

Theme 6 Bhakti-Sufi Traditions

Fastrack Revision

► Introduction:

- Certain religious beliefs and practices, others have been reconstructed from textual traditions, including the Puranas, many of which received their present shape around the same time and yet others remain only faintly visible in textual and visual records.
- These traditions were fluid – generations of devotees tended to elaborate on the original message and occasionally modified or even abandoned some of the ideas that appeared problematic or irrelevant in different political, social or cultural contexts.
- Historians also draw on hagiographies or biographies of saints written by their followers (or members of their religious sect). These may not be literally accurate, but allow a glimpse into the ways in which devotees perceived the lives of these path-breaking women and men.

Knowledge BOOSTER



The period from the 8th to the 18th century occupies a significant place in Indian history as regards to the development of religious tradition.

► Development of Religious Beliefs and Practices:

- Perhaps the most striking feature of this phase is the increasing visibility of a wide range of gods and goddesses in sculpture as well as in texts. At one level, this indicates the continued and even extended worship of the major deities – Vishnu, Shiva and the Goddess – each of whom was visualised in a variety of forms.

► The Integration of Cults:

- During this phase, there were two religious processes that were going on:
 - The first process was related to **spreading of Brahmanical ideas**. The main objective behind the spreading of this idea was composition, compilation and preservation of Puranic texts. These texts were written in simple Sanskrit, which were easily accessible by women and Shudras who were generally excluded from the Vedic learning.
 - The second process was that, the **Brahmanas started accepting the beliefs and practices of other social categories**. Many beliefs and practices were reconstructed through a continuous interaction between 'great' Sanskrit-Puranic traditions and 'little' traditions throughout the country.

► 'Great' and 'little' traditions:

- The terms 'great' and 'little' traditions were coined by a sociologist named Robert Redfield in the twentieth century to describe the cultural practices of peasant

societies. He found that peasants observed rituals and customs that emanated from dominant social categories, including priests and rulers. These are classified as part of a great tradition. At the same time, peasants also followed local practices that did not necessarily correspond with those of the great tradition.

- These he included within the category of little tradition. He also noticed that both great and little traditions changed over time, through a process of interaction. While scholars accept the significance of these categories and processes, they are often uncomfortable with the hierarchy suggested by the terms great and little. The use of quotation marks for 'great' and 'little' is one way of indicating this.

► Example of Second Process:

- The most striking example of the second process was evident at Puri, Odisha. Here the main deity was identified as **Jagannatha, a form of Vishnu**.
- In this instance, local deity, whose image continues to be made of God by local tribal specialists, was recognised as a form of Vishnu. At the same time, Vishnu was visualised in a way that was very different from that in other parts of the country.
- Goddess were worshipped simply in the form of a stone with some colour pigment on it like Ochre.

► Difference and Conflict:

- Often associated with the goddess were forms of worship that were classified as Tantric. Tantric practices were widespread in several parts of the subcontinent – they were open to women and men and practitioners often ignored differences.
- There is difference between Vedic and Puranic traditions. The main deities of Vedic pantheon (religion), **Agni**, Indra and Soma, become marginal figures.
- These are rarely visible in textual or visual forms. Whereas Vishnu, Shiva and the Goddess in Vedic mantras, have little expansion with Puranic mythologies. Despite these differences, Vedas continued to be as superior.
- There were some conflicts also. Those who valued the Vedic tradition often condemned practices that went beyond the closely regulated contact with the divine through the performance of sacrifices or precisely chanted mantras.
- On the other hand, those engaged in Tantric practices frequently ignored the authority of the Vedas.

- Devotees often tended to project their chosen deity, either Vishnu or Shiva, as supreme. Relations with other traditions, such as Buddhism or Jainism, were also often strained when there was no conflict.
- During this time, devotion ranged from the routine worship of deities within temples to ecstatic adoration where devotees attained a trance-like state (an abnormal state of wakefulness). Devotional worship was very old.
- ▶ **Early Traditions of Bhakti:**
 - During the evolution of different forms of worship, the poet-saints emerged as leaders. Brahmanas remained as intermediaries between Gods and devotees in several forms of bhakti.
 - These new traditions also accommodated and accepted women and the lower castes who were earlier considered ineligible for freedom. An important element of diversity was also present in these new traditions of bhakti.
 - Historians of religion classify bhakti traditions into two broad categories, i.e. **saguna** (with attributes) and **nirguna** (without attributes):
 - The **saguna** traditions focused on the **worship of specific deities** such as Shiva, **Vishnu** and his avatars or incarnations and forms of the goddess or Devi which were conceptualised as having human forms.
 - **Nirguna** bhakti on the other hand, **was worship of an abstract form** i.e., existing in thought or as an idea but not having a physical or concrete existence of God.
- ▶ **The Alvars and Nayanars of Tamil Nadu:**
 - Some of the earliest bhakti movements (c. sixth century) were led by the Alvars (literally, those who are "immersed" in devotion to Vishnu) and Nayanars (literally, leaders who were devotees of Shiva). They travelled from place to place singing hymns in Tamil in praise of their gods.
 - During their travels the Alvars and Nayanars identified certain shrines as abodes of their chosen deities. Very often large temples were later built at these sacred places. These developed as centres of pilgrimage. Singing compositions of these poet-saints became part of temple rituals in these shrines, as did worship of the saints' images.
- ▶ **Attitudes Towards Caste:**
 - Some historians suggest that the Alvars and Nayanars initiated a movement of protest against the caste system and the dominance of Brahmanas or at least attempted to reform the system. To some extent this is corroborated by the fact that bhaktas hailed from diverse social backgrounds ranging from Brahmanas to artisans and cultivators and even from castes considered "untouchable".
 - The importance of the traditions of the Alvars and Nayanars was sometimes indicated by the claim that their compositions were as important as the Vedas.
- For instance, one of the major anthologies of compositions by the Alvars, the *Nalayira Divyaprabandham*, was frequently described as the Tamil Veda, thus claiming that the text was as significant as the four Vedas in Sanskrit that were cherished by the Brahmanas.
- ▶ **Women Devotees:**
 - The compositions of **Andal**, a woman Alvar, were widely sung and even now they are continued to be sung. She saw herself as the beloved of Vishnu and her verses expressed her love for the deity.
 - **Karaikal Ammaiyar** was another woman who was a devotee of Shiva, adopted the path of extreme self-discipline in order to attain her goal. Her compositions were preserved within the Nayanar tradition.
 - These women renounced their social obligations and posed a challenge to patriarchal norms.
- ▶ **Relations with the State:**
 - There were several important chiefdoms in the Tamil region in the early first millennium CE. From the second half of the first millennium there is evidence for states, including those of the **Pallavas** and **Pandyas** (c. sixth to ninth centuries CE).
 - Powerful **Chola rulers** of the ninth to thirteenth centuries supported Brahmanical and bhakti traditions by making land grants and constructing temples for Vishnu and Shiva.
 - Some of the most magnificent Shiva temples, like those at **Chidambaram, Thanjavur and Gangaikondacholapuram** were constructed with the support of Chola rulers.
 - In this period bronze sculpture of Shiva was produced after inspired from the Nayanars artists. Both Nayanars and Alvars were revered by Vellala peasants and got the support. Chola rulers also tried to get support of divine by building splendid temples with stone and metal sculpture.
 - These kings also introduced the singing of Tamil Shaiva hymns in the temples in the temples under royal patronage, taking the initiative to collect and organise them into a text called *Tevaram*.
 - According to inscriptions around 945 CE, **Chola ruler Parantaka-I** had dedicated the metal images of Appar, Sambandar and Sundarar in a Shiva temple. These were also carried in processions during the festivals of these saints.
- ▶ **The Virashaiva and Lingayats of Karnataka:**
 - The twelfth century witnessed the emergence of a new movement in Karnataka, led by a Brahmana named Basavanna (1106-68) who was a minister in the court of a Kalachuri ruler. His followers were known as Virashaivas (heroes of Shiva) or Lingayats (wearers of the *linga*).
 - Lingayats continue to be an important community in the region to date. They worship Shiva in his manifestation as a *linga*, and men usually wear a small *linga* in a silver case on a loop strung over the left shoulder.

- Those who are revered include the *jangama* or wandering monks. Lingayats believe that on death the devotee will be united with Shiva and will not return to this world. Therefore they do not practice funerary rites such as cremation, prescribed in the Dharmashastras. Instead, they ceremonially bury their dead.
- The Lingayats challenged the idea of caste and the "pollution" attributed to certain groups by Brahmanas. They also questioned the theory of rebirth. These won them followers amongst those who were marginalised within the Brahmanical social order.
- The Lingayats also encouraged certain practices disapproved in the Dharmashastras, such as post-puberty marriage and the remarriage of widows. Our understanding of the Virashaiva tradition is derived from *vachanas* (literally, sayings) composed in Kannada by women and men who joined the movement.

► Religious Agitation in North India:

- In North India, deities like Vishnu and Shiva were worshipped in temples which were mainly built with the support of rulers.
- Historians pointed out that in North India, many Rajput states emerged. Brahmanas occupied important positions and performed a range of secular and ritual functions in most of these states. There was hardly any attempt to challenge their position directly.
- Other religious leaders, who did not function within the orthodox Brahmanical framework were gaining ground during twelfth century. They were the **Naths**, **Jogis** and **Siddhas**.
- Most of them came from artisanal group like weavers, who became important due to the development of organised craft production.
- These leaders questioned the authority of the Vedas. They expressed themselves in languages spoken by ordinary.
- A new element in this situation was the coming of the Turks which culminated in the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate (thirteenth century). This undermined the power of many of the Rajput states and the Brahmanas who were associated with these kingdoms. This was accompanied by marked changes in the realm of culture and religion. The coming of the sufis (Section 6) was a significant part of these developments.

► Islamic Traditions:

- Just as the regions within the subcontinent were not isolated from one another, so too, contact with lands beyond the seas and mountains had existed for millennia. Arab merchants, for instance, frequented ports along the western coast in the first millennium CE, while Central Asian people settled in the north-western parts of the subcontinent during the same period. From the seventh century, with the advent of Islam, these regions became part of what is often termed the Islamic world.

► Faiths of Rulers and Subjects:

- The Arab general named **Muhammad Qasim** conquered Sind in 711 CE and became part of the Caliph's territory. Later in thirteenth century, the Turks and Afghans established the Delhi Sultanate, which was followed by the formation of Sultanates in the Deccan and other parts of the subcontinent.
- Islam was an acknowledged religion of rulers in several areas. This continued with the establishment of the Mughal Empire in sixteenth century and in regional states in the eighteenth century.
- A category of the *Zimmi* (protected) was developed for people who followed revealed scriptures. These included Jews and Christians. They paid a tax called *Jizya* and gained the right to be protected by Muslims.
- Rulers adopted a fairly flexible policy towards their Muslim and non-Muslim subjects. They expressed devotion towards non-Muslim religious leaders. Several grants were made for subjects by Akbar and Aurangzeb and many other Mughal rulers.
- Muslim rulers were to be guided by the *ulama* who were expected to ensure that they ruled according to the *shari'a*. **Ulama** are scholars of Islamic studies and as preservers of this tradition, they perform various religious, judicial and teaching functions.
- Whereas, **shari'a** is the law governing the Muslim community. *Shari'a* is based on the *Quran* and the *hadis*, traditions of the Prophet including a record of his remembered words and deeds.
- With the expansion of Islamic rule outside the Arabia, **qiyas** (reasoning by analogy) and **ijma** (consensus of the community) were reorganised as two other sources of legislation. *Shari'a* was evolved from the Quran, *hadis*, *qiyas* and *ijma*.

► The Popular Practice of Islam:

- Those who have accepted Islam, also accepted the five pillars of the faith. They are:
 - There is one God, Allah and Prophet Muhammad is his messenger (*shahada*).
 - Offering prayers five times a day (*namaz/salat*).
 - Giving alms (*zakat*).
 - Fasting during the month of Ramzan (*sawm*).
 - Performing the pilgrimage to Mecca (*hajj*).
- These features were practiced differently among sectarian affiliations like Sunni and Shi'a they were also influenced from the local customs. For example, the Khojahs, a branch of the Ismailis (Shi'a sect) developed new modes of communication, disseminating ideas derived from the Quran.
- These included the *ginan* (knowledge), devotional poem in Punjabi, Multani, Sindhi, Kachchi, Hindi and Gujarati.
- Arab Muslim traders who settled along the Malabar coast (Kerala) adopted the local language, Malayalam. They also adopted local customs such as matriliney and matrilineal residence.
- The blend of Islam with local traditions was evident in the architecture especially construction of mosque.

- The orientation towards Mecca and placement of the *mihrab* (prayer niche) and the *minbar* (pulpit) was as per Islamic traditions but they show variations in several features like in roofs and building materials.
- ▶ **Names for Islamic Communities:**
 - Historians who have studied Sanskrit texts and inscriptions dating between the eighth and fourteenth centuries point out that the term *musalman* or Muslim was virtually never used.
 - Instead, people were occasionally identified in terms of the region from which they came. So, the Turkish rulers were designated as Turushka, Tajika were people from Tajikistan and Parashika were people from Persia. Sometimes, terms used for other peoples were applied to the new migrants. For instance, the Turks and Afghans were referred to as Shakas and Yavanas (a term used for Greeks).
 - A more general term for these migrant communities was *mlechchha*, indicating that they did not observe the norms of caste society and spoke languages that were not derived from Sanskrit. Such terms sometimes had a derogatory connotation, but they rarely denoted a distinct religious community of Muslims in opposition to Hindus. The term "Hindu" was used in a variety of ways, not necessarily restricted to a religious connotation.
- ▶ **The Growth of Sufism:**
 - In the early centuries of Islam a group of religious-minded people called sufis turned to asceticism and mysticism in protest against the growing materialism of the Caliphate as a religious and political institution. They were critical of the dogmatic definitions and scholastic methods of interpreting the Qur'an and *sunna* (traditions of the Prophet) adopted by theologians.
 - Instead, they laid emphasis on seeking salvation through intense devotion and love for God by following His commands and by following the example of the Prophet Muhammad whom they regarded as a perfect human being. The sufis thus sought an interpretation of the Qur'an on the basis of their personal experience.
- ▶ **Khanqahs and Silsilas:**
 - Sufism evolved into a well-developed movement by eleventh century. It had a body of literature on Quranic studies and Sufi practices. The Sufis started creating institutions by organising communities for travellers called *khanqah* (Persian).
 - These institutions were controlled by a teaching master known as *shaikh* (in Arabic), *pir* or *murshid* (in Persian). The master would enrol disciples (*murids*) and appointed a successor (*khalifa*). He established rules for spiritual conduct and interaction between group members as well as between laypersons and the master.
 - Around the twelfth century, sufi *silsilas* began to take form in different parts of Islamic world. The word *silsila* means chain, which signifies the continuous link between master (Shaikh) and disciple.
- This chain stretched as an unbroken spiritual link to the Prophet Muhammad. The spiritual power and blessings were transmitted to devotees through this channel.
- Special rituals to admit people into the group were developed in which persons who wanted to enter the group took an oath of commitment, wore a piece of cloth and shaved their hair.
- When *shaikh* died, his tomb-shrine called *dargah* (Persian term meaning court) became the centre of religious worship for his followers. This encouraged the practice of pilgrimage of *ziyarat* to his grave, especially on his death anniversary or *urs* or marriage. This signifies the union of his soul with God. This was because people believed that in death saints were united with God, and were closer to him when living and sought their blessings. Thus the evolved cult of the Shaikh revered as Wali.
- ▶ **Outside the Khanqah**
 - Some mystics initiated movements based on a radical interpretation of sufi ideals. Many scorned the *khanqah* and took to mendicancy and observed celibacy.
 - They ignored rituals and observed extreme forms of asceticism. They were known by different names – Qalandars, Madaris, Malangs, Haidaris, etc. Because of their deliberate defiance of the shari'a they were often referred to as *be-shari'a*, in contrast to the *ba-shari'a* sufis who complied with it.
- ▶ **The Chishtis in the Subcontinent**
 - Of the groups of sufis who migrated to India in the late twelfth century, the Chishtis were the most influential. This was because they adapted successfully to the local environment and adopted several features of Indian devotional traditions.
- ▶ **Life in the Chishti Khanqahs**
 - The *khanqah* was the centre of social life of the Chishtis. In fourteenth century, **Shaikh Nizamuddin's** hospice on the banks of the river Yamuna in Ghiaspur, on the outskirts of the city of Delhi.
 - It had many small rooms and a big hall called *Jamaat khana*, where the inmates and visitors lived and prayed. The inmates included family members of the Shaikh, his attendants and disciples.
 - The Shaikh lived in a small room on the roof of the hall where he met visitors in the morning and evening. The courtyard was surrounded by a veranda and a boundary wall was present around the complex.
 - Poets like Amir Hasan Sijzi and Amir Khusrau and the court historian Ziauddin Barani also visited and wrote about the Shaikh.
- ▶ **Chishti Devotionalism : Ziyarat and Qawwali**
 - Shaikh Nizamuddin appointed several spiritual successors and deputed them to set up religious institutions in various parts of the subcontinent.
 - This resulted in the rapid spread of the teachings, practices and organisation of the Chishtis and also the fame of the Shaikh. This in turn resulted in drawing the pilgrims to his shrine and also to the shrines of his spiritual ancestors.

- It means pilgrimage to tombs of sufi saints. This was common all over the Muslim world. This practice was used as an occasion to seek the sufi's spiritual grace (*barakat*). The most respected shrine is that of Khwaja Muinuddin who was popularly known as **Gharib Nawaz** (comforter of the poor).
- In the fourteenth century, there were references to Khwaja Muinuddin's **dargah**. Muhammad bin Tughlaq was the **first Sultan to visit the shrine**, but the construction to house the tomb was funded by Sultan Ghiyasuddin Khalji of Malwa in late 15th century.
- The shrine had become very popular by the 16th century. **Akbar** visited the tomb, and was inspired by the spirited singing of pilgrims in the Shrine of Ajmer.
- Also part of **ziyarat** is the use of music and dance including mystical chants performed by specially trained musicians or *qawwals* to evoke divine ecstasy. The sufis remember God either by reciting the *zikr* (the Divine Names) or evoking His presence through *samd'* (literally, "audition") or performance of mystical music. *Samd'* was integral to the Chishtis, and exemplified interaction with indigenous devotional traditions.
- **Languages and Communications**
 - It was not just in *samd'* that the Chishtis adopted local languages. In Delhi, those associated with the Chishti *silsila* conversed in Hindavi, the language of the people. Other sufis such as Baba Farid composed verses in the local language, which were incorporated in the **Guru Granth Sahib**.
 - Yet others composed long poems or *masnavis* to express ideas of divine love using human love as an allegory. For example, the *prem-akhyani* (love story) *Padmavat* composed by Malik Muhammad Jayasi revolved around the romance of Padmini and Ratanen, the king of **Chittor**.
 - A different genre of sufi poetry was composed in and around the town of Bijapur, Karnataka. These were short poems in Dakhani (a variant of Urdu) attributed to Chishti sufis who lived in this region during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. These poems were probably sung by women while performing household chores.
 - Other compositions were in the form of *lurinama* or lullabies and *shadinama* or wedding songs. It is likely that the sufis of this region were inspired by the pre-existing bhakti tradition of the Kannada *vachanas* of the Lingayats and the Marathi *abhangs* of the *sants* of Pandharpur. It is through this medium that Islam gradually gained a place in the villages of the Deccan.
- **Sufis and the State**
 - A major feature of the Chishti tradition was austerity, including maintaining a distance from worldly power. However, this was by no means a situation of absolute isolation from political power. The sufis accepted unsolicited grants and donations from the political elites. The Sultans in turn set up charitable trusts (*auqaf*) as endowments for hospices and granted tax-free land (*inam*).
 - The Chishtis accepted donations in cash and kind. Rather than accumulate donations, they preferred to use these fully on immediate requirements such as food, clothes, living quarters and ritual necessities (such as *samd'*). All this enhanced the moral authority of the **shaikhs**, which in turn attracted people from all walks of life. Further, their piety and scholarship, and people's belief in their miraculous powers made sufis popular among the masses, whose support kings wished to secure.
 - When the Turks set up the Delhi Sultanate, they resisted the pressure of the *ulama* on implementing *shari'a* as state law because they expected opposition from their subjects, the majority of whom were Non-Muslims.
 - Sultans asked for Sufis help, who derived authority directly from God and did not depend on jurists (counsellors) to interpret the *sharia*.
 - Sometimes there were instances of conflict between the Sultans and the Sufis. To assert their authority, both expected that certain rituals like prostration and kissing of the feet, should be performed.
 - Sufi Shaikh often took high-sounding titles. For instance, the disciples of Nizamuddin Auliya called him as **Sultan-ul-Mashaikh** (means sultan amongst Shaikhs).
- **Poet-Saints of Devotional Paths**
 - Many poet-saints engaged in explicit and implicit dialogue with these new social situations, ideas and institutions. Let us now see how this dialogue found expression. We focus here on three of the most influential figures of the time.
- **Kabir**
 - Kabir (c. Fourteenth – Fifteenth centuries) was one of the most important examples of a poet-saint who emerged within this context. Kabir is an Arabic name and its meaning is 'great'.
 - Writings on lives of saints within the Vaishnava tradition suggest that Kabir was born Hindu, but he was brought up by a poor Muslim family belonging to community of weavers of **julahas**, who were recently converted to Islam. They also suggested that Kabir was initiated into bhakti by a guru named **Ramananda**.
 - The verses attributed to Kabir use the words guru and satguru, but do not mention the name of any specific preceptor. Kabir was the source of inspiration for those who questioned entrenched religious and social institutions, ideals and practices in their search for the Divine.
 - Verses that belonged to Kabir have been compiled in three different but overlapping traditions. These were:
 - The **Kabir Bijak** was preserved by the Kabirpanth (the path or sect of Kabir) in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh.
 - The **Kabir Granthavali** is related with the Dadupanth in Rajasthan.
 - Many of his compositions are found in **Adi Granth Sahib**.

- All these texts compilations were made long after the death of Kabir. By the nineteenth century, collection of poems and writings that belonged to Kabir were circulated in print in regions as far as Bengal, Gujarat and Maharashtra.
- Kabir's poems have survived in different languages and different forms of languages. Some of them are composed in the special language of *nirguna* poets, the *sant bhasha*. Others known as *ulatbansi* (upside-down sayings), were written in a form in which everyday meanings are inverted.
- Kabir used to describe the ultimate reality in Islam as Allah, Khuda, Hazrat and Pir. He also used terms from Vedantic traditions, *alakh* (the unseen), **nirakar (formless)**, Brahman, Atman, etc. Other spiritual ideas such as *shabda* (sound) or **shunya (emptiness)** belonged to yogic traditions.
- Sometimes diverse and opposing ideas were expressed in these poems. Some poems took Islamic ideas and used the concepts like monotheism (belief in one God) and iconoclasm (the destruction of religious images) to attack Hindu polytheism (belief in many Gods) and idol worship.
- Some other poems use the Sufi concept of *zikr* and *ishq* (love) to express the Hindu practice of *nam-simaran* (remembrance to God's name).
- ▶ **Baba Guru Nanak**
 - Baba Guru Nanak (1469-1539) was born in a Hindu merchant family in a village called Nankana Sahib near the river Ravi in the predominantly Muslim populated Punjab. He trained to be an accountant and studied Persian. He was married at a young age but he spent most of his time among Sufis and bhaktas. He also travelled widely.
- ▶ **Guru Nanak's Teachings**
 - The message of Baba Guru Nanak is spelt out in his hymns and teachings. These suggest that he advocated a form of *nirguna* bhakti. He firmly repudiated the external practices of the religions he saw around him. He rejected sacrifices, ritual baths, image worship, austerities and the scriptures of both Hindus and Muslims.
 - For Baba Guru Nanak, the Absolute or "*rab*" had no gender or form. He proposed a simple way to connect to the Divine by remembering and repeating the Divine Name, expressing his ideas through hymns called "*shabad*" in Punjabi, the language of the region. Baba Guru Nanak would sing these compositions in various *ragas* while his attendant Mardana played the *rabab*.
 - Baba Guru Nanak organised his followers into a community. He set up rules for congregational worship (*sanga*) involving collective recitation. He appointed one of his disciples, Angad, to succeed him as the preceptor (*guru*), and this practice was followed for nearly 200 years.
 - It appears that Baba Guru Nanak did not wish to establish a new religion, but after his death his followers consolidated their own practices and distinguished themselves from both Hindus and Muslims. The fifth preceptor, Guru Arjan, compiled Baba Guru Nanak's hymns along with those of his four successors and other religious poets like Baba Farid, Ravidas (also known as Raidas) and Kabir in the *Adi Granth Sahib*. These hymns, called "*gurbani*", are composed in various languages.
- In the late seventeenth century the tenth preceptor, Guru Gobind Singh, included the compositions of the ninth guru, Guru Tegh Bahadur, and this scripture was called the *Guru Granth Sahib*. Guru Gobind Singh also laid the foundation of the Khalsa Panth (army of the pure) and defined its five symbols: uncut hair, a dagger, a pair of shorts, a comb and a steel bangle. Under him the community got consolidated as a socio-religious and military force.
- ▶ **Mirabai**
 - Mirabai (c. fifteenth-sixteenth centuries) is perhaps the best-known woman poet within the bhakti tradition. Biographies have been reconstructed primarily from the *bhajans* attributed to her, which were transmitted orally for centuries. According to these, she was a Rajput princess from Merta in Marwar who was married against her wishes to a prince of the Sisodia clan of Mewar, Rajasthan. She defied her husband and did not submit to the traditional role of wife and mother, instead recognising **Krishna**, the *avatar* of **Vishnu**, as her lover.
 - Her in-laws tried to poison her, but she escaped from the palace to live as a wandering saint composing songs that are characterised by intense expressions of emotion.
 - After leaving his husband's palace she lived as a wandering saint and composed songs. As per some traditions, her instructor was Raidas, a leather worker. This indicated that she challenged the norms of caste society. She did not form a sect or had group of followers, but she was recognised as a source of inspiration for many centuries. Both women and men sing her songs, especially those who are poor and considered low caste in Gujarat and Rajasthan.
- ▶ **Shankaradeva**
 - In the late fifteenth century, Shankaradeva emerged as one of the leading proponents of Vaishnavism in Assam. His teachings were often known as the **Bhagavati dharma** because they were based on the **Bhagavad Gita** and the **Bhagavata Purana**.
 - He emphasised the need for *naam kirtan* i.e., recitation of the names of the lord in *sat sanga* or congregations of pious devotees. He also encouraged the establishment of *satra* or monasteries for the transmission of spiritual knowledge and *naam ghar* or prayer halls. His major compositions include the **Kirtana-ghosha**.
- ▶ **Reconstructing Histories of Religious Traditions**
 - The availability of wide range of texts produced in and around Sufi *khanqahs* give us knowledge about history of Sufi traditions and these can be used by historians to reconstruct the history.
 - These sources are:
 - **Treaties or Manuals:** Treaties or manuals dealing with Sufi thought and practices from the *Kashf-ul-Mahjub* of Ali bin Usman Hujwiri is an example of this category. It helps historians to see how traditions outside the subcontinent influenced Sufi thought in India.

- **Malfuzat:** *Malfuzat* means uttered i.e., conversations of sufi saints. Fawa'id-al-Fu'ad is an example of early text on **malfuzat**. It was the collection of conversations of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya, compiled by Amir Hasan Sijzi Dehlavi, a noted Persian poet.

Malfuzats were compiled by different sufi silsilas with the permission of the **shaikhs**. The ultimate motto of these texts was to teach moral values. Several such texts have been found from different parts of the subcontinent, including the Deccan.

- **Maktubat:** *Maktubat* means written collections of letters by Sufi masters to their disciples and associates. These give us information about the

shaikh's experience of religious truth that he wanted to share with others. They also show the life conditions of the recipients and are responses to their aspirations and difficulties. *Maktubat-i Imam Rabbani*, written by Naqshbandi Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi is an example of **Maktubat**.

- **Tazkiras:** Tazkiras means to mention and memorialise biographical accounts of saints. The fourteenth century *Siyar-ul-Auliya* of Mir Khwurd Kirmani was the first Sufi *Tazkira* written in India. It was mainly about Chishti saints. The most famous *Tazkira* was the **Akhbar-ul-Akhyar** of Abdul Haqq Muhaddis Dehlavi.



Practice Exercise



Multiple Choice Questions ➡

- Q 1. The written collections of letters of Sufi masters of their disciples and associates. Which of the following is related to the above given statement?

a. *Malfuzat* b. *Salat*
c. *Ziyarat* d. *Maktubat*

- Q 2. It was the collection of conversations of Sufi Saint Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya, compiled by Amir Hasan Sijzi Dehlavi. Which of the following is the correct answer?

a. *Malfuzat* b. *Tazkiras*
c. *Ziyarat* d. *Farman*

- Q 3. Historians of religion classify Bhakti traditions into two broad categories and

Select the correct answer.

a. Saguna and Viguna b. Saguna and Nirguna
c. Nirguna and Sarvaguna d. None of these

- Q 4. Identify the Bhakti tradition which favoured widow remarriage.

a. Alvars b. Nayanars
c. Lingayats d. Siddhas

- Q 5. Find out the correct chronological order of 'the Chishti Silsila' from the following options:

- I. Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya
- II. Shaikh Fariduddin Ganj Shankar
- III. Shaikh Nasiruddin Chiragh-i-Delhi
- IV. Shaikh Muinuddin Sijzi

a. I, II, III and IV b. II, III, IV and I
c. III, II, I and IV d. IV, II, I and III

- Q 6. Read the following statements regarding Sufism in India: (CBSE SQP 2021 Term-1)

- I. They turned to asceticism and mysticism in protest against the growing materialism
- II. They sought an interpretation of Quran on the basis of their experience.
- III. Amir Khusro was the disciple of Shaikh Nizamuddin Aulia.
- IV. Sheikh Muinuddin Sijzi was from Delhi.

Which of the following statements are correct?

a. I, II and III b. II, III and IV
c. I, III and IV d. II and IV

- Q 7. Which of these is an imperial order?

a. Farman b. Sharla
c. Salat d. Hajj

- Q 8. Which of the following is correct regarding the Lingayats?

- (i) They challenged the idea of caste.
- (ii) They question the theory of rebirth.
- (iii) They encouraged the practices approved in Dharmashastras.
- (iv) They did not practice funerary rites.

Codes:

a. (i), (ii) and (iii) b. (iii) and (iv)
c. (i), (ii) and (iv) d. All of these

- Q 9. Which of the following statements is correct regarding Virashaivas?

- a. It means 'heroes of Shiva'.
- b. They question the theory of birth.
- c. They were against caste system.
- d. They believed in theory of death.

- Q 10. Who among these wrote the biography of Shaikh Muinuddin Chishti, titled as *Munis al Arwah*?

a. Shahjahan b. Akbar
c. Mumtaz d. Jahanara

Q 11. Arranged them in chronological order:

- (i) Kabir (ii) Mirabai
(iii) Guru Nanak (iv) Shankaradeva

Codes:

- a. (i), (iii), (iv), (ii) b. (ii), (iv), (i), (iii)
c. (iv), (iii), (i), (ii) d. (iii), (ii), (i), (iv)

Q 12. Arranged them in chronological order:

- (i) Sambandar (ii) Ramanujacharya
(iii) Basavanna (iv) Sri Chaitanya

Codes:

- a. (i), (iv), (iii), (iv) b. (i), (ii), (iii), (iv)
c. (ii), (i), (iv), (iii) d. (iv), (ii), (iii), (i)

Q 13. Who among the following Gurus of Sikhs compiled Shree Guru Granth Sahib? (CBSE SQP 2021 Term-1)

- a. Guru Tegh Bahadur b. Guru Arjan Dev
c. Guru Nanak Dev d. Guru Gobind Singh

Q 14. Read the following given information carefully:

She was a Rajput princess from Merta in Marwar.

She considered Lord Krishna as her lover.

Identify the name of the devotee of Saguna Bhakti from the following options: (CBSE SQP 2021 Term-1)

- a. Andal b. Gargi
c. Meera Bai d. Maitreyi

Q 15. Which of the following 'Guru' consolidated the Sikh community into socio-religious and military force?

- a. Guru Arjun Dev Sahib (CBSE 2021 Term-1)
b. Guru Hargobind Sahib
c. Guru Gobind Singh Sahib
d. Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib

Q 16. Which of the following statement is correct about Kabir? (CBSE 2021 Term-1)

- a. Kabir's verses are compiled in 'Kabir Bijak' only.
b. Kabir was and is a source of inspiration to many.
c. He advocated only saguna bhakti.
d. Kabir believed in Polytheism.

Q 17. Read the following information:

It is a fourteen century dargah.

Muhammad Bin Tughlaq was the first sultan to visit this shrine.

It is located in Ajmer.

Identify whose dargah is this? (CBSE 2021 Term-1)

- a. Shaikh Salim Chishti
b. Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti
c. Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya
d. Khwaja Qutubuddin Bakhtiar Kaki

Q 18. Read the following statements carefully and identify the place where this Dargah is located from the given options. (CBSE SQP 2023-24)

- (i) It is a Dargah of the Shaikh Moinuddin Chishti.
(ii) Akbar visited this place many times.
a. Delhi b. Mehrauli
c. Ajmer d. Fatehpur Sikri



Assertion & Reason Type Questions

Directions (Q. Nos. 19-21): In the following questions given below, there are two statements marked as Assertion (A) and Reason (R). Read the statements and choose the correct option:

- 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.

Q 19. Assertion (A): Lingayats did not practice funerary rites.

Reason (R): Lingayats believed that on death the devotee will be united with Shiva and will not return to this world.

Q 20. Assertion (A): Both Nayanars and Alvars were revered by the Vella peasants.

Reason (R): Earliest Bhakti movements were led by the Alvars and Nayanars.

Q 21. Assertion (A): Of the groups of Sufis who migrated to India in the late 12th century, the chishtis were the most influential.

Reason (R): They adapted successfully to the local environment and adopted several features of Indian devotional traditions.



Fill in the Blank Type Questions

Q 22. is one of the major anthologies of compositions by the Alvars.

- a. Nalayira Divyaprabandham
b. Immersed
c. Both a. and b.
d. Neither a. nor b.

Q 23. were the devotees of Shiva.

- a. Alvars b. Tevaram
c. Nayanars d. Both a. and c.

Q 24. The terms great and little traditions were coined by

- a. Shaikhs b. Robert Redfield
c. Gharib Nawaz d. Milk Muhammad

Q 25. is connected to shakti-cult.

- a. Tantricism b. Virashaivas
c. Lingayats d. Both b. and c.

Q 26. Treaties or manuals dealing with Sufi thought and practices form the of Ali bin Usman Hujwiri.

- a. Akbarnama b. Andel
c. Kashf-ul-Mahjub d. None of these



Correct and Rewrite Type Questions

Q 27. The major anthologies of compositions by the Nayanars, the Tevram, was frequently described as the Tamil Veda.

- Q 28. Virashaivas (heroes of Shiva) or Lingayats (wearers of the linga) was the religious movement laid by Brahmana named Dadu Dayal who was Minister in Court of Pala ruler of Odisha.
- Q 29. Nalayira Divyaprabandham is a composition written by Nayanars.
- Q 30. Some of the earliest Bhakti Movements (c. sixth century) were led by the Alvars (literally, those who are 'immersed' in devotion to Shiva) and Nayanars (literally, leaders who were devotees of Vishnu).
- Q 31. By the eleventh century Sufis began to organise communities around the hospice controlled by a teaching master known as murids.
- Q 32. Buddhism was strictly against the practice of Sati.
- Q 33. Verses ascribed to Kabir have been compiled in three distinct but overlapping traditions. The Kabir Bijak by Nath Panthi in Benaras, Kabir Granthavali by Dadu Panth in Gujarat and in the Adi Granth Sahib.



Match the Following Type Questions

Q 34. Match the following:

Column I	Column II
A. Pilgrimage	1. Hospice
B. Barkat	2. Tomb shrine
C. Khanqah	3. Ziyarat
D. Dargah	4. Sufi's spiritual grace

Codes:

- | | |
|------------|------------|
| A B C D | A B C D |
| a. 1 2 3 4 | b. 4 1 3 2 |
| c. 3 4 1 2 | d. 1 3 4 2 |

Q 35. Match the following:

Column I	Column II
A. Guru Nanak	1. Assam
B. Kabir	2. Marwar
C. Shankaradeva	3. Nankana Sahib
D. Mirabai	4. Varanasi

Codes:

- | | |
|------------|------------|
| A B C D | A B C D |
| a. 3 2 1 4 | b. 3 4 1 2 |
| c. 2 3 1 4 | d. 4 2 1 3 |

Q 36. Match the following:

Column I	Column II
A. Lingayat	1. Punjab
B. Kabirpanth	2. Karnataka
C. Baba Guru Nanak	3. Rajasthan
D. Mirabai	4. Benaras

Codes:

- | | |
|------------|------------|
| A B C D | A B C D |
| a. 1 2 3 4 | b. 2 3 1 4 |
| c. 2 4 1 3 | d. 1 3 4 2 |

Q 37. Match the following:

Column I	Column II
A. Conversations of sufi saints	1. <i>Tazkiras</i>
B. Written collections of letters by sufi masters	2. <i>Malfuzat</i>
C. To mention and memorise biographical accounts of saints	3. <i>Maktubat</i>

Codes:

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| A B C | A B C |
| a. 2 3 1 | b. 1 3 2 |
| c. 3 2 1 | d. 1 2 3 |

Q 38. Match the following:

Column I	Column II
A. There is one God	1. <i>Hajj</i>
B. Giving alms	2. <i>Sawm</i>
C. Fasting during the month of Ramzan)	3. <i>Zakat</i>
D. Performing the pilgrimage to Mecca	4. <i>Shahada</i>

Codes:

- | |
|------------|
| A B C D |
| a. 1 4 3 2 |
| b. 2 4 1 3 |
| c. 4 3 2 1 |
| d. 3 1 2 4 |

Answers

1. (d) 2. (a) 3. (b) 4. (c) 5. (d)
 6. (a) 7. (a) 8. (c) 9. (a) 10. (d)
 11. (a) 12. (b) 13. (b) 14. (c) 15. (b)
 16. (b) 17. (b) 18. (c) 19. (a) 20. (b)
 21. (a) 22. (a) 23. (c) 24. (b) 25. (a)
 26. (c)

27. The major anthologies of compositions by the Alvars, the Nalayira Divyaprabandham, was frequently described as the Tamil Veda.

28. Virashaivas (heroes of Shiva) or Lingayats (wearers of the Linga) was the religious movement laid by Brahmana named Basavanna who was Minister in Court of Kalachuri ruler of Karnataka.
29. Nalayira Divyaprabandham is a composition written by Alvars.
30. Some of the earliest Bhakti Movements (c. sixth century) were led by the Alvars (literally, those who are 'immersed' in devotion to Vishnu) and Nayanars (literally, leaders who were devotees of Shiva).

31. By the eleventh century Sufis began to organise communities around the hospice controlled by a teaching master known as Shaikh.
32. Buddhism was strictly against the practice of caste system.
33. Verses ascribed to Kabir have been compiled in three distinct but overlapping traditions. The Kabir Bijak by Kabirpanth in Benaras, Kabir Granthavali by Dadu Panth in Rajasthan and in the Aadi Granth Sahib.
34. (c) 35. (b) 36. (c) 37. (a) 38. (c)



Picture Based Type Questions

Q 1. Study the picture and then read the following excerpt carefully and answer any three questions:



One of the most striking examples of this process is evident at Puri, Orissa, where the principle deity was identified, by the 12th century, as Jagannatha (literally, the lord of the world), a form of Vishnu.

(i) This picture is one of the most striking example of:

- Nayanar Bhakti Movement
- Lingayat Sect
- Integration of cults
- Alvar Bhakti Movement

(ii) Lord Jagannatha is associated with:

- Brahma
- Vishnu
- Shiva
- All of these

(iii) Choose the correct option:

Assertion (A): Jagannatha was literally the Lord of the world.

Reason (R): Lord Vishnu was worshipped in various avatars.

- Both (A) and (R) are true and (R) is the correct explanation of (A).
- Both (A) and (R) are true, but (R) is not the correct explanation of (A).
- (A) is true, but (R) is false.
- (A) is false, but (R) is true.

(iv) Consider the following statements:

- Lord Jagannatha has been depicted here with his sister Subhadra and brother Balaram.
- Lord Jagannatha has been depicted here with his wife Sita and brother Lakshman.

Choose the correct option:

- Only (1) is correct
- Both (1) and (2) are correct
- Only (2) is correct
- Neither (1) nor (2) is correct

Answers

(i) (c) Integration of cults

(ii) (b) Vishnu

(iii) (b) Both (A) and (R) are true, but (R) is not the correct explanation of (A).

(iv) (a) Only (1) is correct

Q 2. Study this seventeenth century painting of Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya and his disciple Amir Khusrau carefully and answer any three of the following questions by choosing the correct options:



(i) What can be inferred by the postures of Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya and Amir Khusrau?

- Amir Khusrau is the murid (disciple), while the Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya is the Pir.
- Amir Khusrau is seeking spiritual grace (barkat) from the Sheikh.
- Amir Khusrau is evoking the presence of his pir by creating a 'rama' or performance of mystical music.
- All of the above.

(ii) Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya belonged to which of the following tradition of Sufism?

- Chishti
- Qadiri
- Firdausi
- Shadhiliyya

(iii) The halo around the head of Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya projects:

- his spiritual grace and other worldliness
- his wisdom and holiness
- Both a. and b.
- None of the above

(iv) The comparison of the physique and posture of both suggests:

- a. the superiority of Nizamuddin Auliya over Amir Khusrau both in spirituality and wisdom.
- b. the respect and submissive attitude shown by the Amir Khusrau to his Pir.
- c. Both a. and b.
- d. None of the above

Answers

- (i) (d) All of the above.
 - (ii) (a) Chishti
 - (iii) (c) Both a. and b.
 - (iv) (c) Both a. and b.
- Q 3. Study the image of Shiva as Nataraja carefully and answer any three of the following questions by choosing the correct options:



- (i) In this given image Shiva is personified as Nataraja, what does it projects?
 - a. It depicts Shiva as the creator, preserver and destroyer of the universe.
 - b. The cosmic dance of Shiva as the word Nataraja means 'King of dancers'.
 - c. The personification of illusion and ignorance over whom Shiva triumphs.
 - d. All of the above
- (ii) In the ancient Bhakti tradition of South India, the worship of Shiva is generally practised by the saints called:
 - a. Kabirpanth b. Nayanar
 - c. Alwar d. Sufism
- (iii) Which of the following musical instruments is held by the Shiva in the given image?
 - a. Damru b. Veena
 - c. Flute d. Sitar
- (iv) Shiva in this image, through his left leg is crushing:
 - a. the demons of ignorance
 - b. all humanity
 - c. the demon of enmity among all
 - d. All of the above

Answers

- (i) (d) All of the above
- (ii) (b) Nayanar
- (iii) (a) Damru
- (iv) (a) the demons of ignorance



Source Based Type Questions

Source 1

Read the source given below and answer the questions that follow by choosing the most appropriate option:

One Lord

Here is a composition attributed to Kabir:
 Tell me, brother, how can there be
 No one lord of the world but two?
 Who led you so astray?
 God is called by many names:
 Names like Allah, Ram, Karim,
 Keshav, Hari and Hazrat.
 Gold may be shaped into rings and bangles.
 Isn't it gold all the same?
 Distinctions are only words we invent ...
 Kabir says they are both mistaken.
 Neither can find the only Ram.
 One kills the goat, the other cows.
 They waste their lives in disputation

(CBSE SQP 2021 Term-1)

- Q 1. Identify the connotation of Kabir from the following options.
 - a. Monotheistic aspect b. Polytheistic Aspect
 - c. Atheist Aspect d. Theocratic Aspect
- Q 2. Kabir used different names for God or the Supreme power. What can one infer from this?
 - a. Concept or Ultimate Reality
 - b. Faith in Saguna bhakti
 - c. Rituals a way to gain insight
 - d. Reality is in worshipping Idols
- Q 3. How has Kabir's compositions promote communal harmony at large?
 - a. Kabir mentions about one God in all
 - b. He questioned religious practices
 - c. He was a Hindu by birth
 - d. He was an Islamic by birth
- Q 4. Which of the following is the part of Kabir's philosophy?
 - a. He gave emphasis on traditions and rituals
 - b. He used connotations as Shabda or Shunya.
 - c. He gave emphasis on Yajnas and sacrifices
 - d. He was a fundamentalist in his approach

Q 5. Kabir's poetry has a literary as well as a philosophical significance. Select the most appropriate option from the following that describes this essence.

- God is one who just has different names.
- God is vested in all saguna forms
- God is a philosophy in isolation from rituals.
- God is based on reincarnation.

Q 6. Read the following statements regarding Kabir and select the appropriate option:

- Kabir was a nirguna saint.
- He believed in formless supreme God.
- He wanted to remove the differences based on caste and religion.
- He condemned the superstitious cults and ritualism.

Codes:

- I and II
- I, II and III
- I, II, III and IV
- II, III and IV

Answers

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

Source 2

Read the source given below and answer the questions that follow by choosing the most appropriate option:

Shankaradeva

In the late fifteenth century, Shankaradeva emerged as one of the leading proponents of Vaishnavism in Assam. His teachings, often known as the Bhagavati dharma because they were based on the Bhagavad Gita and the Bhagavata Purana, focused on absolute surrender to the supreme deity, in this case Vishnu. He emphasised the need for naam kirtan, recitation of the names of the Lord in *satsanga* or congregations of pious devotees. He also encouraged the establishment of satra or monasteries for the transmission of spiritual knowledge and naam ghar or prayer halls. Many of these institutions and practices continue to flourish in the region. His major compositions include the *Kirtana-ghosha*.

Q 1. Who among the following was the contemporary of Shankaradeva?

- Kabir
- Vardhaman Mahavir
- Chanakya
- Buddha

Q 2. Why do we consider Shankaradeva as supreme saint-scholar?

- He was a poet, playwright and writer.
- He was a musician and social-religious reformer.
- He transmitted spiritual knowledge.
- He was a learnt person to save from negativity.

Q 3. Which of the following cult Shankaradeva followed?

- Advaita Vedanta
- Brahmanism
- Mimamsa Darshan
- Vaishnavism

Q 4. How was Shankaradeva as a person?

- Geographer
- Historian
- Socialist
- Religious

Q 5. Which of the following are the major work of Shankaradeva?

- Gita Gyan
- Harshcharita
- Shalv Darshan
- Kirtana Ghosha

Q 6. Why had Shankaradeva given emphasis on Bhagavata Puran?

- For the surrender of self in the devotion to Lord.
- For the grace of Lord in material things.
- For knowing the world in large.
- For getting blessings of Lord Vishnu.

Answers

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

Source 3

Read the following source carefully and answer the questions that follows:

The Story of Data Ganj Bakhsh

In 1039 Abul Hasan al Hujwiri, a native of Hujwir near Ghazni in Afghanistan, was forced to cross the Indus as a captive of the invading Turkish army. He settled in Lahore and wrote a book in Persian called the *Kashf-ul-Mahjub* (Unveiling of the Veiled) to explain the meaning of *tasawwuf*, and those who practised it, that is, the Sufi. Hujwiri died in 1073 and was buried in Lahore. The grandson of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni constructed a tomb over his grave, and this tomb-shrine became a site of pilgrimage for his devotees, especially on his death anniversary.

Even today Hujwiri is revered as Data Ganj Bakhsh or "Giver who bestows treasures" and his mausoleum is called Data Darbar or 'Court of the Giver'.

Q 1. Who was Abul Hasan al Hujwiri? Where did Abul Hasan settle and what was his book's name?

Ans. Abul Hasan al Hujwiri was a native of Hujwir near Ghazni in Afghanistan. Abul Hasan settled in Lahore and wrote a book in Persian called the *Kashf-ul-Mahjub* to explain the meaning of *tasawwuf*, and those who practised it i.e., the Sufi.

Q 2. When did Abul Hasan die? Who built Abul Hasan's tomb?

Ans. Abul Hasan al Hujwiri died in 1073 and was buried in Lahore. The grandson of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni constructed a tomb over his grave, and this tomb-shrine became a site of pilgrimage for his devotees especially on his death anniversary.

Q 3. How is Abul Hasan revered even today?

Ans. Even today Abul Hasan Hujwiri is revered as Data Ganj Bakhsh or 'Giver who bestows treasures' and his mausoleum is called Data Darbar or 'Court of the Giver'.

Source 4

Read the following source carefully and answer the questions that follow:

A demon?

This is an excerpt from a poem by Karaikkal Ammaiyar in which she describes herself: The female Pey (demoness) with ... bulging veins, protruding eyes, white teeth and shrunken stomach, red haired and jutting teeth lengthy shins extending till the ankles, shouts and wails while wandering in the forest. This is the forest of Alankatu, which is the home of our father (Shiva) who dances ... with his matted hair thrown own in all eight directions, and with cool limbs.

(CBSE SQP 2023-24)

Q 1. How beauty has been personified by Karaikkal Ammaiyar?

Ans. Karaikkal Ammaiyar personified beauty as "Pey" or "Demoness".

Q 2. "Bulging veins, protruding eyes, white teeth and shrunken stomach", "Shouts and wails". State the reason behind the poet's condition in the excerpt given.

Ans. The poet was mad as she was shouting and wailing in the devotion of Lord Shiva and she was desperately searching for him in Alankatu and hence her appearance has become "Bulging veins, protruding eyes, white teeth and shrunken stomach."

Q 3. Examine the phrase "With his matted hair thrown in all eight directions."

Ans. The phrase infers Lord Shiva dancing in Alankatu where in, his matted hair was thrown in all eight directions while dancing with his limbs freely moving in the air.



Very Short Answer Type Questions

Q 1. Who is Robert Redfield?

Ans. Robert Redfield is a sociologist of twentieth century.

Q 2. Who were the main deities in Vedic times?

Ans. Agni, Indra and Soma were the main deities in Vedic times.

Q 3. Who became the major deities in later times?

Ans. Vishnu and Shiva became the major deities in later times.

Q 4. Name the major anthology compiled by the Alvars which is also described as the Tamil Veda.

Ans. Nalayira Divyaprabandham was compiled by Alvars which is also described as the Tamil Veda.

Q 5. What did alternate religious leaders from Nath, Jogis and Siddhas oppose?

Ans. Naths, Jogis and Siddhas questioned the authority of Vedas.

Q 6. What do you mean by Zimmi?

Ans. Zimmi means protected. It was derived from the Arabic word Zimma.

Q 7. What do you understand by Khojahs?

Ans. Khojahs is a branch of the Ismailis which is a Shia sect.

Q 8. Who were mlechhas?

Ans. Mlechhas were migrant communities.

Q 9. Who was the founder of Khalsa Panth?

Ans. Guru Gobind Singh was the founder of Khalsa Panth.

Q 10. Name the women devotee of Nayanar tradition who adopted the path of extreme asceticism in order to attain her goal.

Ans. Karaikkal Ammaiyar.

Q 11. Name the Lingayat devotee who led a new movement in Karnataka in the twelfth century.

(CBSE 2020)

Ans. Lingayat devotee who led a new movement in Karnataka in the twelfth century was also known as Virashaivas (heroes of Shiva).

Q 12. Teachings of Guru Nanak suggest what kind of bhakti?

Ans. Teachings of Guru Nanak suggests Nirguna bhakti.

Q 13. Who was the Guru of Kabir?

(CBSE 2020)

Ans. Ramananda was considered as the Guru of Kabir.

Q 14. Name two compositions of Kabir which convey a sense of Kabir's mystical experiences.

Ans. Kabir's compositions like "the lotus which blooms without flower" and the "fire raging in the ocean" convey a sense of Kabir's mystical experiences.

Q 15. Why do thousands of devotees visit dargahs of Muslim saint?

Ans. Devotees believe that after death, saints unite with God and are thus closer to God. Therefore, thousands of devotees visit dargahs of Muslim saints.



Identify the Image Type Question ▾

Q 1. Identify the picture given below:



Ans. Dargah of Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya Multan (Pakistan).



Short Answer Type Questions ▾

Q 1. Explain with example what historians meant by the integration of cults.

Ans. During the period from 8th to 18th century in India, we came across a wide range of gods and goddesses in **sculpture** and texts, at one level this indicates the extended worship of major deities—**Vishnu and Shiva** and mother goddess, each of whom was visualised in a variety of forms.

The **integration of cults** that historians were speaking about was removing the boundaries between different groups and intermixing them.

(i) **Worship of Goddess:** The example of this was **goddesses** who were worshipped simply in the form of a stone with some colour pigment on it. These local deities were provided an identity as a wife of the main male deities; like they were equated with Lakshmi, the wife of Vishnu, with **Parvati**, the wife of Shiva. Thus, they were merged within the **Puranic** framework.

(ii) **Worship of Vishnu:** Another example is, in **Puri (Odisha)** the main deity was identified as Jagannatha, a form of Vishnu by the twelfth century. The local tribal specialists made the image of deity using wood and this deity was recognised as a form of Vishnu. But the Vishnu visualised here was very different from that in other parts of the country.

Q 2. To what extent do you think the architecture of mosques in the subcontinent reflects a combination of universal ideals and local traditions?

Ans. (i) With the arrival of Islam in the Medieval ages, the architecture of Islam also came to India.

However, the **Arab-cum-Islamic** architecture got impacted by the local traditions and rites too. Hence, we see a fusion of the two. This can be further elaborated by the examples of architecture mainly the construction of the mosques of those days.

(ii) Some features of the architecture of mosques are universal. All mosques have orientation towards **Mecca**. This is manifested in the placement of **Mehrab** and **Minar** within a mosque. But at the same time we have influences that can be described only as local influences.

(iii) A mosque in Kerala of thirteenth century has a **shikhar** like roof unlike a normal mosque where it is dome. The Shah Hamdan Mosque in Kashmir is made of **Kashmiri** woods and its facade is like that of a temple. The Atia Mosque in Bangladesh is made of bricks, though its roof is round. Thus, we can see that the architecture of mosques is that of **fusion**.

Q 3. What were the similarities and differences between the be-shari'a and ba-shari'a Sufi traditions?

Ans. **Similarities:**

Both the Sufi traditions are critical of the dogmatic definitions and scholastic methods of interpretation of the Quran and Sunnah (traditions of the prophet) adopted by theologians. Instead, they laid stress on seeking **salvation**.

Differences:

(i) The **Shari'a** is the law governing the Muslim community. Based on radical interpretation of Sufi ideals, some mystics started movements. They were known as **be-sharia**. They disrespected khanqah and took to begging and did not marry. They ignored rituals and observed extreme form of strict and simple way of living. They were known by different names like Qalandars, Madaris, Malangs, Haldaris etc.

(ii) On the other hand, Sufis who obeyed shari'a were called ba-shari'a Sufis. They were adhered to Islamic sacred law. They mostly lived in **shrines or khanqahs**.

Q 4. Discuss the ways in which the Alvars, Nayanars and Virashnavas expressed critiques of the caste system.

Ans. The Alvars, Nayanars and Virashnavas expressed critiques of the caste system in following ways:

Alvars and Nayanars:

(i) **Alvars:** Some of the earliest Bhakti movements were led by Alvars. Alvars were those who were immersed in **devotion to Vishnu**.

- (ii) **Nayanars:** Nayanars were those leaders who were devotees of **Lord Shiva**.
- (iii) The Alvars and Nayanars started a movement to protest against the caste system and the dominance of Brahmanas or at least attempted to reform the system. The devotees or bhaktas came from different social backgrounds ranging from Brahmanas to artisans all cultivators and even from castes considered 'untouchables'.

The Virashaivas or Lingayats:

- (i) **Virashalvas:** The 12th century witnessed the emergence of a new movement in Karnataka, led by Brahmana named **Basavanna** (1106-68) who was initially a Jaina and a minister in the court of a Chalukya king. His followers were known as Virashalvas or Lingayats.
- (ii) The Virashaivas and Lingayats challenged the idea of caste and the **pollution** attributed to certain group of **Brahmanas**. They also questioned the theory of rebirth. Some practices like post-puberty marriage and the remarriage of widows which were disapproved in the **Dharmashastras**, were encouraged by the Lingayats.

Q 5. Describe the major teachings of either Kabir or Baba Guru Nanak and ways in which these have been transmitted.

Ans. The Major Teachings of Kabir were:

- (i) He described the ultimate reality as Allah, Khuda, Hazrat and Pir. He also used terms like aulakh and nirakar. These words were drawn from **Vedantic traditions**.
- (ii) He, through his poems, promote the concepts like belief in one God and the destruction of religious images to attack Hindu's belief in many Gods and idol worship.
- (iii) He emphasised the Sufi concept of zikr and ishq to express the Hindu practices of **nam-simaran** (remembrance of God's name).
- (iv) He believed that God was one though his names are different.
- (v) He stated that salvation can be attained through Bhakti.

Kabir expressed his views in the language that was spoken and understood by the common people. After his death, the followers spread the views through various means of communication.

The Major Teachings of Baba Guru Nanak were:

- (i) Baba Guru Nanak's hymns and teachings suggest that he supported a form of **nirguna bhakti**.
- (ii) He firmly repudiated and rejected the religious practices like sacrifices, rituals baths, idol worship and austerities.
- (iii) He stated that the almighty or rab had no gender or form.

- (iv) He proposed a simple way to connect to the Divine *i.e.*, by remembering and repeating the Divine name, conveying his ideas through hymns called '**shabad**' in Punjabi, which was the language of the region.

Q 6. Discuss the term 'Great' and 'Little' traditions.

Ans. The term 'Great' and 'Little' traditions are explained below:

- (i) The terms great and little traditions were coined by a sociologist named Robert Redfield in the twentieth century to describe the cultural practices of peasant societies. He found that peasants observed rituals and customs that emanated from dominant social categories, including priests and rulers. These he classified as part of a great tradition.
- (ii) At the same time, peasants also followed local practices that did not necessarily correspond with those of the great tradition. These he included within the category of little tradition. He also noticed that both great and little traditions changed over time, through a process of interaction.
- (iii) While scholars accept the significance of these categories and processes, they are often uncomfortable with the hierarchy suggested by the terms great and little. The use of quotation marks for 'great' and 'little' is one way of indicating this.

Q 7. Describe the beliefs of Virashaiva tradition in Karnataka. (CBSE 2019)

Ans. The Beliefs of Virashaiva Tradition in Karnataka were:

- (i) The 12th century witnessed the emergence of a new movement in Karnataka, led by a Brahman, **Basavanna**, whose followers were known as Virashaiva or Lingayats.
- (ii) Lingayats believed that on death, the devotee will be **united** with Shiva and will not return to this world.
- (iii) They therefore did not practice funerary rites such as **cremation** but ceremonially buried by Brahman.
- (iv) They challenged the idea of caste and the **pollution** attributed to certain group by Brahmanas.
- (v) They encouraged the practices like post-puberty marriage and remarriage of widows which were disapproved in the **Dharmashastras**.

Q 8. How did Karaikkal Ammaiyar become the greatest figure of Nayanar tradition? Explain. (CBSE 2016)

Ans. Karaikkal Ammaiyar was the greatest figure of Nayanar tradition:

- (i) A devotee of Shiva adopted the path of extreme **asceticism** in order to attain her goal.

- (ii) Her compositions were preserved within the Nayanar tradition.
- (iii) Followed the path of devotion.
- (iv) Promoted **social** and **religious** reform movements.
- (v) These women **renounced** their social obligations but did not join an alternative order to become nuns.

Q 9. Discuss the importance of women devotees during bhakti period.

Ans. The importance of women devotees during bhakti period are as follows:

- (i) **Compositions of Andal:** The compositions of Andal, a woman Alvar, were widely sung and even now they are continued to be sung. She saw herself as the beloved of **Vishnu** and we can see that her verses expressed her **love** for the deity.
- (ii) **Karaikal Ammaiyar:** Karaikkal Ammaiyar (a devotee of **Shiva**) was another woman who adopted the path of extreme **self-discipline** in order to attain her goal. Her compositions were preserved within the **Nayanar** tradition.

Q 10. Explain the features of Islamic religion which contributed to its spread through the subcontinent.

Ans. The features of Islamic religion which contributed to its spread through the subcontinent are:

- (i) The development of Islam was not restricted to ruling **aristocrats**, actually it spread far and wide, through the sub-continent, amongst various social strata *i.e.*, **peasants, artisans, warriors, merchants** etc.
- (ii) All those who adopted Islam accepted the five **pillars** of this religion. These are:
 - (a) There is one God, Allah and Prophet Muhammad is his messenger (**shahada**).
 - (b) Offering prayers five times a day (**namaz**).
 - (c) Giving alms (**zakat**).
 - (d) Fasting during the month of Ramzan (**sawm**).
 - (e) Performing the pilgrimage to Mecca (**hajj**).

The universal features were often overlaid with diversities in practice derived from affiliations (sunni, shia) and local customary practices to convert from different social backgrounds. For example, Arab Muslim traders adopted local customs such as **matriliny** and **matrilocal** residence. There was also difference in the architecture of mosque due to the change of regions.

Q 11. "Sufism evolved as a reaction to the growing materialism of the caliphate as a religious and political institution." Elucidate. (CBSE 2018)

Ans. The following are the reasons which helped Sufism evolved:

- (i) Sufi turned to asceticism and mysticism to protest against **materialism**.
- (ii) The Sufis laid emphasis on seeking **salvation** through intense devotion and love for God.
- (iii) By the 11th century Sufism evolved into a well-developed movement with a body of literature on **Quranic studies** and Sufi practices.
- (iv) They sought an interpretation of the Quran on the basis of their personal experiences.
- (v) The Sufis began to organise communities around the **hospice** or **khanqah** controlled by a teaching master known as Sheikh, Pir or Murshid.

Q 12. What did Sufism criticise? What was their idea of devotion?

Ans. Sufism criticised the rigid and narrow minded definitions and precise methods of interpreting the **Quran** and **Sunna** *i.e.*, traditions of prophet, adopted by the theologians (people who study about God).

Idea of Devotion: Sufis stressed on attaining salvation through intense devotion and love for God by following his commands, and by following the example of the **Prophet Muhammad**, whom they regarded as a perfect human being.

Q 13. Islam and its principles permeated far and wide through the subcontinent. Explain the statement. (CBSE 2017)

Ans. The features of Islam that contributed to its spread through the subcontinent:

- (i) Believers of Islam accepted, in principle, the five '**pillars**' of the faith. They offered prayers five times a day (**namaz**).
- (ii) Kings played an important role in spreading **Islam**.
- (iii) The Arab traders who had settled in the **Malabar coast** adopted local language, Malayalam and the local customs.
- (iv) The **khajjahs**, a branch of the Ismailis (a shia sect) developed new modes of **communication**, spreading ideas from the Quran through indigenous literary genres.

Q 14. Write a brief note on Chishti Khanqah.

Ans. Chishti Khanqah

- (i) The khanqah was the centre of social life of the Chishtis. In 14th century, **Shaikh Nizamuddin's** hospice on the banks of the river Yamuna in Ghiaspur, on the outskirts of the city of Delhi.
- (ii) It had many small rooms and a big hall called **Jama'at Khana**, where the inmates and visitors lived and prayed. The inmates included family members of the Shaikh, his attendants and disciples.

- (iii) The Shaikh lived in a small room on the roof of the hall where he met visitors in the morning and evening. The courtyard was surrounded by a veranda and a boundary wall was present around the complex.

Q 15. Discuss in brief, about the Sufi poetry and their compositions.

Ans. A different type of Sufi poetry was composed in and around the town of **Bijapur, Karnataka**. These were short poems in **Dakhani** (a form of Urdu) attributed to Chishti Sufis who lived in the region during the 18th centuries.

The poems were sung by women while performing household tasks. Apart from these **lurinama** or **lullabies** and shadinama or wedding songs were other forms of compositions.

The Sufis of Karnataka must have been inspired by the existing bhakti tradition of the Kannada Vachanas of the **Lingayats** and Marathi abhangs of the saints of Pandharpur.

Q 16. What was the difficulty in analysing the Kabir's compositions?

Ans. The Difficulties In Analysing the Kabir's Compositions were:

- (i) Kabir's poems have survived in different languages and different forms of languages, and some are composed in the special language of **nirguna** poets, the sant bhasha.
- (ii) Other compositions known as **ulatbansi** (upside-down sayings) are written in a form in which everyday meanings are inverted.
- (iii) These show the difficulties of getting the character of the ultimate reality in words. For instance, expressions such as 'the lotus which blooms without flower' or the 'fire raging in the ocean' shows a sense of Kabir's spiritual experiences.

Q 17. Discuss the major beliefs and practices that characterised Sufism.

Ans. The major beliefs and practices that characterised Sufism were:

- (i) Sufis criticised the rigid definitions and scholastic methods of interpreting the **Quran** and **Sunnah**. Sufis interpreted the Quran on the basis of their personal experiences.
- (ii) They gave emphasis on seeking **salvation** through their devotion and bhakti of god. They regarded Prophet Muhammad as perfect human being and preached to follow him.
- (iii) The Sufis started creating institutions by organising communities around lodgings meant for travellers called **khanqah**, controlled by a teaching master known as Shaikh, Pir or Murshid.

- (iv) **Silsilas** were used as link between master and disciple. This link was stretched as an unbroken spiritual link to the **Prophet Muhammad**. The spiritual power and blessings were transmitted to devotees through this channel.

- (v) When the Shaikh died, his tomb-shrine (dargah) became the centre of the devotion for his followers. This led to the practice of pilgrimage of '**Ziyarat**' to his grave, particularly on his death anniversary or use, because it signified their union with God.

- (vi) People visited the shrine to seek material and spiritual blessings, thus evolved the cult of the Shaikh reversed as '**WALI**'.

- (vii) Although the Sufis believed in simple and avoidance of worldly powers, they expected unsolicited grants and donations from **political elites**.

Q 18. Examine how and why rulers tried to establish connections with the traditions of the Nayanars and the Sufis?

Ans. Nayanars were the worshippers of Lord **Shiva**. It gained a shape of powerful Bhakti movement in South India in 6th century onwards. Apart from being popular with the people, the movement got support and patronage of the rulers of the time. This is manifested by the following facts:

- (i) A major part of South India was ruled by **Chola Kings** during the period 9th to 13th century. The Chola kings tried to claim divine support and proclaim their own power and status. These kings also introduced the singing of Tamil Shaiva hymns in the temples under royal patronage, taking the initiative to collect and organise them into a text called **Tevaram**.
- (ii) During the same period some of the most spectacular representation of Shiva in bronze sculpture were produced. All this was possible because the rulers patronised the **Nayanars**.
- (iii) Around **945 CE**, Chola ruler Parantaka I, had dedicated, the metal images of **Appar**, **Sambandar** and **Sundarar** in a Shiva temple for religious purpose. These were also carried in processions during the festivals of these saints.
- (iv) Sufi tradition and the rulers of Delhi Sultanate and Mughals:
- (v) Rulers like **Muhammad bin Tughlaq**, Mughal emperor Akbar visited the Khwaja Muinuddin's dargah many times. Akbar offered a huge **cauldron** (degah) to facilitate cooking for pilgrims and also had a mosque constructed within the compound of dargah. In this way, the rulers showed their connection with the Sufis.
- (vi) The rulers of Delhi Sultanate claimed themselves under Caliphate of **Kabul** and tried

to legitimize their rule. The next step could have been establishing the rule of Shari'a laws. However, the rulers realised from the very beginning that it was impractical. Under the **Delhi Sultanate** most of the people were not Muslim.

- (vii) **Shari'a** laws were not feasible also because they lacked flexibility which a ruler needed to govern. The rulers of Delhi Sultanate wanted to take a practical path of governance without renouncing **Islam**.
- (viii) Sufi tradition gave them this opportunity. The same idea prevailed during the rule of Mughals too. Hence, the rulers of Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal empire adopted the tradition of Sufism.

Q 19. Analyse, with illustrations, why bhakti and Sufi thinkers adopted a variety of languages to express their opinions?

Ans. The Bhakti and Sufi thinkers used the languages of the common people to express their opinions. They often spoke in local languages. So, they were well-understood by the common people and also to make these movement truly popular.

This is manifested in the examples below:

- (i) Traditional Bhakti saints composed the hymns in **Sanskrit**. Such hymns were sung on special occasions. Often within temples, these hymns attracted many people and few would dance and sing with them.
- (ii) Bhakti thinkers in Tamil Nadu regions like **Alvars** and **Nayanars** used Tamil language. Even kings supported by introducing the singing of Tamil Shaiva hymns in the temples under royal patronage, and took the initiative to collect and organise them into a text called **Tevaram**.
- (iii) In the North India the language was different, they too took the language of common people. **Guru Nanak** created shabad all in Punjabi. Various other saints used their own language to express their thoughts and views.
- (iv) **Kabir Das** who lived in Banaras, wrote in the local language which was close to Hindustani, he mostly used the words of the local dialect.
- (v) A different type of Sufi poetry was composed in and around the town of Bijapur, Karnataka.
- (vi) Devotional poems in Punjabi, Multani, Sindhi, Kachchi, Hindi and Gujarati, sung in special ragas during daily prayer meetings. Malayalam was adopted by Muslims in Kerala.
- (vii) Thus, we are inclined to agree with the view that the saints of Bhakti and Sufi movement in many languages and the languages of the common people to connect with them.

Q 20. Read any five of the sources included in this chapter and discuss the social and religious ideas that are expressed in them.

Ans. The different social and religious ideas that are expressed are:

(i) **The first is the architecture:** The different types of **stupas, temple, monasteries** all symbolise different types of religious belief system and practices. Some of them exist as it enable us to look into the annals of history of those days. Some of them are in the form of **ruins** but they also throw light on the religion and society of those days alike.

(ii) **The next important source of history is the composition of the Saints both Bhakti and Sufi:** In terms of content they are religious but they are not the divine text books of religion that are **sacrosanct**. The compilation throws light on the life of common men and village life style. They also impact the music and art of those days.

(iii) **Another very important source of the history of those days is the biographies of the saints:**

The biographies include the description of the society and prevalent beliefs and practices. It is notable that such biographies may not be in the written form still they can give insight into the life of those days. It is a prevalent story that when **Kabirdas** died, both Hindus and Muslims fought for his dead body later on his body turned into flowers. Some were taken by **Muslims** and others by **Hindus**.

This represents that there was conflict and collaboration between both Hindus and Muslims of those days.

(iv) **Rise of religious leaders:** This was also the period of rise of religious leaders who were intermediaries between common men and God. Earlier it was only the **Brahmins** who got this role. Now many people from other background also joined in. To some extent it acted as the force that **idolised equality and fraternity**.

(v) **The other source is the folklore:** They are described in our art forms. It may be dance, paintings and sculpture and so on. They all talk about the universal **brotherhood** of mankind and love for one and all.

Q 21. 'The Alvars and Nayanars initiated a Bhakti and social movement with the support of state'. Explain the statement. (CBSE 2023)

Ans. The Alvars and Nayanars were two prominent groups of poet-saints who lived in South India between the 6th and 9th centuries CE. They were instrumental in initiating a Bhakti movement, which emphasised personal devotion to a particular deity as a means of achieving salvation.

The Alvars were devotees of Lord Vishnu, while the Nayanars were devotees of Lord Shiva. These poet-saints composed devotional poetry in Tamil, which was accessible to the common people and helped to spread the Bhakti message throughout South India. The Bhakti movement led by the Alvars and Nayanars was not just a religious movement but also a social one. They challenged the caste system and social inequalities that were prevalent in Indian society at the time. The Alvars and Nayanars were often from lower castes themselves, and their message of personal devotion to a deity without regard for caste or social status helped to break down these barriers. The Bhakti movement gained significant support from the state, particularly under the rule of the Pallava and Chola dynasties. These Nayanars by building temples, sponsoring festivals, and providing them with patronage.

The Bhakti movement initiated by the Alvars and Nayanars had a significant impact on Indian society and culture. It helped to promote a more inclusive and egalitarian form of Hinduism and played a role in the growth of Tamil literature and culture. The movement also inspired later Bhakti and reform movements, such as those led by Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and Ramanuja and influenced the development of Indian philosophy and spirituality.



Long Answer Type Questions

Q 1. Discuss about the Tantric worship. What were the different beliefs and practices that were emerged during this bhakti period? What were the conflicts in belief system during bhakti period?

Ans. Tantric Worship: Tantric practices were the forms of worship that were often **associated** with the **goddess**.

The practice of Tantric worship was widespread in many parts of the **subcontinent**. It had the following features:

- (i) It was open to both **men** and **women**.
- (ii) Those who believe in tantric worship often ignore the differences of **caste** and **class**.

Emergence of Different Beliefs and Practices:

- (i) **Buddhism** and **Shaivism** especially in the Eastern, Northern and Southern parts of the subcontinent were influenced by many of these ideas of **Tantric practice**.
- (ii) Over the next millennium, all these divergent and even completely different beliefs and practices were classified as Hindu.
- (iii) In Vedic times, the main deities were **Agni**, **Indra** and **Soma** and these deities became marginal figures and rarely visible in textual and visual representation.

Conflicts in Belief System:

- (i) We could see conflicts sometimes, like people who valued the Vedic traditions often condemned practices like performance of sacrifices or accurate chanting of **mantras**.
- (ii) People who were engaged in Tantric practices often ignored the **authority** of the **Vedas**. Even devotees protected their chosen deity like **Vishnu** or **Shiva**, as supreme.
- (iii) Though, the relations with other traditions like **Buddhism** or **Jainism** did not lead to open conflict, but there existed a condition filled with tension.
- (iv) During this time, expressions of devotion ranged from the routine worship of deities within temples to extremely high **love** and **respect** where devotees attained a trance-like state.

Q 2. Identify the relationship of the Alvars and Nayanars of Tamil Nadu with the state from the 8th to 18th century. (CBSE 2017)

Ans. Relationship of the Alvars and Nayanars with the state:

Alvars: Alvars are the devotees of Lord **Vishnu**.

Nayanars: Nayanars were devotees of Lord **Shiva**.

- (i) It was evident that the powerful **Chola rulers** supported the Brahmanical and Bhakti traditions by making land grants and constructing temples for Vishnu and Shiva.
- (ii) Some of the most magnificent **Shiva temples**, like those at Chidambaram, Thanjavur and Gangaikondacholapuram were constructed with the support of Chola rulers.
- (iii) It was also the period where spectacular representation of Shiva as bronze **sculpture** was produced. Clearly the vision of Nayanars inspired the artists.
- (iv) By building very impressive temples. The Chola kings tried to claim divine support and proclaim their own **power** and **status**.
- (v) These kings also introduced the singing of Tamil Shalva hymns in the temple under royal patronage and also took initiative to collect and organise them into a text (**Tevaram**).
- (vi) Chola ruler **Parantaka I** had consecrated metal images of Appar, Sambhandar and Sundarar in a Shiva temple. These were carried in processions during the festivals of these saints. The **Vellalu** peasants revered both Nayanars and Alvars.

COMMON ERROR

Many students misunderstand that the question is about relationship between Alvars and Nayanars.



TIP

The students must read and understand the question thoroughly before starting with the answer.

Q 3. 'The Lingayats challenged the Idea of caste and the 'pollution' attributed to certain groups by Brahmanas', critically examine the statement.

Ans. Above statement is critically examined in the following points:

- (i) A new movement emerged in Karnataka in twelfth century, which was led by a Brahmana named **Basavanna**, who was initially a Jain and a minister in the court of **Kalachuri** king. His followers were known as **Virashaivas (heroes of Shiva)** and **Lingayats (wearers of the linga)**.
- (ii) The tradition of **Virashaiva** was derived from **Vachanas** means saying. It was composed in Kannada by women and men who joined the movement.
- (iii) Lingayats worship Shiva in the form of **Linga** and men wear a small **linga** in a silver case on a thread strung over the left shoulder. These men were admired as **Jangama** or wandering monks.
- (iv) Lingayats believed that devotee will be united with Shiva, and will not return to this world after the death. Thus, they do not practice funeral practices like cremation as per **Dharmashastras** and instead they ceremonially bury their dead.
- (v) Some practices like post-puberty marriage and the remarriage of widows which were **disapproved** in the **Dharmashastras**, were encouraged by the Lingayats.
- (vi) The Lingayats challenged the Idea of **caste** and its **pollution** attributed to certain groups by Brahmanas. They also questioned the theory of rebirth.

Q 4. Identify the relationship between the Sufis and the state from the 8th to the 18th century. (CBSE 2017)

Ans. The relationship between the Sufis and the state from the eighth to the eighteenth century:

- (i) The Sufis were a group of religious minded people who turned to **asceticism** and **mysticism** in order to seek God in the early centuries of Islam. They did this as a protest against the growing materialism of the Caliphate.
- (ii) There was no absolute **isolation** from political power. Grants and donations from political elites were accepted by the Sufis. Charitable trusts (**auqaf**) for hospices were set-up and tax free land (**inam**) were granted by sultans.
- (iii) The Sufi saints, particularly the Chishtis, would accept **donations** in cash and kind. But these were never accumulated and used immediately for basic requirements like food, housing, clothing and rituals necessities. The Shaikhs who attracted devotees from all walks of life

were thus able to establish their moral authority through piety and generosity. Their popularity made the rulers strive for their support.

- (iv) Kings also required **legitimation** from Sufis. Thus, when Turks set-up Delhi Sultanate they resisted the insistence of the Ulama on imposing shari'a as state law. The sultans did this to reduce opposition from both the **muslims** and **non-muslims** already living in the country.
- (v) The Sufi saints who believed that their **spiritual authority** was a blessing from Allah, were enlisted by the sultans in order to garner support from the general population who revered the Sufi saints.
- (vi) It was believed that the **auliya** could intervene with God in order to improve the material and spiritual conditions of ordinary human beings. Thus, Sultans would often visit the dargahs of Sufi saints even have their **tombs** built near the dargahs.
- (vii) In spite of the cooperation and mutual obligation between the state and the saints, there are many examples of **conflict** between the two groups. Both expected certain rituals to be performed such as prostration and kissing of the feet. Often Sufi saints were addressed with high sounding titles. For example: the disciple of **Nizamuddin Auliya** addressed him as '**Sultan-ul-Mashaikh**'.
- (viii) Other Sufis such as the **Suhrawardi** under the Delhi sultans and the **Naqshbandi** under the Mughals were also associated with the state.

Q 5. Explain the teachings of Kabir. How did he describe the ultimate reality through his poems?

(CBSE 2016)

Ans. The historians tried to reconstruct Kabir's life and timings through a study of compositions attributed to him known as **hagiographies**.

Verses ascribed to Kabir have been compiled in three distinct traditions, viz. **Kabir Bijak**, **Kabir Granthavali** and **Adi Granth Sahib**. All these compilations were made long after the death of Kabir. Kabir's poems have survived in several languages and dialects.

The significance of Kabir's poems is as follows:

(i) **Source of Inspiration:**

- (a) Kabir's poems have been a source of inspiration to those who questioned **rigid** and **unrooted** social institutions, ideas and practices in search of God.
- (b) **Taken from both Hinduism and Islam:** The significance of Kabir's poem also lies in the fact that his teachings were inspired by both Hinduism and Islam which sometimes expressed diverse and **conflicting ideas**. For instance, some poems took Islamic ideas and used the concepts like belief in

one God and the destruction of religious images to attack Hindu's belief in many Gods and idol worship. Some other poems used the Sufi concepts of *zikk* and *ishq* to express the Hindu practice of **nam-smaran** (remembrance of God's name).

Kabir's ideas crystallised through dialogue and debate and his legacy was claimed by several groups. The traditions, he drew to describe ultimate reality through his poems are:

- (ii) **Islamic Traditions:** He described the **ultimate reality** as **Allah**, **Khuda**, **Hazrat** and **Pir**.
- (iii) **Vedantic Tradition:** He used the terms **Alakh** (unseen), **Nirakar** (formless), **Brahman**, **Atman**, etc. to describe the ultimate reality.
- (iv) **Yogic Tradition:** Other terms with mystical connotations such as **Shabda** (sound) or **Shunya** (emptiness) were drawn from yogic traditions.

Q 6. Explain how the biography of the saint poetess Mirabai has been primarily constructed? How did she defy the norms of society?

Ans. Reconstruction of Mirabai's Biography:

- (i) Mirabai was the best known woman poet within the **bhakti tradition**. Her biographies can be reconstructed from the *bhajans* that belong to her.
- (ii) According to these sources, she was a **Rajput princess** from Merta in Marwar who was married to a prince of the Sisodia clan of Mewar in Rajasthan, against her wishes. She opposed her husband and did not accept the traditional role of wife and mother.

Recognition of Krishna as Lover: She recognised **Krishna** who was the avatar of Vishnu, as her **lover**. Her in-laws tried to poison her, but she survived and escaped from the palace to live as roaming saint composing songs that were characterised by intense expression of **emotion**.

Defiance of Social Barriers:

- (i) As per some traditions, her instructor was **Raldas**, a leather worker. This indicated that she challenged the norms of caste system.
- (ii) After she rejected the comforts of husband's palace life, she might have dressed in white clothes of a widow or the saffron clothes of the renouncer.

Popular Source of Inspiration:

- (i) Though, she did not form a sect or had group of followers, she was recognised as a **source of inspiration** for many centuries.
- (ii) Both women and men sing her songs, especially those who are poor and considered 'low caste' in Gujarat and Rajasthan.

Q 7. 'Baba Nanak's vision of the sacred word was all inclusive'. Explain the statement. (CBSE 2023)

OR

Who was Guru Nanak? What were his teachings? How did he and his successors organise their followers? Discuss in detail.

Ans. Guru Nanak was born in a Hindu merchant family in a village called **Nankana Sahib** near the river Ravi in the predominantly Muslim Punjab. He was trained as an accountant and studied **Persian**. He was married at a young age but he spent most of his time among **Sufis** and **Bhaktas**.

Baba Nanak's vision of the sacred word was all-inclusive because it emphasized the universal nature of spirituality and rejected the idea of exclusivity based on religious caste or social differences.

Teachings of Guru Nanak:

- (i) Baba Guru Nanak's **hymns** and **teachings** suggest that he supported a form of nirguna bhakti.
- (ii) He strongly refused to accept the external practices of the religions he saw around him.
- (iii) He rejected sacrifices, ritual baths, image worship, simplicity and the scriptures of both **Hindus** and **Muslims**.
- (iv) He proposed a simple way to connect to the Divine i.e., by remembering and repeating the Divine name, conveying his ideas through hymns called 'Shabad' in Punjabi, which was the language of the region.

Organising the followers:

- (i) Guru Nanak organised his followers into a community. He framed rules for group worship (**sangat**) involving collective recitation (repeating hymns). **Angad**, one of his disciples was appointed by him as the teacher (guru) who will succeed him, and this practice was followed for nearly **200 years**.
- (ii) Baba Guru Nanak did not want to establish a new religion, but after his death his followers combined their own practices and distinguished themselves from both Hindus and Muslims.
- (iii) The fifth instructor, **Guru Arjan**, collected Baba Guru Nanak's hymns in the *Adi Granth Sahib* which are known as **gurbani** and are composed in various languages.
- (iv) The tenth guru, **Guru Gobind Singh** in late 17th century included the compositions of the ninth guru. *Guru Tegh Bahadur* and his scripture was called the *Guru Granth Sahib*.
- (v) *Guru Gobind Singh* also laid the foundation of the **Khalsa Panth** (army of the pure) and defined its five symbols: Uncut hair, a dagger, a pair of shorts, a comb and a steel bangle. The community got combined as a socio-religious and **military force** under *Guru Gobind Singh*.



Chapter Test

Multiple Choice Questions

- Q 1. During which period was there a striking visibility of wide range of Gods and Goddesses in sculpture and texts?
- 6th to 18th century
 - 18th 21st century
 - 8th to 18th century
 - 7th to 16th century
- Q 2. Where did the early Bhakti movements originate from?
- South India
 - North India
 - The west
 - Both a. and c.

Fill in the Blank Type Question

- Q 3. The terms great and little traditions were coined by
- Shalkhs
 - Robert Redfield
 - Gharib Nawaz
 - Milk Muhammad

Correct and Rewrite Type Question

- Q 4. The major anthologies of compositions by the Nayanars, The Tevaram, was frequently described as the Tamil Veda.

Assertion and Reason Type Question

- Q 5. In the question given below, there are two statements marked as Assertion (A) and Reason (R). Read the statements and choose the correct option:

Assertion (A): Bhakti Saints adopted local languages to preach their ideas to the masses.

Reason (R): Vernacular languages could be understood by the common people. They stressed equality and to live a simple life.

- Both (A) and (R) are true and (R) is the correct explanation of (A).
- Both (A) and (R) are true, but (R) is not the correct explanation of (A).
- (A) is true but (R) is false.
- (A) is false but (R) is true.

Identify the Image Type Question

- Q 6. Identify the legendary Tamil poet depicted in this bronze sculpture.



Picture Based Question

- Q 7. Study this seventeenth century painting of Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya and his disciple Amir Khusrau carefully and answer any three of the following questions by choosing the correct options:



- (i) What can be inferred by the postures of Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya and Amir Khusrau?

- Amir Khusrau is the murid (disciple), while the Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya is the Pir.
- Amir Khusrau is seeking spiritual grace (barkat) from the Sheikh.
- Amir Khusrau is evoking the presence of his pir by creating a 'rama' or performance of mystical music.
- All of the above.

(ii) Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya belonged to which of the following tradition of Sufism?

- a. Chishti b. Qadiri
- c. Firdausi d. Shadhiliyya

(iii) The halo around the head of Sheikh Nizamuddin Auliya projects:

- a. his spiritual grace and other worldliness
- b. his wisdom and holiness
- c. Both a. and b.
- d. None of the above

(iv) The comparison of the physique and posture of both suggests:

- a. the superiority of Nizamuddin Auliya over Amir Khusrau both in spirituality and wisdom.
- b. the respect and submissive attitude shown by the Amir Khusrau to his Pir.
- c. Both a. and b.
- d. None of the above

Very Short Answer Type Questions

- Q 8. What are the two distinct but overlapping traditions of the Kabir?
- Q 9. What is the similarity between the philosophy of Kabir and Guru Nanak Dev?

Short Answer Type Questions

- Q 10. Why do you think that the traditions of Guru Nanak remain significant even in 21st century?
- Q 11. Explain any two sources of social and religious ideas.

Long Answer Type Question

- Q 12. Explain Malfuzat, Maktubat and Tazkiras as the sources used to reconstruct the history of Sufi traditions