

Bhakti and Sufi Movement

BHAKTI MOVEMENT

- It was a religious reform movement during medieval times which emphasized single-minded intense devotion to God.
- Bhakti movement was based on the doctrine that the relationship between god and man is through love and worship rather than through performing any ritual or religious ceremonies.
- The origin of Bhakti is traced in Vedas, but its real development took place after the 7th
- It was initiated by ShaivaNayanars&VaishnaviteAlvars in south India, later spread to all regions.
- Emotional Side of Vaishnavism represented by: Alvars through collective songs – “Prabhandas”.
- Intellectual side of Vaishnavism represented by: “Acharyas”

Alvars and Nayanars

The Alvars and Nayanars led some of the earliest Bhakti movements (c. sixth century).

- Alvars – those who are “immersed” in devotion to Vishnu.
- Nayanars – those who are devotees of Shiva.
- They travelled from place to place singing hymns in Tamil praising their gods.
- 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. This is supported by the fact that bhaktas or disciples hailed from diverse social backgrounds ranging from Brahmanas to artisans and cultivators and even from castes considered “untouchable”.
- The NalayiraDivyaPrabandham (“Four Thousand Sacred Compositions”) is one of the major anthologies of compositions of the 12 Alvars collected and compiled in the 10th century by Nathamuni.
- Tevaram – a collection of the first seven volumes of Tirumurai (Saiva devotional poetry) contains the work of Tamil poets – Appar, Sambandar, and Sundarar.

FEATURES OF BHAKTI MOVEMENT

- Unity of God or one God though known by different names.
- Condemnation of rituals, ceremonies and blind faith.
- Rejection of idol worship.

- Surrender of oneself to God.
- Emphasized both **Nirguna and Saguna bhakti**.
- Salvation through Bhakti.
- Open-mindedness about religious matters.
- Rejected castes distinctions & believed in equality of all humans.
- Rebelled against the upper caste's domination and the Sanskrit language.
- Use of local or regional languages for Preaching.
- Creation of literature in local language.

Causes for the emergence of Bhakti Movement:

- Influence of Vaishnavism
- Evil practices of the Hindus
- Fear of spread of Islam
- Influence of Sufi sects
- The emergence of great reformers.

Vedanta Saints and Their Contribution

Shankaracharya (c. 788 – 820 CE)

- One of the mystic Bhakti poet-saint leaders who gave a new orientation to Hinduism.
- He was born in Kaladi in Kerala. He propounded the **Advaita** (Monism) philosophy and the idea of Nirgunabrahman (god without attributes).
- In Advaita, the reality of the world is denied and Brahman is considered the only reality. It is only Brahman at its base that gives it its reality.
- His famous quotes include, 'Brahma Satyam JagatMithyaJivoBrahmatraNaparaha' meaning, "The Absolute Spirit is the reality, the world of appearance is Maya" and 'EkamevaAdviteeyam Brahma' meaning, "The absolute is one alone, not two".
- He laid emphasis on knowledge (gyan) as that can alone lead to salvation.
- Upadesahasri, Vivekachudamani, BhajaGovindumStotra are some of the works authored by Shankaracharya. He also wrote commentaries on the Bhagavad Gita, the Brahma Sutra and the Upanishads.
- He set up mathas at Dwarka, Puri, Sringeri and Badrinath.

Ramanuja (c. 1017 – 1137 CE)

- In the 12th century, Ramanuja, who was born at Sriperumbudur near modern Chennai, preached **VishistaAdvaitavada** (qualified monism). According to him, God is Saguna Brahman (with attributes) and the creative process including all the objects in creation are real and not illusory as was held by Shankaracharya. Therefore, according to Ramanuja, God, soul, and matter are real. However, God is the inner substance and the rest are his attributes.
- In VishistaAdvaitavada, the universe and Brahman are considered two equally real entities, as in dualism, but here the universe is not separate from Brahman but is formed out of Brahman. The Brahman is considered as a personal god with omniscient qualities who has created the world out of his own self. Thus, the world bears to Brahman the relation of the part to the whole, or the relation of a 'qualified effect' to the base (hence qualified monism).
- The famous analogy given for this is the sea and wave – Brahman is the sea and the objects of the world, both living and nonliving are the waves upon this sea.
- According to Ramanuja, Brahman is an entirely personal god and is considered to be Vishnu or one of his avatars. He believed that Vishnu has created the world out of his love for humans, and he also controls the world at every step. He also held that Vishnu has all the qualities of a personal god – omniscient, omnipotence, etc.
- The difference between Dualism and VishistaAdvaita is that "mankind enjoys higher status than in pure dualistic worship and is nearer to God". In VishistaAdvaita, both the world and Brahman are considered equally real; they are not considered to be two separate entities as in Dualism.
- Ramanuja advocated prabattimarga or the path of self-surrender to God. He invited downtrodden people to Vaishnavism and advocated salvation by Bhakti.
- He authored Sribhashya, Vedanta Dipa, Gita Bhasya and Vedantasara.

Madhavacharya (c. 1238 – 1317 CE)

- Madhava from Kannada preached Dvaita or the dualism of Jivatma and Paramatma. According to his philosophy, the world is not an illusion but a reality and full of real distinction.
- God, soul and matter are unique in nature, and are irreducible to each other.
- He founded the Brahma Sampradaya.
- He considered Brahman and the universe to be two equally real entities that are not related in any way. The God of dualism is Vishnu who has created the universe, and the universe is separate from God and in an inferior position to God with no link between

the two. Vishnu controls all worldly affairs and to worship and pray to God is the duty of all persons.

Nimbarka

- He was the younger contemporary of Ramanuja who propounded the DvaitaAdvaita philosophy and the philosophy of BhedaAbheda (difference/non-difference). The BhedaAbheda philosophy, like VishistaAdvaita, also believes that the world and the Brahman are both equally real and that the world is a part of Brahman. The difference is in emphasis only.
- He was the preacher of Vaishnavite Bhakti in the Telangana region.
- He also founded the SanakSampradaya.

Vallabhacharya (c. 1479 – 1531 CE)

- He was born in Benaras to a Telugu Brahmin family. He propagated his doctrine of Bhakti (devotion) through god Krishna whom he fondly addressed as ShrinathJi.
- He founded pustimarga (the path of grace) – a path that teaches a devotee how to offer selfless love and devotion to ShrinathJi without expecting anything in return but love.
- He propounded the philosophy of ShudhAdvaita (pure monism) which forms the basis of the pushtimarg devotional practice. ShudhAdvaita like VishistaAdvaita too indicates that the entire universe is the manifestation of Brahman. It is like the two sides of the coin, with Brahman as one side and the universe another side. There is no change – the universe is a part of the coin that is Brahman. Hence, this is called “ShudhAdvaita” because it is said that there is only one and there is no change.

SAINTS	THEIR CONTRIBUTION
Ramanada (14-15th century]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ He was a follower of Ramanuja. ❖ Founder of Sant-parampara (literally, the tradition of bhakti saints) in north India. ❖ Substitute the worship of Rama in place of Krishna. ❖ He has 12 disciples – “Avadutas”. ❖ Disciple(s): Kabir, Ravidas, BhagatPipa, Sukhanand, sena&sudhana. ❖ Literary works: Gyan-lila and Yog-cintamani (Hindi), Vaisnava Mata Bhajabhaskara and Ramarcnapaddhati (Sanskrit). ❖ His verse mentioned in Guru Granth Sahib.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Disciple of Ramananda ❖ He was the first to reconcile Hinduism and Islam. ❖ He was a Nirguna saint and openly criticised the orthodox ideas

Kabir Das (1440-1510 AD)	<p>of major religions like Hinduism and Islam.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Denounced idol-worship, fastings, pilgrimages and religious superstitious beliefs, bathing in holy rivers, formal worship like nama. ❖ His poems are called “Banis” (utterances) or ‘Dohe’. His works are compiled in the famous book “Bijak”. ❖ Kabir says: “Ram Rahim are same”.
Guru Nanak Dev (1469-1538 AD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Birth – Talvandi Village & Death Kartarpur (Both are in Pakistan) ❖ Founder of Sikh religion & the first Guru of ten Sikh Gurus. Initially worked as Accountant. ❖ Preached middle path & need of Guru for liberation. ❖ He composed hymns and sang along with the help of instrument called “Rabab” played by his attendant “Mardana”. ❖ Travelled across the Asia including Mecca & Baghdad and spread the message of “IkOnkar” – One God. ❖ Opposes idol worship, pilgrimage and caste system, and emphasized purity of character and conduct. ❖ Called God as “Waheguru” that is shapeless, timeless, omnipresent & invisible (Nirgun Bhakti) ❖ He started Guru-Ka-langer (Community Kitchen) ❖ He promoted “Tauhid-e-wazidi”
Purandar Das (1483-1564)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ One of the chief founding-proponents of the South Indian classical music (Carnatic Music). ❖ He is often quoted as Karnataka Sangeeta Pitamaha
Dadu Dayal (1544-1603 AD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Disciple of Kabir ❖ He was a supporter of Hindu-Muslim unity ❖ His followers were called Dadu Panthis
Chaitanya Mahaprabhu (1486-1533 AD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Founder of modern Vaishnavism in Bengal. ❖ He was a Saguna and popularized “Kirtans” (religious songs) as a form of worshipping God. ❖ Popularized the chanting of “Hare Rama, Hare Krishna”. ❖ He made famous the practice of worshipping Radha and Krishna together. He gave the “Achintya Bheda-Abheda” philosophy. ❖ Didn’t reject scriptures or idol worship called god as Hari. ❖ He wrote “Siksastakam”, a text in Sanskrit, where he elaborated his philosophy. ❖ He is the inspiration behind the world renowned ISKCON (International Society for Krishna Consciousness) that was founded in the 20th century.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Spread the Bhakti cult in Assam

Shankaradeva (1499-1569 AD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Translated Ramayana & Mahabharat into Assamese ❖ He started the Ekasarana movement (Neo-Vaishnavite movement). He believed in the worship of 'Ekasarana' (One God) in the form of Krishna. ❖ He also called Krishna by different names like Hari, Narayan and Rama. ❖ His most famous work is "KirtanaGhosha", written in a simple language understood by the masses. ❖ He wrote in Assamese and Brajavali (mixture of Maithili and Assamese).
Vallabhacharya (1479-1531 AD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Exponent of Krishna cult ❖ Founded philosophy of "Suddhadvaita" (Pure Non dualism) and his philosophy is known as 'PushtiMarg'. ❖ He worshipped Krishna under the title "Srinathji"
Guru Ghasidas (1756-1836 AD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ He was a famous saint from Chhattisgarh and he established the "Satnami Community" there. ❖ He strongly believed in equality and criticized the oppressive caste system. ❖ He was a monotheist and was against idol worship.
Surdas (1483-1563 AD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Disciple of Vallabhacharya ❖ He wrote "Sursagar" and "Sursurvali". ❖ Showed intense devotion to Radha and Krishna ❖ Regarded as the outstanding devotional poet in Brajbhasha
Mirabai (1498-1546 AD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Staunch devotee of Lord Krishna ❖ Composed number of songs and poems in honour of Krishna. ❖ She composed 'bhajans' (short religious songs) which are sung even today.
Haridas (1478-1573 AD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ A great musician saint who sang the glories of Lord Vishnu
Tulsidas (1532-1623 AD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Depicted Rama as the incarnation ❖ Wrote "Ramcharitmanas" ❖ He was Varkari
Namdeva (1270-1350AD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Disciple of VishobaKhechar ❖ He was a devotee of Vittoba (Vishnu) ❖ Opposed Caste system ❖ Only Nirguna saint in Maharashtra. ❖ He belongs to Varkari tradition.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ He was founder of the Bhakti Movement in Maharashtra in the 13th century.

Dnyanesvar (1275-1296 AD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Wrote “Dnyaneswari”, a commentary on the Bhagavad-Gita. ❖ His other work is “Amrutanubhav” on Yoga and philosophy. ❖ He was a worshipper of Vithoba (Vitthala) who is considered a manifestation of Vishnu. ❖ He was a follower of Nath Yogi Tradition. He also drew inspiration from the Upanishads and Bhagavad Gita.
Ekknath (1533-1599)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Wrote commentary on verses of the Bhagavad-Gita ❖ Devotee of Vithoba. He criticized the Caste distinctions.
Tukaram (1598-1650)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Contemporary of Maratha king Shivaji ❖ Devotee of Vithal ❖ He founded the Varkau sect ❖ His teachings are contained in Abhangas.
Ram Das (1608-1681)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Author of “Dasabodh” ❖ His teachings inspired Shivaji to establish an independent kingdom in Maharashtra.

- He also founded RudraSampradaya.
- He along with his disciple Surdas was largely instrumental in popularising the Krishna cult in north India.

Vidyapati (c. 1352 – 1448 CE)

- Vidyapati was known for his poetry dedicated to Shiva, whom he fondly addressed as Uzna.

VIRASHAIVISM/ SHARANA MOVEMENT

- The Virashaiva movement began in Karnataka in the mid-twelfth century.
- It was initiated by Basavanna and other virshaivas like AllamaPrabhu and Akkamahadevi.
- They fought for the equality of all human beings and against the Brahmanical ideas of caste and poor treatment of women.
- They were also against religious rituals and idol worship.
- Challenged caste system, questioned the theory of rebirth
- Encouraged post puberty marriage & widow remarriage.
- Basavanna spread social awareness through his poetry, popularly known as Vachanaas.
- He established AnubhavaMantapa– academy of mystics, saints and philosophers of the ‘Lingayath’s’ faith.

IMPACT OF BHAKTI MOVEMENT:

- The Bhakti saints were social reformers. The evil practice of Sati and caste rigidities received some set back.
- Women were encouraged to join kirtans. Mirabai, Laila (Kashmir) and Andal composed verses that are popular even today.
- In place of Sanskrit, Bhakti saints preached through the medium of local languages which could be understood very easily. Surdas used 'Brij'. Tulsi Das composed his works in 'Awadhi'. Shankaradeva popularizing Assamese, Chaitanya spreading their message in Bengali, Mirabai in Hindi and Rajasthani.
- Kirtan at a Hindu Temple, Qawwali at a Dargah (by Muslims), and singing of Gurbani at a Gurdwara are all derived from the Bhakti movement of medieval India (800-1700).
- It popularized idea of equality & brotherhood.
- Preached inclusive path to spiritual salvation.
- Rulers adopted liberal religious policies under the impact of the Bhakti movement.

SUFI MOVEMENT:

- In beginning of 12 AD, some religious people in Persia turned to asceticism due to the increasing materialism of the Caliphate. They came to be called the 'Sufis'.
- In India, Sufi movement began in 1300 A.D & came to South India in 15th century.
- Sufism is the mystical arm of Islam. Sufis represent the inner side of the Islam creed (tasawwuf).
- Sufism(tasawwuf) is the name given to mysticism in Islam.
- Sufi means wool: People who wear long woolen clothes were called as sufis.
- It was a liberal reform movement within Islam. It stressed the elements of love and devotion as an effective means of the realization of God.
- It is based on Pir-Murid (Teacher- student)
- Sufism sprang from the doctrine of Wahadut-ul-wajud (unity of being) propounded by Ibn-ul-Arabi [1165-1240 AD].
- Early Sufi saints – Rabia, Mansur bin hallal.
- Sufi orders are broadly divided in two : Ba-sara– Those followed Islamic law & Be-shara– who did followed Islamic law.
- In Sufism, self-discipline was considered an essential condition to gain knowledge of God. While orthodox Muslims emphasise external conduct, the Sufis lay stress on inner purity.

- Sufism entered in India between 11th and 12th Al-Hujwari was first Sufis who settled in India and died in 1089 AD who is popularly known as Data GanjNaksh (Distributor of unlimited treasure).
- Multan and Punjab were the early centre and later on, it spread to Kashmir, Bihar, Bengal and the Deccan.

THE ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF SUFISM:

- **Fana:** Spiritual merger of devotee with Allah
- **Insan-e-kamil:** Perfect human with all good virtues,
- **Zikr-tauba:** remembrance of god all the time(zikr),
- **Wahadatul-wazudi:** one god for entire universe; unity of god and being.
- **Sama:** spiritual dance and music to promote their concepts, though music is un-Islamic.

THREE STAGES IN THE HISTORY OF SUFISM:

STAGE	PERIOD	CHARACTER
1st Stage: Khanqah	10th century	Also called the age of Golden Mysticism
2nd Stage: Tariqa	11-14th century	When Sufism was being institutionalised and traditions and symbols started being attached to it.
3rd Stage: Tarifa	15th century onwards	The stage when Sufism became a popular movement.

SUFISM AND MUSIC:

- Sufism encourages music as a way of deepening one's relation with God, remembering God by zikr (reciting name) sama or performance of mystical music.
- Sufis too composed poems and a rich literature in prose, including anecdotes and fables, The most notable writer of this period was Amir Khusrau the follower of NizamuddinAuliya.
- Sufi saints are credited with invention of sitar and tabla.
- It contributed to evolution of classical music. Khayal style owes a lot to sufism.
- Amir Khusro was disciple of NizamuddinAuliya. He give unique form to sama.
- Khusrow is sometimes referred to as the "Parrot of India". His songs are sung in several dargahs across the country. Khusrow is regarded as the "Father of Qawwali".

IMPORTANT FEATURES:

- The Sufis rejected the elaborate rituals and codes of behaviour demanded by Muslim religious scholars.
- They believed that God is 'Mashuq' and Sufis are the 'Ashiqs'.
- Sufism was divided into 12 orders (Silsila) and each under a mystic Sufi saint of which 4 most popular ones were Chistis, Suhrawardis, Qadiriya and Naqshbandis.
- Silsila is continuous link between Murshid (teacher) and Murid (student). They lived in Khanqah -hospice of worship.
- Names of Silsila were based on name of founding figure E.g. – QadriSilsila based on name of Shaikh Abdul Qadri& Place of origin E.g. – Chishti (place in Afghanistan).
- Sufism took roots in both rural and urban areas and exercised a deep social, political and cultural influence on the masses.
- Sufism believes that devotion is more important than fast (Roza) or prayer (Namaz).

IMPORTANT SILISILA/ORDERS OF SUFIS:

- Sufism discards caste system.
- Sufism has adapted extensively from the Vedanta school of the Hindu philosophy.

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| Chisti | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Founder -Kwaja Abdul Chisti.• Originated in Persia and Central Asia.• MoinuddinChishti introduced Chisti order in India.• Baba Farid (FarīduddīnGanjshakar) was disciple of Moinuddin& his poems included in Guru granthsahib.• NizamuddinAuliya was called sidh/perfect due to yogi breathing exercises.• Sama was mostly associated with Chisti.• Belong to Ba sharia. |
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| Suhravardi | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Founder – ShaikhShihabuddinSurhavardi.• Main centre was Multan.• Saints of this order were also rich and held important government positions.• Associated with Delhi Sultanate.• A famous saint is Bahauddin Zachariah.• Belong to Ba-sharia |
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| Nakshabadi | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Founder – Baha-ud-Din NaqshbandBukhari• Khwajapirmohammad introduced Nakshabadi order in India during Akbar reign.• Orthodox Sect.• Mujaddid opposed Shia, philosophy of Wahadat-ul-Shahdud , wrote 'Red-i-Khafid' arrested by Jhangir |
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- The cardinal doctrines of the Sufism include: Complete surrender to the will of God; Annihilation of the self; Becoming a perfect person
- These three cardinal principles altogether make the Doctrine of Fana which means annihilation of human attributes through Union with God.
- In Sufism, a perfect being is also called a Wali (saint), a word that literally means 'sincere friend'.