

BHAKTI-SUFI TRADITIONS

Multiple Choice Type Questions

1. Vishnu Bhakta saints were known as _____
(a) Nayanar
(b) Virshaiv
(c) Alvar
(d) Zimmi
2. Alwar saints worshipped _____
(a) Vishnu
(b) Laxmi
(c) Indra
(d) Shiva
3. Non-Muslim had to pay a religious tax called _____
(a) Zakat
(b) Shukrana
(c) Zajiya
(d) None of these
4. Which of these was a part of Chishti worship?
(a) Dance
(b) Music
(c) Qawali
(d) All of these
5. _____ was the guru of
(a) Saint Kabir
(b) Saint Ravidas
(c) Saint Farid
(d) Ramananda

Answer

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

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. Discuss teachings of the Sufi tradition.

Answer: 1. The teachings of the Sufi tradition were as follows :

2. The Sufi saints preached that God is one. As God is one, we are all his children. God is not Rama, Krishna or Muhammad. They are all great men but not God.
3. The Sufi saints preached that those who wanted to attain God should love human beings. God loves those who love other human beings.
4. According to Sufi saints, a man becomes high not by his religion but by his deeds. If an untouchable performs a good deed, he will be considered as high.
5. The Sufis state that all religions are the same because the purpose of all religions is to attain God.

6. The Sufi saints and Bhakats gave more importance to peace and non-violence. They gave an exalted position of Guru and Pir.

2. Discuss the contribution of Amir Khusrau in the fields of music and literature.

Answer: Amir Khusrau was a literary person of the Persian language and was a great supporter of Hindi (Hindavi). He loved India and gave the status of Aristotle to Indian Brahmanas. He was born at Patiala in 1252 C.E. He gave more importance to this country in comparison with heaven. Following is given his contribution in the fields of music and literature:

1. Khusrau composed many anthologies which include the historical Premakhyan. He used all the forms of poetry and then formed a new Persian form which was later on called as Sabak-e-Hindi or Indian form of poetry.
2. Amir Khusrau gave a unique form to the Chishti Sama by introducing the qaul, a hymn sung at the opening or closing of qawwali. Qawwals at the shrine of Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya always started their recital with the qaul.
3. Amir Khusrau was himself a great musician and took part in many religious Sabhas. These Sabhas were organized by Sufi saint Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya. It has been said that Amir Khusrau died on the second day after the death of Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya.

3. Explain the development of regional languages in the Sultanate period.

Answer:

1. Regional languages developed to a great extent during the Sultanate period. Bhakat Saints of the whole of the country preaching in these languages. These languages took the form of present languages with the passage of time.
 2. Brij, Awadhi, Punjabi, Gujarati, Bangla, Kannada, Telugu, and Tamil of this period took the form of certain languages.
 3. Persian was the language of the state. As a result, Indian languages certainly were influenced by this language. Many words of Persian became part of Indian languages.
 4. The Urdu language originated in this age due to a mixture of Persian-Hindi languages.
 5. Many Sanskrit texts were translated into regional languages during the Sultanate period.
4. Describe the development of music in the Sultanate period.

Answer: During the Sultanate period, a mixed form of both Indian and Iranian style of music was developed. With the Turkish advent in India, many Iranian ragas were mixed into Indian ragas. Development of music took place in Khanqahs (hospice of Sufis). Many regional kings patronaged the music. Music was one of the major parts of the daily life of their palaces.

Amir Khusrau was one of the greatest musicians of this age who was given the title of 'Nayak'. He helped in the development of many Iranian-Arabian ragas like Emaan, Gora, Sanam, etc. He also helped in increase in the practice of Sitar and even of the Tabla as well. Sultan of Jaunpur, Hussain Sharki was a great lover of music. One Sufi saint Pir Bodhan resided in his kingdom who was also known as a very good musician. Raja Man Singh of Gwalior was also a music lover. Lodhi rulers also patronaged music.

5. Give a brief description of the new sources of history from the 8th to 18th centuries.

Answer: The period from the 8th to 18th century witnessed many new sources of history. They include compositions of the poet-saints. Most of these poet-saints expressed themselves orally. They used regional languages which were often used by ordinary people. Their compositions were a set to music and were compiled by their disciples or devotees who sometimes modified their original message to fit in different political, social, and cultural contexts.

The historians also use the hagiographies or biographies of these saints. All these sources provide us an insight into the dynamic and diverse lives of these path-breaking poet-saints.

LONG ANSWER QUESTION

1. How was the religious ferment in North India? How dominance of Brahmanas was reduced over there?

Answer: Rulers of North India constructed temples and deities like Vishnu and Shiva were worshipped over there. But historians did not find anything resembling the compositions of Alvar and Nayanar saints till the 14th century in North India. In this regard, some scholars are of the view that during this period, many Rajput kingdoms came into existence in North India. Brahmanas had an important place in all the Rajput kingdoms and they performed secular and religious functions.

➤ **Out of Brahmanical Structure:** At the same time, other religious leaders were gaining ground that did not function within the traditional Brahmanical framework. These leaders include Naths, Jogis, and Siddhas. Many of them belonged to artisan groups including weavers. Their importance was also increasing with the development of organized craft production. Demand for this production increased with the emergence of new urban centers and with the spread of long-distance trade with western and Central Asia.

➤ **The decline in the dominance of Brahmanas:** Many new religious leaders challenged the authority of Vedas and gave their ideas in the language of the common masses. Gradually, these languages developed over the centuries into the ones used today. Although these leaders were popular, they were unable to win over the support of the ruling elites. At the same time, Turks came to India and established Delhi Sultanate in the 13th century.

Conclusion: With the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate, the importance of Rajput Kingdoms and Brahmanas, associated with them, declined to a great extent. These changes also influenced our culture and religion. The advent of the Sufis in India was an important part of such developments.

2. How did India become a part of the Islamic world? How rulers who had faith in Islam, maintained a balance with their subjects?

Answer: Arab merchants frequently came along the parts of the western coast in the first millennium C.E. During the same period, people from Central Asia came to the sub-continent and settled in the north-western parts. With the advent of Islam and from the 7th century onwards, these regions became a part of that world which is often termed as the Islamic world.

Establishment of Islamic Authority: In 711 C.E., an Arab General Muhammad Bin Qasim conquered Sindh and annexed to the domains of Caliph. Later on (around the 13th century) Turks and Afghans established the Delhi Sultanate. Gradually, Sultanate spread in Deccan and other parts of the subcontinent. The religion of most of the rulers in most of the regions was Islam. This situation remained till the establishment of the Mughal Empire in the 16th century. Many regional kingdoms emerged in the 18th century and most of them had faith in Islam.

Maintaining balance with Subjects: Theoretically, Muslim rulers were supposed to be guided by the Ulemas. It was expected from Ulemas that they could ensure that they ruled according to the Sharia. But the situation in the subcontinent was complicated because a large section of the population did not subscribe to Islam.

In this context, Zimmi, which means protected category, was developed. Zimmi word was used for the people who followed revealed scriptures like Jews and Christians living in the regions of Islamic rulers. These people paid a tax called Jizya. In lieu of that, they gained the right of protection by Muslim rulers. Hindus in India were also included among Zimmis. That is why rulers like Mughals regarded themselves as emperors of Muslims and of all peoples.

Actually, rulers generally adopted a fairly flexible policy towards their subjects. For example, many rulers gave land grants and tax exemptions to Jainas, Hindus, Zoroastrians, Christians, and Jewish religious institutions. They also expressed their respect toward non-Muslim religious leaders. These grants were given by many Mughal rulers including Akbar, Aurangzeb, etc.

3. How did Islam become popular in India?

Answer: The changes that took place at the emergence of Islam were not confined to only the ruling class. In fact, they spread in the whole sub-continent. They affected different strata of social life such as the peasants, artisans, warriors and merchants. Those who adopted Islam accepted the following five pillars of the faith :

1. There is only one God i.e., Allah. Prophet Muhammad is the messenger of Allah.
2. Namaz should be offered five times a day.
3. Alms (Zakat) should be given to the needy.
4. Fasts should be kept in the month of Ramzan.
5. All Muslims should make the pilgrimage to Mecca (Hajj) at least once in their lives.

However, these universal principles were over-shadowed by various diversities. In practice, there were sectarian affiliations. There were differences between Shias and Sunnis. For example, the Khojahs, a branch of the Ismailis (a sect of Shia) developed new modes of communication. They spread the ideas of the Quran through their literary works.

Another reason for the popularity of Islam was that Arab Muslim traders who settled along the Malabar Coast in Kerala adopted Malayalam which was a local language. They also adopted local customs.

4. Give a brief description of the development of the Sufi idea and the organization of Khanqahs and Silsilas.

Or

“Sufism evolved as a reaction to the growing materialism of the caliphate as a religious and political institution.” Elucidate. (C.B.S.E. 2018)

Answer: Sufism became a well-developed movement in the eleventh century. It led to the publication of literature on Quranic studies and Sufi practices. The word Sufi is derived from suf, meaning wool. It shows the coarse woolen clothes worn by Sufis. Some people derive this word from ‘safe’ which meant purity. It may also have been derived from ‘stuff’ which signified the platform outside the mosque of the Prophet. The followers of the Prophet assembled near this

platform to learn about the faith. The Sufis began to organize communities around Khanqah. These Khanqahs were controlled by Shaikh who was a pir, or murshid, or the teaching master.

- The Sufis rejected the intellectual explanation of the Quran given by conservative religious leaders.
- They emphasized that the path of salvation lay in the devotion to God and obedience to his will.
- They stated that Prophet Muhammad was the Insaan-e-Quamil and therefore we should follow his ideals and teachings.
- They interpreted Quran on the basis of their personal experiences.

In other words, Khanqahs established rules for spiritual conduct. But in the 12th century, silsilas began to crystallize in different parts of the Islamic world. The word 'silsila' literally meant a chain. It signified a continuous link between the master and the disciple. It helped in transmitting spiritual power and blessings to the devotees. Those who joined silsila took an oath of allegiance. They wore a patched garment and shaved their head.

When the Shaikh died, a tomb-shrine was built in his honor. This dargah soon became the center of devotion for all his followers. This encouraged the practice of pilgrimage or ziyarat. People visited such dargahs either on a death anniversary or marriage. In other words, the Shaikh was revered as Wali.

5. Discuss the activities of Chishti Silsila in the sub-continent on the basis of Khanqah of Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya.

Answer: Chishtis was the most influential among Sufi communities that came over to India at the end of the 12th century. It was so because they not only adapted themselves to the local environment but they also adopted many things of Indian bhakti tradition.

Khanqah of Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya: Khanqah was the central point of social life. We can understand this thing by the Khanqah of Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya (14th century). It was situated on the banks of river Yamuna in Ghiyaspur, on the outskirts of then Delhi. A number of small rooms and a big hall (Jama'at Khana) were there wherein inmates and visitors used to live. Inmates included the family of the Shaikh, his attendants, and disciples. Shaikh used to live in a small room on the roof where he used to meet visitors in the morning and evening. A veranda was surrounded by the courtyard and a boundary wall ran around the complex of Khanqah. Once people of the neighboring areas took shelter in Khanqah at the time of the Mongol invasion.

There was an open kitchen (Langar) which was run on fudra (unasked-for charity) right from the morning till late night. People from all walks of life including slaves, soldiers, merchants, singers, travelers, poets, rich and poor, Hindu Jogis and qalandars came over here to seek discipleship, amulets for healing, and the intercession of the Shaikh in different matters. Some other visitors included Amir Hasan Sijzi, poets like Amir Khusrau, and court historians like Ziya-ud-din Barani. All of these wrote about the Shaikh. Bowing before the Shaikh, offering water to visitors, shaving the heads of initiates, and yogic exercises indicated that efforts were made to assimilate local traditions.

Shaikh Nizam-ud-din also appointed his spiritual successors and deputed them to establish hospices or Khanqahs in different parts of the sub-continent. In this way, the teachings, practices, organization, and fame of Shaikh spread rapidly all over. People started to turn to his shrine and shrines of his spiritual ancestors as pilgrims.