



COMPOSITE CULTURE: THE SUFI AND BHAKTI MOVEMENTS

Short-Answer Questions

1. Who were the Sufis?

Ans. People who came from Persia to India in order to spread religious teachings were termed as Sufis.

2. Give any two principles of Chishti Silsila of Sufism.

Ans. (i) The Chisti Silsila of Sufism instructed people to live in cooperation with each other and to respect each other's religion.

(ii) 'Ishwar' and 'Allah' are one and the same thing and so the people should not fight over this question any more.

3. Name any two Sufi saints.

Ans. Nasir-ud-din Chirag-i-Dilli and Salim Chisti.

4. Who was the Sufi saint whose Durgah was established at Ajmer?

Ans. Hazrat Khwaja Muin-ud-din Chishti.

5. Name one Sufi saint whose Durgah was established at Delhi.

Ans. Nizam-ud-din Aulia.

6. Mention any two major effects of Sufism.

Ans. (i) Sufism greatly encouraged the feelings of Hindu-Muslim unity.

(ii) It led to the popularity of the Bhakti movement, because many principles of Sufism were similar to those of the Bhakti cult.

7. What is meant by Bhakti?

Ans. Bhakti means a great love and devotion to God.

8. Explain any two causes of the rise of the Bhakti Movement.

Ans. (i) Bhakti saints emphasised simple ways for the realisation of God.

- (ii) At the time when society had become polarised, they discarded caste, colour, creed and gender based bias.

9. Give any two principles of the Bhakti Movement.

- Ans.** (i) God is one and he alone should be worshipped.
(ii) By following the path of true devotion (or Bhakti) one can find salvation.

10. Name any two reformers of the Bhakti Movement.

Ans. Ramanuja and Kabir.

11. Mention any two effects of the Bhakti Movement.

- Ans.** (i) It removed the bitterness between the Hindus and the Muslims.
(ii) It checked the spread of conversion.

12. Why were the common masses attracted towards the Bhakti saints?

Ans. Because Bhakti saints preached in the popular local languages of the people like Hindi, Marathi, Bengali, Oriya, Assamese, Telugu and Kannada.

13. What is the contribution of Francis Xavier to Christianity?

Ans. Francis Xavier travelled to many countries including India and south-east Asia and won a great many Christian Converts. He preached the christian religion to such a wider area which no Christian preacher could do.

14. What is the place of Robert de Nobili among the Christian missionaries?

Ans. In order to win a large number of converts to Christianity Robert de Nobili adopted many customs of India. He began to dress himself as a Sanyasi. He is said to have authored many books on Christianity which led to the popularity of this religion.

Structured Essay-Type Questions

1. With reference to the main principles of Sufism, answer the following :

- (a) Attitude towards God

- (b) Emphasis on right living
- (c) Unity of all religions.

Ans. (a) God is one and all powerful, and all men are His children. If anyone wants to get the love and blessings of God he should try to *love mankind*. An English poet has similarly remarked, "*To love God is to love Mankind.*"

- (b) True faith depends upon right living. Only *good actions* lead to good results and so one should try to do good acts rather than run after rituals and useless religious ceremonies.
- (c) All regions are inherently *good* because they all aim at the attainment of God's love. Different religions are only different manifestations of the desire to know the truth.

2. With reference to Hazrat Khwaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti, explain the following :

- (a) Country from which he migrated to India
- (b) His teachings
- (c) Place where his Durgah is established.

Ans. (a) Hazrat Khwaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti migrated from Persia.

- (b) Khwaja Muin-ud-Din Chishti instructed the people to live in cooperation with each other and to respect each other's religion.
- (c) Ajmer

3. With reference to the main principles of the Bhakti Movement, explain the following :

- (a) Attitude towards God
- (b) Social institutions which they attacked or condemned
- (c) Brotherhood of mankind.

Ans. (a) God is one and He alone should be worshipped.

- (b) Blind faiths, *useless ceremonies* and *showy religious rites* were severely attacked and much emphasis was laid on right actions.

- (c) All men are equal and there is no question of superiority or inferiority among them. There is brotherhood of mankind.

4. With reference to Kabir, answer the following :

- (a) His early life
- (b) Quote any one of his Dohas
- (c) Two of his main teachings.

- Ans.** (a) The most important reformer of the Bhakti Movement was Kabir. But unfortunately we do not know anything definite about his early life. Some say that he was born of a Hindu widow who threw him off to escape infamy and consequently he was brought up by Niru, a Muslim weaver. There are some who suggest that he was originally a Muslim but came under the influence of Hinduism. Anyhow it is certain that he was the most famous disciple or ramanand and flourished in the first half of the 15th century CE. He was born at Benaras (in about 1398 CE) and was a weaver by profession.
- (b) *"If by worshipping stones one can find God, I shall worship a mountain. Better than these stones (idols) is a stone of the flour mill with which men grind the corn."*
- (c) Kabir's teachings are contained in his 'dohas' which are still sung with great pleasure even up to this day. In them he preached against caste distinctions, supremacy of the Brahmanas, image worship, rituals and ceremonies, pilgrimage to the so-called holy places and insincerity and hypocrisy.

5. Write short notes on the following :

- (a) Mira Bai
- (b) Guru Nanak.

- Ans.** (a) **Mira Bai:** She was a Bhakti saint of Rajasthan. She was a great worshipper of Krishna who preached in 'Brijbhāsa', the common language of the people. She

preached the value of devotion to Krishna whereby one can get salvation from the endless circles of death and birth. Her devotional songs are very sweet and are still very popular among the masses. There are few who do not love singing her songs. By her sweet and devotional songs Mira Bai did a lot in popularising the Bhakti cult.

- (b) **Guru Nanak (1469 to 1539 A.D.):** Another reformer of the Bhakti Movement was Guru Nanak, founder of the Sikh faith in India. He was born at Talwandi (Punjab) in 1469 A.D. Like Kabir he preached against image-worship and caste distinctions, and laid emphasis on the unity of God. According to him good actions shall alone be counted in God's court and metaphysical discussions are completely useless.

6. What do you know about the following?

- (a) Francis Xavier
(b) Roberto de Nobili

Ans. (a) Francis Xavier (1506–1552 A.D.): Francis Xavier was an important Portuguese preacher who travelled to many countries including India and south-east Asia and won a great many Christian converts. He preached the Christian religion to a wider area. The body of this saint still lies in **Bom Jesus Church in Goa**. The list of the principal *miracles* may be found in the *Bull of canonisation*. St. Francis Xavier is considered the greatest missionary since the time of the *Apostles*, and the *zeal* he displayed, the wonderful *miracles* he performed, and the great number of *souls* he brought to the light of true Faith, entitle him to this distinction. He was *canonised* with St. Ignatius in 1622, although on account of the death of Gregory XV, the *Bull of canonisation* was not published until the following year."

- (b) **Roberto de Nobili (1577-1656 A.D.):** He was an Italian Christian missionary who preached the Christian religion in southern India. In order to win a large number of converts to Christianity he adopted many customs of India. He reached Goa on May 20, 1605. He began to dress himself as a Sanyasi. He learned Sanskrit and Tamil languages and held dialogue with Hindu scholars. He wore white *dhoti* and wooden sandals and adopted the Indian customs of shaving one's head. He himself composed many works in Sanskrit and Tamil. His adopting the Indian customs of three-stringed thread, sandalwood paste on the forehead, tiny tuft etc. were opposed by many Christian missionaries but the then Christian Pope (Pope Gregory XV) decided in favour of Roberto de Nobili which greatly enhanced his reputation. He is said to have authored many books on Christianity which led to the popularity of this religion. Father Roberto de Nobili died at the ripe age of 79 in January 1656 at the height of his reputation.