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ART AND CULTURE

BHAKTHI AND SUFI MOVEMENT

BHAKTI MOVEMENT

- ✓ Historians of religion often classify bhakti traditions into two broad categories:
 - **Saguna (with attributes):** included traditions that focused on the worship of specific deities such as Shiva, Vishnu and his avatars (incarnations) and forms of the goddess or Devi, all often conceptualised in anthropomorphic forms.
 - **Nirguna bhakti (without attributes)** was worship of an abstract form of God.

Tamil Bhakti movement

- ✓ Some of the earliest bhakti movements (c. sixth century) were led by the Alvars and Nayanars. They travelled from place to place singing hymns in Tamils in praise of their gods.
- ✓ Both Nayanars and Alvars were revered by the **Vellala peasants**. Not surprisingly, rulers tried to win their support as well.

✓ Nayanars:

- The Nayanars were a group of 63 saints who lived in Tamil Nadu during the 6th to 8th centuries CE and were devoted to the Hindu god Shiva.
- There were 63 Nayanars, who belonged to different caste backgrounds such as potters, “untouchable” workers, peasants, hunters, soldiers, Brahmanas and chiefs. The best known among them were **Appar, Sambandar, Sundarar and Manikkavasagar**. There are two sets of compilations of their songs – **Tevaram and Tiruvacakam**.
- **Manikkavasagar:** He was a 9th-century Tamil poet who wrote **Tiruvasakam**, a book of Shaiva hymns. He was one of the main authors of **Saivite Tirumurai**. A minister to the Pandya king, he lived in Madurai.
- **Karaikkal Ammaiyar, Mangayarkkarasiyar, Isaiganiyar** are the women Nayanars.



A bronze image of Karaikkal Ammaiyar
Image from NCERT

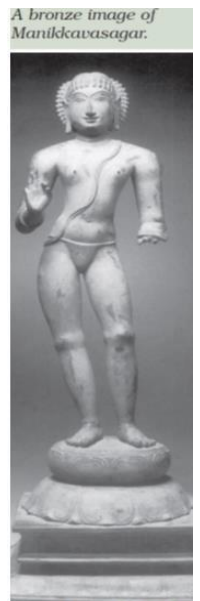


Image from NCERT

✓ Alvars:

- There were 12 Alvars, who came from equally divergent backgrounds, the best known being **Periyalvar, his daughter Andal, Tondaradippodi Alvar and Nammalvar**.
- Their songs were compiled in the Divya Prabandham.

Note: One of the major themes in Tamil bhakti hymns is the poets’ opposition to Buddhism and Jainism.

Vedanta Schools

✓ Adishankara:

- Shankara was born in Kerala in the eighth century.
- He was an **advocate of Advaita or the doctrine of the oneness of the individual soul and the Supreme God** which is the Ultimate Reality.

- He taught that Brahman, the only or Ultimate Reality, was formless and without any attributes.
- He considered the world around us to be an illusion or maya, and **preached renunciation of the world** and adoption of the path of knowledge to understand the true nature of Brahman and attain salvation.

✓ Ramanuja:

- Ramanuja was born in Tamil Nadu in the eleventh century, was deeply influenced by the Alvars. According to him the best means of attaining salvation was through intense devotion to Vishnu. Vishnu in His grace helps the devotee to attain the bliss of union with Him.
- He propounded the **doctrine of Vishishtadvaita or qualified oneness** in that the soul even when united with the Supreme God remained distinct. Ramanuja's doctrine greatly inspired the new strand of bhakti which developed in north India subsequently.
- He was a proponent of **Sri Sampradaya**, a Vaishnavite sampradaya.

✓ Madhavacharya

- Madhvacharya was born on the west coast of Karnataka state in **13th- century**.
- Madhava propagated **Dvaita or the dualism of the Jivatma and Paramatma**. According to this philosophy, the world is not an illusion but a reality. Brahman and the world are considered to be two equally real entities and not related in any way.
- He was also a proponent of **Brahma Sampradaya**, a vaishnavite sampradaya.

✓ Nimbarka:

- The philosophy of **Bheda Abheda** (difference/ non-difference) was founded by Nimbarka who probably lived in **13th century**.
- He also founded **Kumara Sampradaya**, a Vaishnavite sampradaya.

✓ Vallabhacharya:

- He was born in Benaras in the 15th century and widely believed to be a **contemporary of Krishnadeva Raya**.
- He **propounded** the **Shudhadvaita** (pure monism).
- He also **propounded** the **Rudra Sampradaya or Pushti Marg** philosophy of Vaishnavism.

✓ Chaitanya:

- Shri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was the chief proponent of the **Achintya Bheda Abheda (Inconceivable Difference/One-ness) Vedanta school**.
- He was **from Bengal** (1486-1533)
- He **founded** the **Gaudiya Vaishnavism** tradition within Hinduism. He also expounded the Vaishnava school of Bhakti yoga (meaning loving devotion to God), based on Bhagavata Purana and Bhagavad Gita.

Lingayat Bhakti movement

- ✓ **Basava**, the founder of this movement, was a courtier of **Kalachuri kings of Karnataka**.
- ✓ He along **with** his companions like **Allama Prabhu and Akkamahadevi** initiated the **Virashaiva movement** or Lingayat movement.

- ✓ 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.**
- ✓ The **Virashaivas** argued **strongly for the equality of all human beings and against Brahmanical ideas about caste and the treatment of women.** They were also **against all forms of ritual and idol worship.**
- ✓ The Lingayats **also** encouraged certain practices disapproved in the Dharmashastras, such as **post-puberty marriage and the remarriage of widows.**
- ✓ The movement is rooted in **vachanas or sayings attributed to Basavanna.**

Maratha Bhakti movement

- ✓ The Vaishnava **poet-saints** of Maharashtra such as **Jnaneshwar, Namadeva, Eknath and Tukaram were devotees of lord Vitthala (a form of Vishnu) temple in Pandarpur.**
- ✓ The saints also **included** women like **Sakhubai and the family of Chokhamela, who belonged to the “untouchable” Mahar caste.**
- ✓ Devotion **around** lord Vitthala gave rise to the **Varkari sect** which lay emphasis on an annual pilgrimage to Pandharpur as well as on the notion of a personal god residing in the hearts of all people.
- ✓ The **cult of Vitthala emerged** as a powerful mode of devotion and was very popular amongst the people.
- ✓ These saint-poets rejected all forms of ritualism, outward display of piety and social differences based on birth. In fact, they **even rejected the idea of renunciation** and preferred to live with their families, earning their livelihood like any other person, while humbly serving fellow human beings in need.
- ✓ Their **devotional hymns were known as abhangs.**

Nathpanthis, Siddhas and Yogis

- ✓ They advocated renunciation of the world. To them, the **path to salvation lay in meditation on the formless Ultimate Reality & the realisation of oneness with it.**
- ✓ To achieve this, they advocated intense training of the mind and body through practices like yogasanas, breathing exercises and meditation. These groups became particularly popular among “low” castes.
- ✓ Their criticism of conventional religion created the ground for devotional religion to become a popular force in northern India.
- ✓ The **Siddha saints were mostly Shaiva**, who professed and practised an unorthodox type of **sadhana** (spiritual practices) to attain liberation. The Siddhas are also believed to be the founders of Varmam, a kind of martial art for self-defence and medical treatment simultaneously.
- ✓ **Nathpantis:**
 - They were followers of a saint named **Gorakhnath and Matsyendranath.** They are mostly **shaivites.** A notable aspect of Nath tradition practice have been its refinements and use of **Yoga, particularly Hatha Yoga**, to transform one's body into a sahaja siddha state of awakened self's identity with absolute reality.

Other important Bhakti Saints

✓ Surdas:

- Surdas was an **ardent** devotee of Krishna.
- His compositions, compiled in the **Sursagara, Surasaravali and Sahitya Lahari**, express his devotion.

✓ Shankaradeva of Assam:

- He emphasised devotion to Vishnu, and composed poems and plays in Assamese.
- He began the **practice** of setting up **namghars** or houses of recitation and prayer, a practice that continues to date.
- He established **Sattras** (monasteries) which flourish even today.
- He is widely credited with building on past cultural relics and devising new forms of music (**Borgeet**), **theatrical** performance (**Ankia Naat, Bhaona**), dance (**Sattriya**), literary language (**Brajavali**). The essence of Shankaradeva's devotion came to be known as Eka Sarana Nama Dharma (supreme surrender to the One).

✓ Dadu Dayal (1544—1603):

- He was a poet-saint from Gujarat, India, a religious reformer which have said against formalism **and** priestcraft.
- Dadupanthis, the **sect** founded by him, is a **vaishnavite** sect.
- Dadu's **compositions** in **Braj** language were recorded by his disciple Rajjab and are known as the **Dadu Anubhav Vani**.

✓ Ravidas:

- Ravidas, also called **Raidas**, (mystic and poet who flourished in 15th or 16th century) was one of the most renowned of the saints of the North Indian bhakti movement.
- Ravidas was born in Varanasi as a member of an **untouchable leather- working caste**, and his poems and songs often revolve around his low social position.
- Some 40 of the poems attributed to Ravidas were included in the **Adi Granth** ("First Volume"), the **sacred** scripture of Sikhism, and it is generally accepted that **Ravidas met Nanak**, the first Guru and founder of the Sikh tradition.
- The **Panch Vani text** of the Dadupanthis tradition within Hinduism also includes numerous **poems** of Ravidas.

✓ Mirabai:

- Mirabai **was** a Rajput princess married into the royal family of Mewar in the sixteenth century. **Mirabai became a disciple of Ravidas**.
- She was devoted to Krishna and composed innumerable bhajans expressing her intense devotion. Her songs also openly challenged the norms of the "upper" castes and became popular with the masses in Rajasthan and Gujarat.

✓ Kabir:

- Kabir Das **was** a 15th-century Indian mystic poet and saint, whose writings influenced **Hinduism's Bhakti movement** and his verses are found in the **Guru Granth Sahib**.

- He was strongly **influenced** by his teacher, the Hindu bhakti leader **Ramananda**.
- **Bijak** is compositions of teachings of Kabir. Kabir's poems have survived in several languages and **dialects**; and some are composed in the special language of nirguna poets, the sant bhasha. Others, known as ulatbansi (upside-down sayings), are written in a form in which everyday meanings are inverted.



Image from NCERT

Sikhism

- ✓ Baba Guru Nanak (1469-1539) **was born at Talwandi (Nankana Sahib in Pakistan)**, he travelled widely before establishing a centre at **Kartarpur (Dera Baba Nanak on the river Ravi)**.
- ✓ Irrespective of their former creed, caste or gender, his followers ate together in the **common kitchen (langar)**. The sacred space thus created by Baba Guru Nanak was known as dharmsal. It is now known as Gurdwara.
- ✓ Before his death in 1539, Baba Guru Nanak appointed one of his followers as his successor. His name was Lehna but he came to be known as **Guru Angad**.
- ✓ The three successors of Guru Angad also wrote under the name of "Nanak" and all of their compositions were compiled by Guru Arjan in 1604. To this compilation were added the writings of other figures like **Shaikh Farid, Surdas, Ravidas, Sant Kabir, Namdev and Guru Tegh Bahadur**.
- ✓ In 1706 this compilation was authenticated by Guru Gobind Singh and is now known as **Guru Granth Sahib**, the holy scripture of the Sikhs.
- ✓ Followers of Sikhism belonged to a number of castes but traders, agriculturists, artisans and craftsmen predominated.
- ✓ By the beginning of the seventeenth century the town of Ramdasapur (Amritsar) had developed around the **central Gurdwara called Harmandar Sahib (Golden Temple)**.
- ✓ The Sikh movement began to get politicised in the seventeenth century, a development which culminated in **the institution of the Khalsa by Guru Gobind Singh** in 1699. The community of the Sikhs, called the Khalsa Panth, became a political entity.

List of Sikh Gurus

	Guru	Period as Guru	Remarks
1	Guru Nanak Dev	Since birth -1539	
2	Guru Angad	1539-1552	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compiled the teachings of Nanak Adopting and formalized the Gurmukhi alphabet
3	Guru Amar Das	1552-1574	
4	Guru Ram Das	1574-81	
5	Guru Arjan	1581-1606	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compiled the first official edition of the Sikh scripture called the Adi Granth Built the Harmandir Sahib/ Golden temple Executed by Jahangir
6	Guru Hargobind	1606-1644	
7	Guru Har Rai	1644-1661	
8	Guru Har Krishan	1661-1664	
9	Guru Tegh Bahadur	1664-1675	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Founder of Anandpur Sahib Executed by Aurangazeb
10	Guru Gobind Singh	1675-1708	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Founder of Khalsa Enshrined the Guru Granth Sahib as Sikhism's primary scripture and eternal Guru

Sufi Movement

- ✓ 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.
- ✓ By the eleventh century, Sufism evolved into a well-developed movement with a body of literature on Quranic studies and sufi practices.
- ✓ Institutionally, the sufis began to organise communities around the **hospice or khanqah (Persian)** controlled by a teaching master known as **shaikh (in Arabic)**, pir or murshid (in Persian). He enrolled **disciples (murids)** and appointed a successor (**khalifa**). He established rules for spiritual conduct and interaction between **inmates** as well as between laypersons and the master.
- ✓ When the shaikh died, his **tomb-shrine (dargah, a Persian term meaning court)** became the centre of devotion for his followers. This encouraged the practice of **pilgrimage or ziyarat to his grave**, particularly on his death anniversary or **urs** (or marriage, signifying the union of his soul with God). Thus evolved the cult of the **shaikh revered as wali**. Wali (plural auliya) or friend of God was a sufi who claimed proximity to Allah.

MAJOR TEACHERS OF THE CHISHTI SILSILA

SUFI TEACHERS	YEAR OF DEATH	LOCATION OF DARGAH
Shaikh Muinuddin Sijzi	1235	Ajmer (Rajasthan)
Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki	1235	Delhi
Shaikh Fariduddin Ganj-i Shakar	1265	Ajodhan (Pakistan)
Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya	1325	Delhi
Shaikh Nasiruddin Chiragh-i Dehli	1356	Delhi

Table from NCERT

- ✓ Most sufi **lineages** were named after a founding figure. For example, **the Qadiri order was named after Shaikh Abd'ul Qadir Jilani**.
- ✓ However, some like the Chishti order, were named after their place of origin, in this case the town of **Chisht in central Afghanistan**.
- ✓ Khwaja Muinuddin:
 - Khwaja Muinuddin was a Chishti saint who **established his dargah at Ajmer**.
 - He was popularly known as **"Gharib Nawaz"**. Earliest references to dargah date to the fourteenth century.

- It was evidently popular because of the austerity and piety of its Shaikh, the greatness of his spiritual successors, and the patronage of royal visitors including **Muhammad bin Tughlaq (ruled, 1324-51) and Akbar.**
- **Mughal princess Jahanara wrote a biography of Shaikh Muinuddin Chishti, titled Munis al Arwah**

✓ **Nizamuddin Auliya:**

- Syed Muhammad Nizamuddin Auliya was one of the most famous Sufi saints from the Indian subcontinent region.
- Nizamuddin went to Ajodhan to **become** a disciple of the **Sufi saint Fariduddin Ganjshakar**, also known as Baba Farid. Some of the famous disciples of Nizamuddin includes - **Shaikh Nasiruddin Chirag Delhavi and Amir Khusro.**

Amir Khusrau and the qaul

Amir Khusrau (1253-1325), the great poet, musician and disciple of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya, gave a unique form to the Chishti *sama* by introducing the *qaul* (Arabic word meaning "saying"), a hymn sung at the opening or closing of *qawwali*. This was followed by sufi poetry in Persian, Hindavi or Urdu, and sometimes using words from all of these languages. *Qawwals* (those who sing these songs) at the shrine of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya always start their recital with the *qaul*. Today *qawwali* is performed in shrines all over the subcontinent.

Box from NCERT



Table of Bhakti and Sufi Saints

Time period	Contemporary Rulers	Bhakti/sufi saints	Remarks
c. 500-800 CE	Pallavas Mahendravarman(600-630 CE) Cheras Cheraman Perumal Chalukyas of Badami	Appar Sambandar Sundaramurti (All in Tamil Nadu)	These three are most important Nayanars and their works are compiled in a collection called "Tevaram".
c. 800-900	Pallavas Pandyas	Nammalvar Manikkavachakar Andal Tondaradippodi (All in Tamil Nadu)	All except Manikkavachakar were Alwar Saints Andal was the only woman alvar.
c1000-1100	 Cholas , Hoysalas	Al Hujwiri or Data Ganj Bakhsh in the Punjab; Ramanujacharya in Tamil Nadu	Hujwiri settled in Lahore and wrote a book in Persian called the Kashful-Mahjub
c.1100-1200	Kalachuris of Kalyan	Basavanna in Karnataka	Founder of Virashaiva and Lingayat movements.
c1200-1300	Qutb al-Din Aibak1206–1210 Iltutmish 1211–1236 Razia Sultana 1236-1240 Nasiruddin 1246–1266 Balban 1266–1287 Jalal ud din Khalji 1290–1296	Jnanadeva/ Jnaneshwar, Muktabai in Maharashtra; Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti in Rajasthan; (1142–1236 CE), Bahauddin Zakariyya, Fariduddin Ganj- i Shakar in the Punjab Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki in Delhi	Muinuddin Chishti is the saint associated with Ajmer Dargah
C1300-1400	Alauddin Khalji 1296–1316 Ghiyas al-Din Tughluq 1321–1325	Lal Ded in Kashmir; Lal Shahbaz Qalandar in Sind;	
	Muhammad bin Tughluq 1325–1351 Firuz Shah Tughlaq 1351–1388	Nizamuddin Auliya in Delhi; (1238-1325) Ramananda in Uttar Pradesh; Chokhamela in Maharashtra; Sharafuddin Yahya Maneri in Bihar	

c1400-1500	Bahlul Khan Lodi 1451-1489	Kabir, Raidas, Surdas in Uttar Pradesh; Guru Nanak (1469-1539) Abdullah Shattari in Gwalior; Muhammad Shah Alam in Gujarat; Mir Sayyid Muhammad Gesu Daraz in Gulbarga, Shankaradeva in Assam (1449-1568) Tukaram in Maharashtra	
C1500-1600	Sikandar Lodi 1489-1517 Ibrahim Lodi 1517- 1526 Krishnadevaraya 1509-1529 Humayun (reigned 1530-1556) Akbar 1556-1605	Sri Chaitanya in Bengal (1486-1533) Vallabhacharya in Gujarat (1479-1531) Mirabai in Rajasthan((1502- 1556) Dadu Dayal (1544— 1603) Shaikh Abdul Quddus Gangohi, Malik Muhammad Jaisi in UP Tulsidas (1532-1623) in UP	
C1600-1700	Jahangir 1605-1627	Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi in Haryana	
	Shahjahan 1627-58	Miyan Mir in the Punjab	
	Aurangzeb 1658-1707		

Note: The time period of rulers mentions their period of reign while that of Saints mention their life time.

Major Figures in Carnatic Music

Composer	Time period	Remarks
Purandarasa	1484-1565	Known as Sangeeta Pitamaha Systematized Carnatic music
Annamacharya	1408-1503	He composed songs called sankirtanas in praise of the Lord Venkateswara, a form of Vishnu. Lived in Andhra region.
Ramadasa	1620-1680	Lived around Bhadrachalam Devotee of Rama
Narayanatheertha	1650-1745	Sree Krishna devotee
Shyama Shastri*	1762-1827	Born in Tiruvarur Known for Devotion to Goddess Kamakshi
Tyagaraja*	1767-1847	Born in Tiruvarur Devotee of Lord Rama
Muthuswami Dikshitar*	1775-1835	Born in Tiruvarur

*Known as Trinity of Carnatic music