoration of a personal god' *started* during the course of the *6th century BCE*, with the *rise of the heterodox movements* of *Buddhism* and *Jainism*. For instance, under *Mahayana Buddhism*, the *worship of the Buddha* started in his *avalokita* (gracious) *form*. The *worship of Vishnu* too started around the same time, which was *popularised* to a great extent *by* the *Gupta kings*, who supported the pantheon of gods (*Vishnu*, the cosmic king; *Shiva*, the great yogi and ascetic; and his feminine counterpart, *Shakti*, or divine energy) through the worship of divine images (*puja*), the *Puranas* (mythological compositions about the gods). The Gupta kings also built temples dedicated to these gods and patronised the various devotional groups.

However, what is known today as the Bhakti Movement *had its genesis in southern India* in the *7th and 12th century CE*. It was in south India that Bhakti grew from a religious tradition to a popular movement, based on notions of *religious equality* and *broad-based social participation*. It is characterised by the writings of its poet-saints, the *Shaivaite Nayannars* and the *Vaishnavaites Alvars*, who preached the Bhakti cult under the Pallavas, Pandyas, and the Cholas. They disregarded the austerities preached by the Jains and the Buddhists and preached that personal devotion to god was the only means of salvation.

They extolled **passionate devotional love for the Divine** and stressed on the fact that Moksha (liberation from the cycle of rebirth) could be attained not by following rules, regulations, or social order, but through **simple devotion** to the Divine. The Bhakti saints usually emerged from **lower castes**, preached a religion which was **non-ritualistic** and **open to all** without any distinction of caste or creed, **encouraged women** to join in the gatherings, and taught in the **local vernacular languages**. These ideas of Bhakti were carried to the north by scholars as well as by saints.



## THE BHAKTI MOVEMENT IN NORTH INDIA

Interestingly, the **evolution of Bhakti Movement** in medieval India, which gained momentum **in the northern parts** of the country during the **12th–17th century CE**, **differs from** the **southern Bhakti** Movement. The Bhakti Movement in the north included socio-religious movements that were linked to one of the acharyas from the south, and is sometimes seen as a continuation of the movement that originated in the south. Though there were similarities in the traditions of the two regions, the notion of bhakti varied in the teachings of each of the saints. The northern medieval Bhakti Movement had the **influence of the spread of Islam** in India. The distinctive characteristics of Islam such as **Monotheism** or **belief in one God**, **equality and brotherhood of man**, and **rejection of rituals** and **class divisions** certainly influenced the Bhakti Movement of this era. Moreover, the preaching of Sufi teachers shaped the thinking of Bhakti reformers like Ramananda, Kabir, and Nanak, as the Bhakti Movement also initiated certain reforms in the society.

There is also **difference of opinion about the reasons** behind the origins of the Bhakti Movement. Some scholars consider the rise of the Bhakti Movement as a **reaction against feudal oppression** and **against conformist Rajput–Brahman domination**. The **anti-feudal tone** in the **poetry of Bhakti saints** like *Kabir*, *Nanak*, *Chaitanya*, and *Tulsidas* is

seen as testimony to this point. However, some scholars feel that the **socio-economic changes** in the early medieval period provided the necessary background reasons for the emergence of this movement. According to them, *during the 13th and 14th centuries, the demand for manufactured goods, luxuries, and other artisanal goods increased, leading to a movement of artisans into the cities. The movement gained support from these classes of the society as these groups were dissatisfied with the low status accorded to them by the Brahmanical system, and hence they turned towards Bhakti since it focused on equality.* Though there is no single opinion about the origins of the Bhakti Movement, there is unanimity of thought over the fact that the Bhakti Movement focused on the message of **equality** and **devotional surrender** to a personally conceived supreme God.

The Bhakti movement is also divided into two different ideological streams of **‘Saguna’** (those poet-saints who composed verses **extolling a god with attributes or form**) and **‘Nirguna’** (those **extolling god without and beyond all attributes or form**). For instance, the **Saguna Bhaktas** like **Tulsidas** upheld the caste system and the supremacy of the Brahmans, and preached a religion of surrender and simple faith in a personal God, having a strong commitment towards idol worship. On the other hand, the **Nirguna Bhaktas** like **Kabir** rejected the **varnashrama** and all conventions based on caste distinctions. They championed new values, helping the emergence of new groups and new unorthodox or protestant sects. The **Nirguna Bhaktas** are also known as **Monotheistic Bhakti saints**, who gave more importance to the **personal experience** of Bhakti saints with god. They rejected the authority of the **Brahmans** and attacked the caste system and the practice of idolatry. All of them were influenced by the **Vaishnava** concept of Bhakti, the Nathpanthi movement, and Sufism, and their ideas seemed to be a synthesis of the three traditions. Though they had **adopted the notion of bhakti from Vaishnavism, they gave it a nirguna orientation.** They called their god using different names and titles, but their god was non-incarnate, formless, eternal, and ineffable. The monotheistic poet-saints were also aware of each other’s teachings and influence, and in their verses they frequently mentioned each other and their predecessors in a manner

suggesting ideological affinity among them.

While the differences between these two branches are indeed important, their overarching **similarities** cannot be minimised:

- a. Both focused on **singular devotion**, **mystical love for God**, and had a particular focus on a personal relationship with the Divine.
- b. Both were **highly critical of ritual observances** as maintained and fostered by the Brahman priesthood. In fact, many poet-saints, specially in northern areas, were themselves of lower caste lineages.
- c. Another commonality was their **usage of the vernacular or regional languages** of the masses, as opposed to the sacred language of the elite priesthood, Sanskrit. They composed their poems in popular languages and dialects spoken across north India. This enabled them to transmit their ideas among the masses and also among the various lower classes.



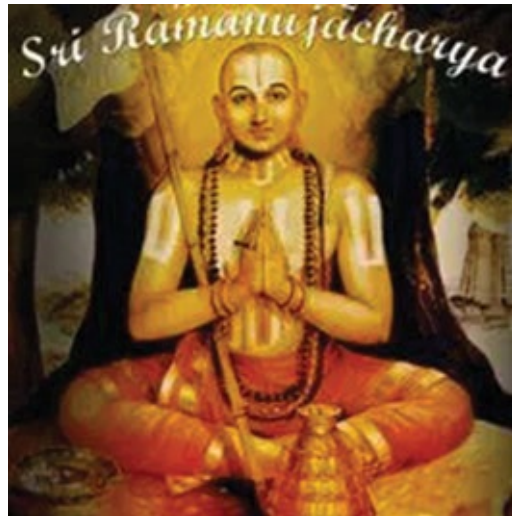
## **Prominent Leaders of the Bhakti Movement:**



**Sankaracharya**

## 1. Sankaracharya

- Great thinker, distinguished philosopher, and leader of the Hindu revivalist movement of the 9th century, which gave a new orientation to Hinduism.
- He was born in Kaladi (Kerala) and propounded the *Advaita* (Monism) philosophy and *Nirgunabrahman* (god without attributes).
- In Advaita, the reality of the world is denied and *Brahman* is considered as the only reality. It is only *Brahman* at its base that gives it its reality. The analogy given for Advaita is the famous analogy of the snake and the rope. *In the dark, we may mistake a rope for a snake and for a time take it to be a real snake. But soon we realise that it is in fact only a rope. Once we know it to be a rope, we do not see the snake anymore. The rope had never existed, it was purely in our minds.* So also, although it is only the *Brahman* that exists all around us, we see the world, which is only a reading of *Brahman* by our minds. But once we attain realisation and see that it was *Brahman* all along, we do not see the world anymore.
- His famous quotes include, “*Brahma Satyam Jagat Mithya Jivo Brahmatra Naparaha*”, meaning, “The Absolute Spirit is the reality, the world of appearance is *Maya*”.
- According to him, *gyaan* (knowledge) alone can lead to salvation.
- Wrote commentary on the *Bhagvat Gita*, on the *Brahmasutra* and the *Upanishads*, and wrote books like:
  - (a) Upadesh Shastri
  - (b) Vivek Chudamani
  - (c) Bhaja Govindum Stotra
- Established *mathas* at Sringeri, Dwarka, Puri, and Badrinath.



Ramanujan

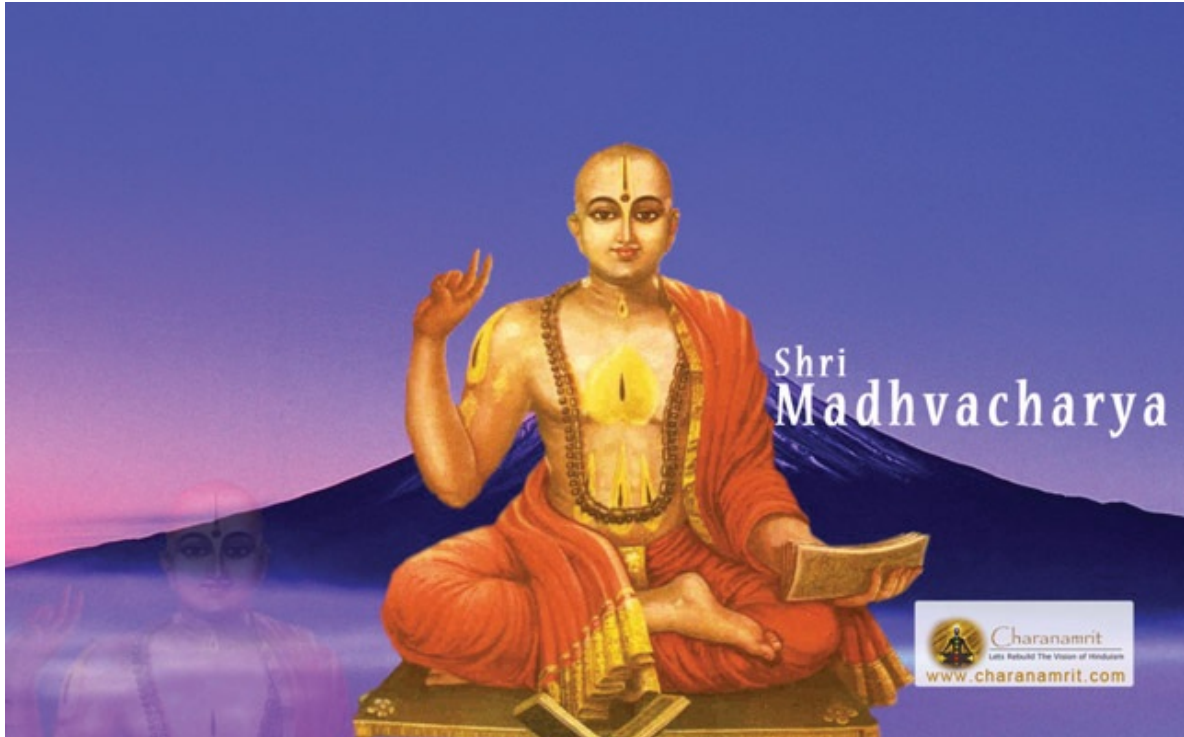
## 2. Ramanuja

- Born at Sriperumbudur near modern Chennai in the 12th century.
- He opposed the *mayavada* of Shankara and advocated the philosophy of *Vishista Advaitavada* (qualified monism), and founded the *Shrivaishnava sect*. According to him, God is *Saguna Brahman*. The creative process and all the objects in creation are real but not illusory as was held by Sankaracharya. Therefore, God, soul, matter, are real. But god is inner substance and the rest are his attributes. In Vishista Advaita, the world and *Brahman* are also considered two equally real entities, as in dualism, but here the world is not separate from *Brahman* but is formed out of *Brahman*.
- In Vishista Advaitavada, *Brahman* is a personal god with omniscient qualities. He has created the world, but he has created the world out of his own self. Thus, the world bears to *Brahman* the relation of the part to the whole, or the relation of a 'qualified effect' to the base (hence qualified monism). The famous analogy given for this is the sea and wave – *Brahman is the sea and the objects of the world, both non-living and the living souls, are like waves upon this sea. All waves are ultimately the sea only, but as long as we see the wave we think it to be different from the sea.*

*The wave is of name and form only.* Other analogies given for this are gold and gold jewellery, clay and clay pots, the spider and his web, etc.

- *Brahman* as defined by Ramanuja is an entirely personal God. Ramanuja considered *Brahman* to be Vishnu or one of his avatars. Vishnu has all the qualities of a personal God like omniscience, omnipotence, etc. Vishnu creates the world out of his love for humans, and controls the world at every step. The duty of humans is to love and worship the Lord Vishnu so that he will grant deliverance when our worship has ripened.
- The practice of religion in Vishista Advaita is similar to Dualism, and the only difference is that mankind enjoys a higher status than in pure dualistic worship and is nearer to God. Thus in *Vishista Advaita*, although both the world and *Brahman* are considered equally real, they are not considered two separate entities as in Dualism.
- He also advocated *prabattimarga* or the path of self-surrender to God. He invited the downtrodden to *Vaishnavism* and advocated salvation by bhakti.
- He wrote:
  - (a) Sribhashya
  - (b) Vedanta dipa
  - (c) Gita Bhasya
  - (d) Vedantasara





### 3. Madhavacharya

- In the 13th century, Madhava from Kannada region propagated *Dvaita* or the dualism of the *Jivatma* and *Paramatma*. According to this philosophy, the world is not an illusion but a reality, full of real distinction. According to Madhava, *Brahman* and the world are considered to be two equally real entities and not related in any way. The God of dualism is the Hindu God, Vishnu. *Vishnu has created the world, and the world stands separate from God and in an inferior position to God with no link between the two.* Vishnu controls the world and all world events, and the duty of all persons is to worship and pray to god.
- God, soul, and matter are all unique in nature, and hence they are irreducible to each other.
- He also founded the *Brahma Sampradya*.

### 4. Nimbraka

- Younger contemporary of Ramanujam who propounded the *Dvaita advaita* philosophy and the philosophy of *Bheda Abheda* (difference/ non-difference). According to him, *Brahman* or the supreme soul transforms itself into the

souls of the world, which are therefore real, distinct, and different from *Brahman*. Like Vishista Advaita, the *Bheda Abheda* school also believes that the world and *Brahman* are both equally real, and that the world is a part of *Brahman*. The difference is on emphasis only. The same analogy of sea and wave, clay and pot, etc. is used here. A particular **analogy of *Bhed Abheda*** is the **sun and the sun beam**. *The sun beam cannot be called separate from the sun, it arises from the sun, and is attached to it. Yet it is not the sun either, it is only a part of the sun, a reflection of the sun, and it gives only a part view of the sun. Hence the world also is but a manifestation of Brahman, but it is a very small manifestation, and the difference with Brahman is very large.*

- **Preacher** of Vaishnavite Bhakti in the **Telangana** region.
- Worshipper of **Krishna** and **Radha** and established his ashrama in Braja (Mathura).
- He also founded the ***Sanak Sampradaya***.



**Vallabhacharya**

## 5. **Vallabhacharya**

- Born in Benaras in the 15th century and lived at the court of Krishnadeva Raya.
- He propounded the ***Shudhadvaita*** (**pure monism**). In

Shudhadvaita, as in Vishista Advaita, the world is **taken to have a real existence, as also Brahman**. But it is said that there is no change of *Brahman* into the world, the world exists as it were as an aspect of *Brahman* without undergoing any change, it is a part of *Brahman*. We may consider it like **two sides of a coin**, with *Brahman* as one side and the world as another side. There is no change — the world is a part of the coin that is *Brahman*. Hence, this is called ‘*Shudh Advaita*’ because it is said that *there is only one and there is no change*.

- However, we see that though Shudhadvaita calls itself **monism**, it recognises the presence of both, the world and Brahman, as being equally real. Hence, there are **two realities**. Hence, even if we say that it is a part of Brahman, the **world does exist as a different reality from Brahman**, the other side of the coin as it were. So it is actually a branch of Vishista Advaita, in that it recognises both the world and Brahman as being two equally real existences, though it **emphasises the non-difference more** by saying that the world is an inseparable, unchanged aspect of Brahman. Thus it tends more towards pure Advaita than the Vishista Advaita of Ramanuja.
- Its philosophy is **Pushtimarga**.
- He founded the **Rudra Sampradya**.
- According to him, God is omnipotent and omniscient and cause of all that is there in the universe. **Surdas was the disciple of Vallabhacharya who was blind but he was largely instrumental in popularising the Krishna cult in north India.**

#### 6. Vidyapati

- Vidyapati was a **14th century Maithili poet** known for his poetry dedicated to **Shiva**, whom he addressed as Ugna.



## The Bhakti Movement in Maharashtra

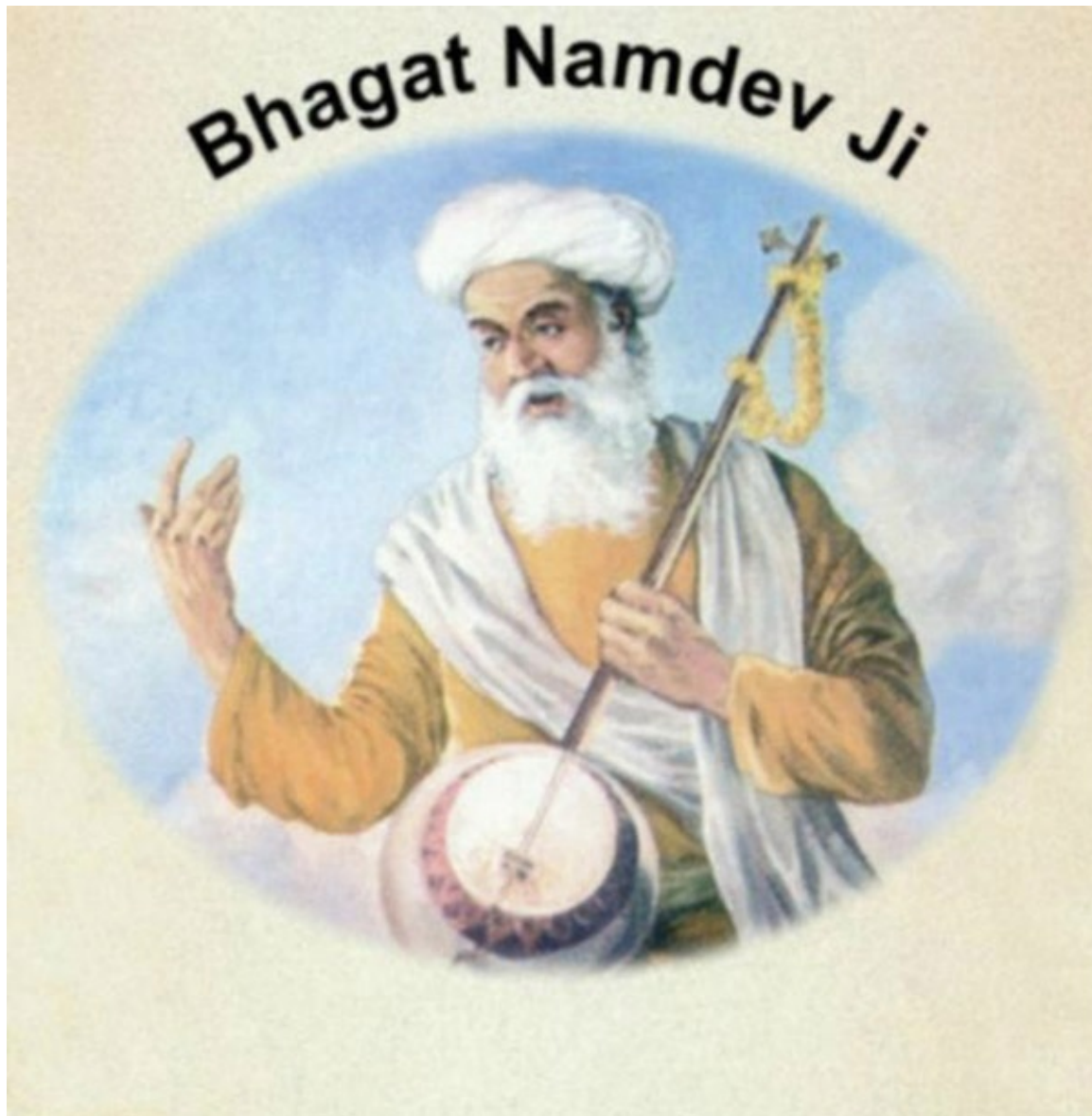
The Bhakti movement in Maharashtra centred around the shrine of *Vithoba* or *Vitthal*, the residing deity of Pandharpur, who was regarded as a manifestation of Krishna. That is why it is also known as the *Pandharpur movement*, which led to great cultural and social development in Maharashtra such as the development of Marathi literature, elevation in the status of women, breaking of caste barriers, etc. In Maharashtra, the Bhakti Movement drew its inspiration from the *Bhagavata Purana* and the *Shiva* Nathpanthis. The Bhakti Movement is broadly divided into two sects:

- a. *Varakaris*: The mild devotees of God *Vitthala* of Pandharpur, who are more emotional, theoretical, and abstract in their view-point.
- b. *Dharakaris*: The heroic followers of the cult of Ramadasa, the devotee of God *Rama*, who are more rational, practical, and concrete in their thoughts.

The difference between the two schools, however, is only apparent, and the realisation of God as the highest end of human life is common aim of both. The three great saints belonging to the *Vithoba* cult were *Jnaneswar*, *Jnanadeva*, *Namdeva*, and *Tukaram*.

7. *Jnaneswara* or *Jnanadeva*:

- A 13th century pioneer bhakti saint of Maharashtra, whose commentary on the *Bhagvat Gita* called *Jnanesvari* served as a foundation of the bhakti ideology in Maharashtra.
- Arguing against caste distinctions, he believed that the only way to attain god was through bhakti.



8. **Namdeva** (c.1270–1350 CE)

- He was a poet-saint from Maharashtra belonging to the **14th century**, who belonged to the **Varkari sect**. He attracted individuals from diverse classes and castes during community-driven bhajan singing sessions. It is **interesting** to note that *while he is remembered in the north Indian monotheistic tradition as a nirguna saint, in Maharashtra he is considered to be part of the Varkari tradition (the Vaishnava devotional tradition).*
- He is **considered one the five revered gurus** in the



*Dadupanth* tradition within Hinduism, the other four being *Dadu*, *Kabir*, *Ravidas*, and *Hardas*.

- According to tradition, Namdeva was a *tailor* who had taken to banditry before he became a saint. His Marathi poetry breathes a spirit of intense love and dedication to god.
- His companions during worship sessions included *Kanhopatra* (a dancing girl), *Sena* (a barber), *Savata* (a gardener), *Chokhamela* (an untouchable), *Janabai* (a maid), *Gora* (a potter), *Narahari* (a goldsmith), and *Jnanesvar* (also known as Dnyandev, a Brahmin).
- It is believed that his *Abhangas* were included in the *Guru Granth Sahib*.



### Sant Eknath

#### 9. Sant Eknath

- He was a prominent Marathi saint, scholar, and religious poet of the Varkari sampradaya, belonging to the 16th century CE.
- In the development of Marathi literature, Eknath is seen as a bridge between his predecessors—Dnyaneshwar and Namdeva—and the later Tukaram and Ramdas.
- He introduced a new form of Marathi religious song called *Bharood*. Eknath's teachings in Marathi attempted to shift the emphasis of Marathi literature from spiritual to narrative compositions.
- He is believed to be a family man and emphasised on the fact that stay in monasteries or resignation from the world are not necessary for leading a religious life.



Tukaram

#### 10. Tukaram

- Tukaram was a 17th century poet-saint of the Bhakti movement in Maharashtra who also was part of the

egalitarian Varkari devotionalism tradition and was a **Sudra by birth**.

- Tukaram is known for his **Avangas (dohas)**, which constitute the gathadevotional poetry, and community-oriented worship with spiritual songs known as kirtans.
- His poetry was devoted to **Vitthala** or **Vithoba**, an **avatar of the Hindu God Vishnu**.
- He was a **contemporary of Shivaji** and was responsible for creating a background for **Maratha nationalism**, 'Parmaratha'.

#### 11. Ramdasa

- He was born in c.1608 CE and was the **spiritual guide of Shivaji**.
- He wrote **Dasabodha**, combining his vast knowledge of various sciences and arts with the principles of spiritual life.



## Non Sectarian Bhakti Movement

In the 14th and 15th centuries, Ramananda, Kabir, and Nanak emerged as the great apostles of the Bhakti cult. Though they drew inspiration from old teachers yet they showed a new path. Unlike the early reformers, they were **not linked with any particular religious creed** and did **not believe in rituals and ceremonies**. They condemned polytheism and believed in one god. They also denounced all forms of idolatry. They helped the common people to shed age-old superstitions and attain salvation through bhakti or pure devotion. They greatly emphasised on the **fundamental unity of all religions**.





Ramananada

## 12. Ramananda:

- He is believed to have lived in the first half of the 15th century, born in Allahabad, and was originally a follower of Ramanuja. Later, he founded his own sect and preached his principles in Hindi at Benaras and Agra. He considered it to be the link between the South Indian Bhakti and North Indian Vaishnava Bhakti traditions.
- Ramananda brought to North India what Ramanuja did in South India. He raised his voice against the increasing formalism of the orthodox cult and founded a new school of Vaishnavism based on the gospel of love and devotion. His most outstanding contribution is the abolition of distinctions of caste among his followers.
- He looked upon Ram and not Vishnu as the object of

bhakti. He worshiped Ram and Sita and came to be identified as the founder of the Ram cult in north India.

- He, like the monotheist bhakti saints, also rejected caste hierarchies and preached in the local languages in his attempt to popularise the cult. His followers are called *Ramanandis*, like *Tulsidas*.
- He put emphasis on bhakti and avoided both *gyana marg* and *karma marg*.
- Gave rise to two schools of thought:
  - (a) *Orthodox school* – Represented by *Nabhadas*, *Tulsidas*
  - (b) *Liberal* – Represented by *Kabir*, *Nanak*, and others
- Other followers included:
  - (a) *Raidasa* – A *cobbler* whose songs are included in the Guru Granth Sahib
  - (b) *Kabir* – A *weaver who preached that* Ram, Rahim, and Allah are all the same
  - (c) *Sena* – A *barber*
  - (d) *Sadhana* – A *butcher*
  - (e) *Dhanna* – A *farmer*
  - (f) *Naraharai* – A *goldsmith*
  - (g) *Pipa* – A *Rajput prince*



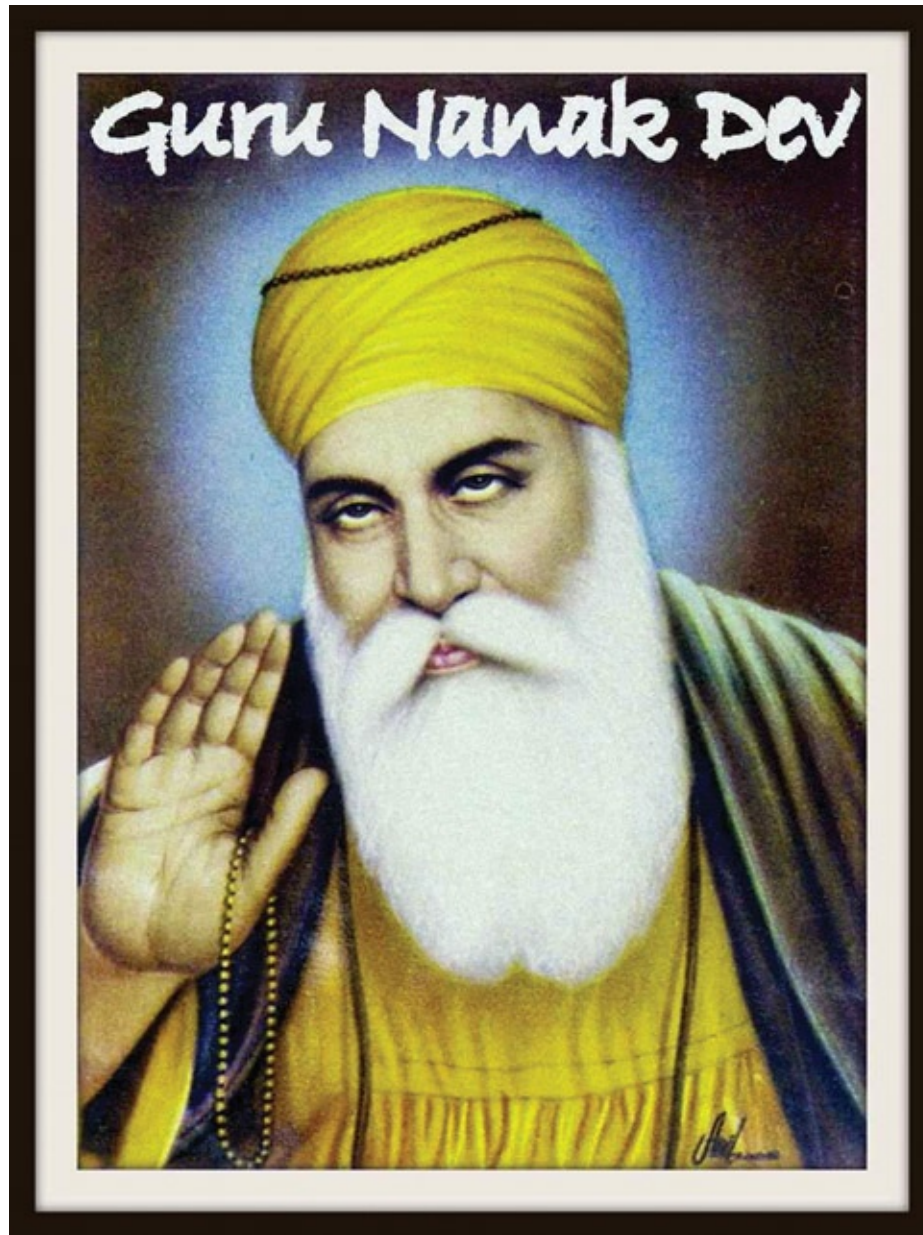
Kabir

### 13. Kabir:

- Among the disciples of Ramananda, one of the most famous was Kabir. He was a 15th century Bhakti poet and saint, whose verses are found in the Sikh holy scripture, *Adi Granth*.
- He was born near Benares to a Brahman widow, but was brought up by a Muslim couple who were weavers by profession. He possessed an inquiring mind, and while in Benares, learnt much about Hinduism and became familiar with Islamic teachings also.
- He denounced idolatry and rituals and laid great emphasis on the equality of man before God. He regarded devotion to god as an effective means of salvation and urged that to

achieve this one must have a pure heart, free from cruelty, dishonesty, hypocrisy, and insincerity.

- Though familiar with yogic practices, he considered neither asceticism nor book knowledge important for true knowledge. He strongly denounced the caste system, especially the practice of untouchability.
- Kabir's object was to reconcile Hindus and Muslims and establish harmony between the two sects. He emphasised the essential oneness of all religions by describing Hindus and Muslims "*as pots of the same clay*". To him "*Rama and Allah, temple and mosque*" were the same.
- He is regarded as the greatest of the mystic saints and his followers are called *Kabirpanthis*. Among those who were influenced by Kabir were Raidas, who was a tanner by caste, from Benares, Guru Nanak, who was a Khatri merchant from Punjab, and Dhanna, who was a Jat peasant from Rajasthan.
- *Bijak* is the best known of the compilations of the compositions of Kabir.



#### 14. Guru Nanak:

- The first Sikh Guru and founder of the Sikhism, who was also a *Nirguna Bhakti Saint* and social reformer.
- He was born in a Khatri household in the village of Talwandi (now called Nankana), on the banks of the river Ravi in c.1469 CE. His father was an accountant, and even Nanak was trained in Persian to follow his father's footsteps, but he was inclined towards mysticism.
- He was opposed to all distinctions of caste as well as the



religious rivalries and rituals, and preached the unity of god and condemned the formalism and ritualism of both Islam and Hinduism.

- He laid a **great emphasis on the purity of character and conduct** as the first condition of approaching, God, and the need of a guru for guidance. Like Kabir, he advocated a middle path in which spiritual life could be combined with the duties of the householder.

#### 15. **Dadu Dayal** (c.1544–1603 CE):

- Dadu Dayal is one of the major representatives of the **Nirguna Sant** traditions in Northern India. He was a saint from **Gujarat**, who spent the best part of his spiritual life in Rajasthan. ‘**Dadu**’ means ‘brother’, and ‘**Dayal**’ means ‘the compassionate one’. Later, his followers came to be known as the **Dadupanthis** who set up ashrams known as **Thambas** around the region.
- According to tradition, he was the foster son of an affluent businessman who had found him floating on the river Sabarmati. It is believed that Emperor **Akbar** was one of his followers.
- Dadu believed that devotion to God should transcend religious or sectarian affiliation, and that devotees should become non-sectarian or nipakh.



## **Vaishnavite Movement**

Apart from the non-sectarian movement, the Bhakti Movement in north India developed around the worship of Ram and Krishna, two of the incarnations of the God Vishnu. The leading light of the **Ram** cult was saint-poet **Tulsidas**. He was a great scholar and had made a profound study of Indian philosophy and literature. His great poem, the **Ramacharitamanasa**, popularly called **Tulsi-krita Ramayana**, is very popular among Hindu devotees till date, in which he portrays the image of Sri Ram as all virtuous and all powerful, the Lord of the World, and the very embodiment of the Supreme Reality (**Parambrahma**).

On the other hand, the followers of the Krishna cult founded the **Radha Ballabhi sect** under **Hari Vamsa** in c.1585 CE. In the early 16th century, **Vallabacharya**, a popular bhakti saint popularised the **Krishna bhakti cult**. He was followed by **Surdas** (c.1483–1563 CE) and **Mirabai** (c.1503–1573 CE). Sur Das wrote **Sursagar** in *Brajbhasha*, which is full of verses on the charm of Lord Krishna and his beloved Radha. **Mirabai**, the **daughter-in-law of Rana Sanga**, was a great **devotee of Krishna**, and she became popular in Rajasthan for her bhajans. Later, the exponent of the Ram cult and the Krishna cult among the Vaishnavas branched off into a number of sects and creeds.

Interestingly, the Vaishnava Bhakti Movement in Bengal was very different from its counterparts in north India and the south. It was influenced by the Vaishnava Bhakti tradition of the ***Bhagavata Purana***, and the ***Sahajiya Buddhist***, and ***Nathpanthi traditions***. These traditions focused on the esoteric and emotional aspects of devotion. In the 12th century, **Jayadeva** was an important bhakti saint in this tradition. He highlighted the mystical dimension of love with reference to Krishna and Radha. **Chaitanya** was another popular bhakti saint from the region, who was even looked upon as an avatar of Krishna.



#### 16. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu:

- Well-known saint, ascetic Hindu monk, and social **reformer of Bengal**, who popularised the **Krishna cult** in the **16th century**. With him, the Bhakti Movement in Bengal began

to develop into a reform movement as it questioned social division on the basis of caste.— Popularised the *Sankirtan/Kirtan system* (group devotional songs accompanied with ecstatic dancing).

- He renounced the world, became an ascetic, and wandered all over the country preaching his ideas.
- He proclaimed the *universal brotherhood of man* and condemned all distinction based on religion and caste, and emphasised love and peace.
- He showed great empathy towards the suffering of other people, especially that of the poor and the weak, and believed that through love and devotion, song and dance, a devotee can feel the presence of God.
- He accepted disciples from all classes and castes, and his teachings are widely followed in Bengal even today.
- The biography of Chaitanya was written by Krishnadas Kaviraj.

#### 17. Narsingh Mehta

- Saint from *Gujarat* who wrote songs in Gujarati depicting the love of *Radha–Krishna*.
- *Author* of *Mahatma Gandhi's favorite bhajan* – “*Vaishanava jan ko*”

#### 18. Saint Tyagaraja (c.1767–1847 CE):

- Was one of the greatest composers of *Carnatic music*, who composed thousands of *devotional compositions*, most in *Telugu* and in praise of *Lord Ram*.
- He was a prolific composer and composed the famous *Pancharatna Kritis* (meaning five gems). He was highly influential in the development of the classical devotional music tradition.



## SUFISM

The word ‘sufi’ is derived from ‘*suf*’, which means *wool* in Arabic,



referring to the simple cloaks the early Muslim ascetics wore. It also means 'purity', and thus can be understood as the one who wears wool on top of purity. The Sufis were regarded as people who kept their heart pure and who sought to communicate with God through their ascetic practices. The terms *Sufi*, *Wali*, *Darvesh*, and *Faqir* are used interchangeably for **Muslim saints** who attempted to achieve development of their intuitive faculties through ascetic exercises, contemplation, renunciation, and self-denial. God, man, and the **relation of love between God and man**, is fundamental to Sufism. The ideas of *ruh* (soul), *qurbat* (divine proximity), and *hulul* (infusion of the divine spirit), *Ishq* (divine love), and *Fana* (self-annihilation) are central to the theory of Sufism. Sufism thus represents the **inward or esoteric**, mystical side of Islam. The Sufi saints, transcending all religious and communal distinctions, worked for promoting the **interest of humanity** at large. The Sufis regarded God as the supreme beauty, and believed that one must admire him, take delight in his thought, and concentrate his attention on him only. They believed that God is *Mashuq* and Sufis are the *Ashiqs*.

Sufism stressed the elements of love and devotion as effective means of the realisation of God. Love of God meant the **love of humanity**, and hence they believed that **service to humanity** was tantamount to service to God. In Sufism, **self-discipline** was considered an essential condition to gain the knowledge of God by sense of perception. While orthodox Muslims emphasise external conduct, the Sufis lay stress on **inner purity**. Other ideas emphasised by Sufism are **meditation, good actions, repentance for sins, performance of prayers and pilgrimages, fasting, charity, and suppression of passions by ascetic practices**.

Sufism or mysticism emerged in the **8th century**, and the early known Sufis were Rabia al-Adawiya, Al-Junaid, and Bayazid Bastami. However, it evolved into a well-developed movement by the end of the **11th century**. Al Hujwiri, who established himself in north India, was buried in Lahore and regarded as the oldest Sufi in the sub-continent. By the 12th century, the Sufis were organised in *Silsilahs* (i.e., **orders**, which basically represented an unbreakable chain between the *Pir*, the **teacher**, and the *murids*, the **disciples**). The four most popular Silsilahs

among these were the *Chistis*, *Suhrawardis*, *Qadiriya*s, and *Naqshbandis*. Sufis stress on the importance of following the path directed by the Sufi pir, which thus enables one to establish a direct communion with the divine. The *khanqah* (the *hospice*) was the centre of activities of the various Sufi orders. The *khanqah* was led by the *shaikh*, *pir*, or *murshid* (teacher), who lived with his murids (disciples). In due course of time, the *khanqah*s emerged as important centres of learning and preaching. When the pir died, his *dargah*, i.e., the *tomb* or *shrine*, became a centre for his disciples and followers. The *murid* (*disciple*) passes through *maqamat* (various *stages*) in this process of experiencing communion with the divine. Many Sufis enjoyed the *sama* or *musical congregation* in their *khanqah*s. In fact, *qawwali* developed during this period only. The *ziyarat* or *pilgrimage to the tombs* of the Sufi saints soon emerged as an important form of ritual pilgrimage. Most of the Sufis believed in the performance of miracles. Almost all pirs were associated with the miracles performed by them.



## The Chisti Silsilah

The Chisti Order was established in India by *Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti*, who probably moved to India after the invasion of Muizzuddin Muhammad Ghorī, and settled in Ajmer around c.1206 CE. Muinuddin Chishti argued that the highest form of devotion to God was to *redress the misery of those in distress*, *fulfilling the need of the helpless*, and to *feed the hungry*. His fame grew more after his death in c.1235 CE, when his grave was visited by the then *Sultan Muhammad Tughlaq*, after which the mosque and the dome were erected by *Mahmud Khalji of Malwa* in the 15th century. The patronage to the *dargah* reached unprecedented heights after the support of Mughal *Emperor Akbar*.

The Chisti presence in Delhi was established by *Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki* (the *Qutub Minar* is named after him), who settled in Delhi from his homeland in Transoxiana in c.1221 CE. His *presence* in Delhi was a *threat to the Suhrawardis*, who tried to levy charges against him so that he was forced to leave, but the Sultan of Delhi, *Ilutmish*, dismissed these attempts, eventually forcing the *Suhrawardis* to relent.

The Chistis believed in:

- a. **Simplicity of life, humility, and selfless devotion to God.** The **renunciation of worldly possessions** was regarded by them as significant for the control of the senses that was necessary to maintain a spiritual life.
- b. **Love as the bond between god and the individual soul**, and adopting an attitude of benevolence towards all.
- c. The **tolerance between people of different faiths**, and acceptance of disciples irrespective of their religious beliefs.
- d. Use of **simple language** and the **refusal to accept any grant for their maintenance** from the Sultans.

Apart from Muinuddin Chisti, the other important Chistis were **Baba Fariduddin Ganj-i-Shakar**, who established himself at **Hansi in Haryana** on the route between Multan and Lahore, and **Nizamuddin Auliya**, who lived in the **14th century**, during a period of political change and turmoil. He had a **conflicting relationship with different Sultans such as Mubarak Khalji and Ghiyasauddin Tughlaq**, as he maintained a strict policy of not involving himself with the various groups and factions of the Sultan's court in Delhi, thus earning hostility of these warring factions. But at the same time, he earned the respect of the masses. On the other hand, **Nasiruddin Chiragh-i-Dehlavi** (a disciple of **Nizamuddin Auliya**) was another Chisti saint who played an active role in the political affairs of the period.

In the 13th century, the Chisti Order was established in the **Deccan** by **Shaikh Burhanuddin Gharib**. Between the 14th and 16th centuries, many Chisti Sufis migrated to Gulbarga, and also contrary to past practice, some of the Chistis began accepting grants and patronage from the ruling establishment. The Deccan city of Bijapur emerged as an important centre for Sufi activity, and one of the famous pirs of the region was **Muhammad Banda Nawaz**.



## **The Suhrawardi Silsilah**

The Silsilah was founded by **Shihabuddin Suhrawardi** in **Baghdad** and was established in **India** by **Bahauddin Zakariya**. The Suhrawardis,

unlike the Chistis, **accepted, maintenance grants from the Sultans.** While the Chistis were active in Delhi, Rajasthan, and parts of the western Gangetic plains, and in the later years in the eastern regions of the Gangetic plain (Bihar and Bengal) and into the Deccan, the Suhrawardis were active in **Punjab and Sindh.** They believed that

- a. A Sufi should possess the three attributes of **property, knowledge, and *hal* (mystical enlightenment),** as they felt that this was necessary to ensure that they served the poor better. Thus, they did **not believe in excessive austerities or self-mortification,** and mingled with the Muslim aristocracy and **took active part in politics.**
- b. They stressed on the **observance or external forms of religious belief** and advocated a combination of ***ilm* (scholarship)** with mysticism.



## **The Naqshbandi Silsilah**

This order was established in India by **Khwaja Bahauddin Naqshbandi,** and later on, propagated by his successors, **Sheikh Baqi Billah** and **Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi.** The mystics of this order stressed on:

- a. The **observance of the *shariat*** and denounced all innovations or biddat. They attempted to purge Islam from all liberal, and according to them, ‘un-Islamic’ practices.
- b. They **opposed the listening of *sama* (religious music) and the practice of pilgrimage to the tombs of saints,** and strongly **opposed interaction with Hindus and Shias.** In fact, it was **Baba Farid,** the famous Sufi Saint, who maintained that devotional music was one way of coming close to God.
- c. They **criticised the liberal policies of Akbar** such as the high status accorded by Akbar to many non-Muslims, the withdrawal of the *jizya*, and the ban on cow slaughter.
- d. Contrary to the Chistis, they **maintained** that the **relationship between man and God was** that of the **slave and the master** and not of the relation of a lover and beloved.



## The Qadri Silsilah

The Quadiriyya Silsilah, which was popular in Punjab, was initiated during the Mughal rule under the teachings of Sheikh Abdul Qadir and his sons, Shaikh Niamtullah, Mukhdum Muhammad Jilani, and Miyan Mir, who had enrolled the Mughal princess Jahanara and her brother Dara as disciples. Another prominent pir was Shah Badakhshani. The pirs of this Order supported the following:

- a. The concept of *Wahdat al Wajud* meaning “Unity of Existence” or “Unity of Being”, that is to say, God and his creation are one and similar.
- b. They dismissed Orthodox elements, declaring that the infidel who had perceived reality and recognised it was a believer and that a believer who did not recognise reality was an infidel.

It is pertinent to note that during the medieval period, while there was a constant tension between the liberal and orthodox views in Islam, the Sufis featured on both sides. For instance, there were the Chistis who held a liberal view and argued in favour of assimilation of local traditions, while there were Naqshbandi Silsilah proponents who held the Orthodox view of shariat and argued that through the other Silsilahs, the purity of Islam was being diluted. But the majority of the Sufis found resonance with the liberal opinion that argued against the narrow definition of Islamic laws by the ulema.



## Impact of Sufism

- a. These liberal and unorthodox features of Sufism had a profound influence on medieval Bhakti saints. In the later period, Akbar, the Mughal emperor, appreciated Sufi doctrines, which shaped his religious outlook and religious policies. Alongside the Sufi movement, the Bhakti cult was gaining strength among the Hindus and these two parallel movements based on the doctrines of love and selfless devotion contributed a great deal in bringing both the communities of Hindus and Muslims closer together.

- b. Sufism took roots in both rural and urban areas and exercised a deep **social, political, and cultural influence on the masses**. It rebelled against all forms of religious formalism, orthodoxy, falsehood, and hypocrisy, and endeavoured to create a new world order in which spiritual bliss was the only and the ultimate goal. At a time when struggle for political power was the prevailing madness, the Sufi saints reminded men of their **moral obligations**. To a world torn by strife and conflict, they tried to bring **peace** and **harmony**.
- c. The most important contribution of Sufism is that it helped to blunt the edge of Hindu–Muslim prejudices by forging the **feelings of solidarity** and **brotherhood** between these two religious communities. These Sufi saints are revered even today by not only Muslims but by a large number of Hindus, and their tombs have become popular places of pilgrimage for both communities.

<b>Key Term/Concept</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
a) Kanqah	Pir or the preceptor who lived in a hospice and followed certain practices of Sufism
b) Sama	Religious music, which led to ecstasy
c) Tauba	Repentance over bad deeds
d) Vara	Non-acceptance of what was not given freely
e) Julad	Kindness
f) Fakr	Poverty
g) Suhr	To observe tolerance
h) Sukar	Acceptance of obligation
i) Khauf	Symbolises fear
j) Tawakkhul	To observe contentment
k) Riza	Surrender to achieve salvation
l) Ziyarat	Practice of visiting tombs
m) Ba-shara	Who followed Islamic law



## SIKH MOVEMENT

The Sikh Movement had origins in the medieval period when saint-preacher **Guru Nanak**, founded the Sikh Religion, which started as a minor religion, but developed into a prominent religion over the centuries. There were **ten** recognised living Gurus in the Nanak line:

1. **Guru Nanak** (c.1469–1539 CE):

- **Founder of Sikhism**, who was born in Talwandi near Lahore in a respectable family of accountants.
- **Rejected the authority of the Vedas** and preached the new idea of God as the supreme, universal, all-powerful, truthful, formless, fearless, without hate, self-existent, everlasting creator of all things, the eternal and absolute truth.
- He **denounced caste distinctions** and **rituals like bathing in holy rivers**, and promoted equality of all human beings, including women. He argued that the caste and honour should be judged by the acts or the deeds of individuals. He laid stress on concepts of justice, righteousness, and liberty.
- His conception of religion was highly practical and **sternly ethical**. He exhorted people to give up selfish-ness, falsehood and hypocrisy and to lead a life of truth, honesty and kindness. He advised people to follow the principles of conduct and worship: **sach** (truth), **halal** (lawful earning), **khair** (wishing well of others), **niyat** (right intention), and service to the lord. “*Abide pure amidst the impurities of the world*” was one of his famous sayings.
- His philosophy consists of three basic elements: a leading **charismatic personality** (*the Guru*), **ideology** (*Shabad*), and **organisation** (*Sangat*).
- He repudiated idol worship and did not favour pilgrimage, **nor did he accept the theory of incarnation**. He condemned formalism and ritualism.



- He introduced the concept of *Langar* (a community kitchen).
  - His main teachings can be summarised as: Faith in one true lord
    - Worship of the name
    - Necessity of the guru in worship of the name
  - God conceptualised as *Nirguna* (attribute less) and *Nirankar* (formless)
2. **Guru Angad** (c.1539–1552 CE)
- His real name was *Bhai Lehna*.
  - He standardised and popularised the *Gurumukhi script* of the Punjabi language.
  - He established new religious institutions to strengthen the base of Sikhism and opened many new schools.
  - He popularised and expanded the institution of Guru ka Langar.
  - He started the tradition of *Mall Akhara* for physical as well as spiritual development
3. **Guru Amardas** (c.1552–74 CE)
- He reformed the Langar and gave more importance to it.
  - Divided his spiritual empire into 22 parts called *Manjis*, each under a Sikh and also *Piri* system
  - Strengthened the Langar community kitchen system.
  - Preached against the Hindu society's *sati system* (the act of burning alive of a wife at the pyre of her deceased husband), advocated widow-remarriage, and asked the women to discard the *purdah* (veil worn by women).
  - Asked Akbar to remove the toll-tax (pilgrim's tax) for non-Muslims while crossing Yamuna and Ganges rivers.
4. **Guru Ramdas** (c.1574–81 CE)
- Composed the *four Lawans* (stanzas) of the *Anand Karaj*, a distinct marriage code for Sikhs separate from the orthodox and traditional Hindu Vedic system.
  - Had very cordial relations with Akbar. Akbar granted him a plot of land where the Harmandir Sahib was later



constructed. Interestingly, the first brick of Harmandir Sahib was laid down by Hazi Mian Mir (a Muslim).— Guru Ramdas also laid the foundation stone of Chak Ramdas or Ramdas Pur, now called Amritsar.

- Strongly decried superstitions, caste system, and pilgrimages.

5. **Guru Arjun Dev** (c.1581–1606 CE)

- Compiled the *Adi Granth*, i.e., *Guru Granth Sahib*, and installed it at Sri Harmandir Sahib.
- Completed construction of Amritsar, Taran, and Kartarpur.
- Executed by Jahangir for helping his rebellious son Khusrau, and was thus hailed as the first martyr of the Sikh religion, and as *Shaheedan-de-Sartaj* (The crown of martyrs).

6. **Guru Har Govind** (c.1606–1644 CE)

- Longest tenure as Guru. He transformed Sikhs into a militant community, established the Akal Takht, and fortified Amritsar.
- Waged wars against rulers Jahangir and Shah Jahan, and defeated a Mughal army at Sangrama.
- Took the title of *Sachcha Padshah*.
- Shifted his headquarters to Kartarpur.
- Was the proprietor of the concept of *miri and piri* (keeping two knives).

7. **Guru Har Rai** (c.1644–1661 CE)

- Gave shelter to Dara Shikoh (brother of Aurangzeb, and his rival to the throne), and thus was persecuted by Aurangzeb, who framed charges of anti-Islamic blasphemy against the Guru and the Guru Granth Sahib.

8. **Guru Har Kishan** (c.1661–1664 CE)

- Was forcibly summoned to Delhi, the imperial capital of Aurangzeb, under framed charges.
- According to tradition, he died at a young age of 8 years due to smallpox, which he contracted while healing the sick people during an epidemic.

9. **Guru Tegh Bahadur** (c.1665–1675 CE)

- Revolted against Aurangzeb, but was **executed** by him and was **beheaded before the public** in Delhi's Chandni Chowk in 1675 CE. The **Sis Ganj Sahib Gurudwara** stands at the site of his martyrdom today.
- He appointed Banda Bahadur as the military leader of the Sikhs.
- Credited with spread Sikhism to Bihar and Assam.

10. **Guru Gobind Singh** (c.1675–1708 CE)

- **Last Sikh Guru in human form**, who passed the Guruship of the Sikhs to the **Guru Granth Sahib**. He died of complications from stab wounds **inflicted by an Afghan**, believed to have been sent by the Mughal governor, Wazir Khan.
- Was born in Patna and **organised the Sikhs as community at warriors** and called them **Khalsa** in c.1699 CE.
- To create a sense of unity among the Sikhs, the Guru started some practices which were to be followed by Sikhs. These were: **initiation through baptism** by the **double-edged sword**, **wearing uncut hair**, **carrying arms**, and **adopting the epithet Singh** as part of the name.
- He selected five persons known as the **Panj piyare** (the five beloved), and requested them to administer the **pahul** (**amrit chakhha**) to him.
- Compiled the supplementary granth of **Deswan Padshan Ka Granth**.



## IMPORTANCE OF THE BHAKTI MOVEMENT

The Bhakti movement had a tremendous impact in medieval India. For instance:

Bhakti movement provided **an impetus for the development of regional**

languages such as Hindi, Marathi, Bengali, Kannada, etc. Since various preachers spoke and wrote in the regional languages, it resulted in the growth of these languages.

As the caste system and lower position of women was condemned by the Bhakti saints, the lower classes and women were raised to a position of greater importance.

Moreover, the Bhakti movement gave to the people a simple religion, without complicated rituals. The new idea of a life of charity and service to fellow human beings developed.

With the synthesis of Sufism and Bhakti tradition, unity among the two communities, Hindu and Muslim, was fostered. With the mutual influence of Sufism and Bhakti tradition on each other, even the masses got an opportunity to understand each other's religious traditions and practices, which resulted in not only appreciation for each other tradition but also developed mutual respect among each other. In fact, the emergence of Urdu as a new language is a best example of this interaction and synthesis.



## WOMEN IN THE BHAKTI MOVEMENT

Female poet-saints also played a significant role in the Bhakti Movement. Nonetheless, many of these women had to struggle for acceptance within the largely male-dominated movement. Only through demonstrations of their utter devotion to the Divine, their outstanding poetry and stubborn insistence of their spiritual equality with their contemporaries, were they able to garner acceptance and more egalitarian access to the Divine.

Since most of the bhakti poetry was grounded in the everyday familiar language of the ordinary people, it is not surprising to find that women bhaktas wrote more around the same issues such as the obstacles faced by them at home, family tensions, the absent husband, meaningless household chores, and restrictions of married life, including their status

as married women. In many cases, the women saints rejected traditional women's roles and societal norms by leaving husbands and homes altogether, choosing to become wandering bhaktas, while in other instances, they tried to engage with Bhakti without discarding their household roles. Interestingly, conforming to the patriarchal ideology that upheld the chaste and dutiful wife as ideal, these women transferred the object of their devotion and their duties as the "lovers" or "wives" to their Divine Lover or Husband. In fact, far greater numbers of women took part in the movement's earlier development from 6th to 13th centuries, while during the later centuries, male bhaktas and saints dominated the Bhakti scene.

Some of the female Bhaktas are:

- a. **Akkamahadevi**: During the 12th century CE, Akkamahadevi, also known as **Akka** or **Mahadevi**, belonging to the southern region of Karnataka, established herself as an ardent devotee of **Shiva** whom she addressed as Chennamallikarjuna.
- b. **Janabai**: Was born around 13th century in Maharashtra in a low caste Sudra family. She worked in the household of one of the most revered of the bhakti poets, saint **Namdeva**. She wrote over 300 poems focusing on domestic chores and about the restrictions she faced as a low caste woman.
- c. **Mirabai, or Mira**: She belonged to a high class ruling Rajput family. Mirabai's poetry speaks of her vision of **Lord Krishna** when she was a child. From that point onwards, Mira vowed that she would forever be his bride. However, against her wishes, she was married to the son of Rana Sanga of Mewar at an early age. Central to these accounts are Mirabai's struggles within the family she had been married into, including unsuccessful attempts made by her jealous husband to kill her, and her sisters-in-law's efforts to obstruct Mirabai in her desires to join the company of wandering saints. Eventually, Mirabai left her husband and family and went on a pilgrimage to various places associated with her divine husband, **Krishna**. Here too she was rejected initially because she was a woman, yet Mirabai's reputation of devotion, piety,

and intellectual astuteness eventually led to her inclusion within the community of the saints of Brindavan. Mirabai's poetry portrays a unique relationship with Krishna as she is not only being portrayed as the devoted bride of Krishna, but Krishna is also portrayed as in pursuit of Mira.



Mirabai

- d. **Bahinabai or Bahina:** She was a poet-saint from 17th century Maharashtra, writing in the form of *abangas*, women's folk songs, that portray the working life of woman, especially in the fields.



## Questions from Last Year's Prelims

2014

1. Consider the following statements:

- i. 'Bijak' is a composition of the teachings of Saint Dadu Dayal.
- ii. The philosophy of Pushti Marg was propounded by Madhvacharya. Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) i only
- (b) ii only
- (c) Both i and ii
- (d) Neither i nor ii

**2013**

2. Consider the following Bhakti Saints:

- i. Dadu Dayal
- ii. Guru Nanak
- iii. Tyagaraja

Who among the above was/were preaching when the Lodhi dynasty fell and Babur took over?

- (a) i and iii
- (b) ii only
- (c) ii and iii
- (d) i and ii

**2010**

3. Among the following, who was not a proponent of Bhakti cult?

- i. Nagarjuna
- ii. Tukaram
- iii. Tyagaraja
- iv. Vallabhacharya

**2009**

4. Anekantavada is a core theory and philosophy of which one of

the following?

- (a) Buddhism
- (b) Jainism
- (c) Sikhism
- (d) Vaishnavism

**2006**

5. Bhakta Tukaram was a contemporary of which Mughal Emperor?
- (a) Babur
  - (b) Akbar
  - (c) Jahangir
  - (d) Aurangzeb

**2004**

6. Which one of the following sequences indicates the correct chronological order?
- (a) Shankaracharya - Ramanuja - Chaitanya
  - (b) Ramanuja - Shankaracharya - Chaitanya
  - (c) Ramanuja - Chaitanya - Shankaracharya
  - (d) Shankaracharya - Chaitanya - Ramanuja

**2004**

7. Consider the following statements about the Sikh Gurus:
- i. Banda Bahadur was appointed as the military leader of the Sikhs by Guru Tegh Bahadur.
  - ii. Guru Arjun Dev became the Sikh Guru after Guru Ram Das.
  - iii. Guru Arjun Dev gave to Sikhs their own script, Guru Mukhi.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) i only
  - (b) ii and iii
  - (c) i and iii

(d) i and ii

2002

8. Who among the following was the first Bhakti saint to use Hindi for the propagation of his message?
- (a) Dadu
  - (b) Kabir
  - (c) Ramananda
  - (d) Tulsidas

2002

9. With reference to Sufism in Indian history, consider the following statements:
- i. Shaikh Ahmad Sarhandi was a contemporary of Ibrahim Lodhi.
  - ii. Shaikh Nasruddin Chirag-i-Dehlavi was a disciple of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya.
  - iii. Aurangzeb was a contemporary of Shaikh Salim Chisti.
  - iv. The Qadiri order of Sufis was first introduced in India by Shaikh Niamtullah and Makhdum Muhammad Jilani.
- Which of these statements are correct?
- (a) i and ii
  - (b) i and iii
  - (c) ii and iii
  - (d) ii and iv

2001

10. Match List I with List II and select the correct answer using the code given below the lists:

List I (Bhakti Saint)

List II (Profession)

(a) Namdeva

i. Barber



- (b) Kabir
- (c) Ravidas
- (d) Sena

- ii. Weaver
- iii. Tailor
- iv. Cobbler

Code:	A	B	C	D
(a)	ii	iii	i	iv
(b)	iii	ii	iv	i
(c)	iii	ii	i	iv
(d)	ii	iii	iv	i

11. Assertion (A) :The sponsor and the most prominent figure of the Chisti order of Sufis in India is Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti.

**1997**

Reason (R): The Chisti order takes its name from a village Chisti in Ajmer.

- (a) Both A and R are true and R is the correct explanation of A
- (b) Both A and R are true but R is not the correct explanation of A
- (c) A is true but R is false
- (d) A is false but R is true

**1996**

12. Prem Vatika, the poems on the life of Krishna, was composed by:

- (a) Bihari
- (b) Surdas
- (c) Raskhan
- (d) Kabir

**1996**

13. The Sufi Saint who maintained that devotional music was one way of coming close to God was

- (a) Muin-ud-din Chisti

- (b) Baba Farid
- (c) Saiyyad Muhammad Gesudaraz
- (d) Shah Alam Bukhari



## Answers

1. (b)
2. (b)
3. (a)
4. (b)
5. (c)
6. (a)
7. (d)
8. (c)
9. (d)
10. (b)
11. (c)
12. (c)
13. (b)



## Questions From Last Year's Mains

1. Evaluate the contribution of Vaishnava saints to the growth of medieval Bhakti literature. (2014, History optional)
2. Discuss and evaluate critically various trends in the historiography of Bhakti. (2013, History optional)



## Practice Questions (Prelims)

1. Match List I with List II and select the correct answer using the code given below the lists:

List I

List II

- |                    |               |
|--------------------|---------------|
| (a) Bengal         | i. Chaitanya  |
| (b) Sri Perumbudur | ii. Ramananda |
| (c) Amritsar       | iii. Ramanuja |
| (d) Benaras        | iv. Ramdas    |

Code:	A	B	C	D
(a)	ii	iv	iii	i
(b)	ii	iii	iv	i
(c)	i	iv	iii	ii
(d)	i	iii	iv	ii

2. Who among the following was not an exponent of the Bhakti Movement in northern India?

- (a) Nanak
- (b) Shankaracharya
- (c) Ramananda
- (d) Kabir

3. Consider the following:

- i. The pioneer in preaching Nirguna Bhakti in medieval India was Ramananda.
- ii. Surdas was the blind poet who worshipped Krishna.
- iii. Shankaracharya established four mathas in the four corners of India. Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

- (a) i and ii only
- (b) iii only
- (c) i and iii only
- (d) i, ii and iii

4. Match List I with List II and select the correct answer using the code given below the lists:

List I

List II

- |               |            |
|---------------|------------|
| (a) Tawakkhul | i. Teacher |
|---------------|------------|

- (b) Beshara  
(c) Bashara  
(d) Wali
- ii. To observe contentment  
iii. Bound by Shariat Law  
iv. Not bound by Shariat Law

Code:	A	B	C	D
(a)	ii	iv	iii	i
(b)	ii	iii	iv	i
(c)	i	iv	iii	ii
(d)	i	iii	iv	ii

5. Match List I with List II and select the correct answer using the code given below the lists:

List I

List II

- |                       |                                      |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| (a) Guru Nanak        | i. Introduced the concept of Langar. |
| (b) Guru Arjun Dev    | ii. Khalsa                           |
| (c) Guru Ram Das      | iii. Anand Karaj                     |
| (d) Guru Gobind Singh | iv. Compiled Guru Granth Sahib       |

Code:	A	B	C	D
(a)	ii	iv	iii	i
(b)	ii	iii	iv	i
(c)	i	iv	iii	ii
(d)	i	iii	iv	ii

6. Consider the following:

- Aurangzeb executed Guru Angad.
- Guru Arjun Dev was executed by Jahangir.

Select the incorrect answer using the codes given below:

- (a) i and ii only  
(b) i only  
(c) ii only  
(d) None



## Answers

1. (d)
2. (b)
3. (d)
4. (a)
5. (c)
6. (b)



## Practice Questions (Mains)

1. Delineate the role of Sikh Gurus in the development of Sikhism.
2. Bhakti Movement and Sufism were both categorical in promoting Hindu–Muslim Unity. Do you agree? Substantiate your answer with examples.
3. Maharashtra has a rich tradition of Bhakti saints, and the Maratha rulers have also promoted Bhakti cults. Elaborate with examples.

