

Chapter 8

Devotional Paths

Q.1 Match the following:

The Buddha	Namghar
Shankaradava	Worship of Vishnu
Nizamuddin Auliya	Questioned social differences
Nayanars	Sufi saint
Alvars	Worship of shiva

Ans.:

The Buddha	Questioned social differences
Shankaradava	Namghar
Nizamuddin Auliya	Sufi saint
Nayanars	Worship of shiva
Alvars	Worship of Vishnu

Q.2 Fill in the blanks

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

Ans.: (a) Shankara was an advocate of a dvaita.

(b) Ramanuja was influenced by the Alvars.

(c) Basavanna, Allama Prabhu and Akkamahadevi were advocates of Virashaivism.



(d) Vitthala temple was an important centre of the Bhakti tradition in Maharashtra.

Q.3 Describe the beliefs and practices of the Nathpanthis, Siddhas and Yogis.

Ans.: 1. The Nathpanthis, Siddhas and Yogis believed in the renunciation of the world.

2. They criticized the ritual and other aspects of conventional religion and social order.

3. According to them, the path of salvation lay in meditating on the formless ultimate reality and oneness.

4. They stressed on intense training of the mind and body through yogasanas, breathing exercises and meditation.

Q.4 What were the major ideas expressed by Kabir? How did he express these?

Ans.: The following ideas were expressed by Kabir :

1. Kabir rejected the major religious traditions.

2. He believed in a formless Supreme God.

3. For him, the path of salvation was through bhakti or devotion.

4. He expressed his ideas through verses called sakhis and pads.

5. He openly made fun of all external forms of the religion, Hindu and Islam, also the pre-eminence of priestly classes and the cast system.

Let's understand

Q.5 What were the major beliefs and practices of the Sufis?

Ans.: The following were the major beliefs and the practices of the Sufis:

1. Sufis were Muslim mystics and they rejected the outward religiosity.
2. The Sufis believed in union with God as a lover seeking his beloved.
3. They also believed that the heart could be trained to look at the world in a different way.
4. They rejected the elaborate rituals and codes of behavior demanded by Muslim religious scholars.
5. The Sufis developed various methods of raining using Zikr (chanting of a name or sacred formula), contemplation, singing and dancing.
6. The sufi masters held their assemblies in Khanqahs, there they discussed spiritual matters and sought the blessings of saints.

Q.6 Why do you think many teachers rejected prevalent religious beliefs and practices?

Ans.: Many teachers rejected prevalent religious beliefs and practices because:

1. Such beliefs advocated social differences and practicing them was difficult and cumbersome.
2. The lower cast was oppressed by upper cast.
3. They wanted to free the right of worship God and simplify it by abandoning the rituals to please God.
4. They believed in power of personal devotion.

Q.7 What were the major teachings of Baba Guru Nanak?

Ans.: The following were the major teachings of the Baba Guru Nanak:



1. Baba Guru Nanak emphasized the worship of one God.
2. He directed people to the importance of right belief and worship, honest living and helping others.
3. According to him, caste, creed or gender was irrelevant for attaining liberation.
4. Liberation for him was not that of a state of inert bliss but the pursuit of active life with a strong sense of social commitment.
5. He gave the motto of nam, dan and isnan, which meant right worship, the welfare of others and purity of conduct.

Let's discuss

Q.8 For either the Virashaivas or the sants of Maharashtra, discuss their attitude towards caste.

Ans.: The attitude of Virashaivas or the sants of Maharashtra are discussed as follows:

1. Both Virashaivas and the saints of Maharashtra rejected social inequality and caste differences.
2. They reacted to the temple worship.
3. They rejected the ideas of Brahmans towards cast system and women.
4. Argued for the equality of all human beings, mainly the Virashaivas.

Q.9 Why do you think ordinary people preserved the memory of Mirabai?

Ans.: Ordinary people have preserved the memory of Mirabai because of:

1. She belonged to the royal family.

2. Her songs openly challenge the norms of the upper castes.
3. She left her husband and even drink the poison but did not die. This popularized her as being saved by lord and as a true devotee.