

Social Science

(History)(Chapter – 6) (Devotional Paths to the Divine)
(Class – 7)

Exercises

Let's recall

Question 1:

Match the following:

The Buddha	<i>namghar</i>
Shankaradeva	worship of Vishnu
Nizamuddin Auliya	questioned social differences
Nayanars	Sufi saint
Alvars	worship of Shiva

Answer 1:

The Buddha	Questioned social differences
Shankaradeve	<i>namghar</i>
Auliya	Sufi saint
Nayanars	Worship of Shiva
Alvars	Worship of Vishnu

Question 2:

Fill in the blanks:

- (a) Shankara was an advocate of _____.
- (b) Ramanuja was influenced by the _____.
- (c) _____, _____ and _____ were advocates of Virashaivism.
- (d) _____ was an important centre of the Bhakti tradition in Maharashtra.

Answer 2:

- (a) Shankara was an advocate of *Advaita*.
- (b) Ramanuja was influenced by the *Alvars*.
- (c) *Basavanna*, *Allama Prabhu* and *Akkamahadevi* were advocates of Virashaivism.
- (d) *Pandharpur* was an important centre of the Bhakti tradition in Maharashtra.

Question 3:

Describe the beliefs and practices of the Nathpanthis, Siddhas and Yogis.

Answer 3:

The beliefs and practices of the Nathpanthis, Siddhas and yogis were as under:

- They criticised the ritual and other aspects of conventional regional and the social order.
- They used simple and logical arguments to present their thoughts.
- They advocate renunciation of the world.
- According to them Salvation could be attained by meditation on the formless ultimate reality and realisation of oneness with it.
- To achieve Salvation, they advocated intense training of the mind and body through practices like Yogasanas, breathing exercise and meditation.

Question 4:

What were the major ideas expressed by Kabir? How did he express these?

Answer 4:

The major ideas of Kabir were follows:

- He believed in a formless Supreme God and preached that the only path to Salvation of through bhakti or devotion.
- His teachings were based on a complete, indeed vehement, reaction of the major religious traditions.
- He openly ridiculed all forms of external worship of both Brahmanical Hindusthan and Islam.
- He also ridiculed the pre-eminence of the priestly classes and the caste system.
- To express his ideas, he used a form of spoken Hindi.

Let's understand

Question 5:

What were the major beliefs and practices of the Sufis?

Answer 5:

Major beliefs and practices of the Sufis:

- They rejected outward religiosity and emphasised love and devotion to God.
- They also emphasized compassion towards all fellow human beings.
- They rejected idol worship and simplified rituals of worship into collective prayers.
- They believed in monotheism or submission to one God.
- They rejected the elaborate rituals and codes of behaviour demanded by Muslim religious scholars.

Question 6:

Why do you think many teachers rejected prevalent religious beliefs and practices?

Answer 6:

Many teachers rejected prevalent religious beliefs and practices because

- It created differences in the society.
- Those teachings favoured the upper caste people and lower caste people suffered.
- The idea that all human beings are not equal were prevailing in the society and must be abolished.
- They believed in equality of God and want to break the evils of the society.
- Bondage can be broken if approached God with devotion.

Question 7:

What were the major teachings of Baba Guru Nanak?

Answer 7:

The major teaching of Baba Guru Nanak were as under:

- He emphasised the importance of the worship of one God.
- He insisted that caste, creed or gender was irrelevant for attaining liberation.
- His idea of liberation was on the pursuit of active life with a strong sense of social commitment.
- He, himself, used the terms *nam*, *dan* and *insan* for the essence of his teachings which actually meant right worship, welfare of purity of conduct.
- Guru Nanak, thus, promoted the idea of equality.
- He directed to the importance to right belief and worship, honest living and helping others.

Let's discuss

Question 8:

For either the Virashaivas or the *sants* of Maharashtra, discuss their attitude towards caste.

Answer 8:

The attitude of Virashaivas towards caste was as follows:

- They reacted to the temple worship.
- Virashaivas argued strongly for the equality of all human beings.
- They rejected Brahmanical ideas about caste and the treatment of women.

Question 9:

Why do you think ordinary people preserved the memory of Mirabai?

Answer 9:

Due to the following reasons, the ordinary people preserved the memory of Mirabai:

- She was a queen and devotee of Krishna.
- She composed innumerable bhajans expressing her intense devotion to his beloved lord.
- She left her husband's but she did not die. This popularized her as being saved by Lord. Thus, her authenticity as a true devotee was proved.
- She even drank poison, sent by her husband, but she did not die. This popularised her as being saved by lord. Thus, her authenticity as a true devotee.
- Her songs openly challenged the norms of the "upper" castes and became popular with the masses in Rajasthan and Gujarat.

Let's do

Question 10:

Find out whether in your neighbourhood there are any *dargahs*, *gurudwaras* or temples associated with saints of the bhakti tradition in your neighbourhood. Visit any one of these and describe what you see and hear.

Answer 10:

Students, do it yourselves. [Hint: There wouldn't be any picture or idol of any God. The religious shrine would be devoted to some saint, etc.]

Question 11:

For any of the saint-poets whose compositions have been included in this chapter, find out more about their works, noting down other poems. Find out whether these are sung, how they are sung, and what the poets wrote about.

Answer 11:

Students, do it yourselves. [Hint: You can look for Kabir's poem in Hindi textbooks]

Question 12:

There are several saint-poets whose names have been mentioned but their works have not been included in the chapter. Find out more about the language in which they composed, whether their compositions were sung, and what their compositions were about.

Answer 12:

Students, do it yourselves. [Hint: You can search internet for the subcontinental Bhakti and Sufi literature of various saints and Sufi masters. Also, you can discuss with your history teacher.]