



GS FOUNDATION BATCH FOR CSE 2024

**Ancient and Medieval Indian
History and Culture- 12**

**(Bhakti Movement and Acharyas -
Part 2)**

Bhakti Movement and Vedantic Philosophy – Part 2

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Bhakti in North India

With the establishment of Turkish rule, the role of trade/commerce/trade/craft in economy increased and there was decline of feudalism. There was now a need for new religious ideas in north India. Here, the bhakti movement was **essentially a religious protest against prevailing socio-religious orthodoxy**. Emphasis on bhakti and religious equality were two common features of north Indian bhakti, like in the case of South India.

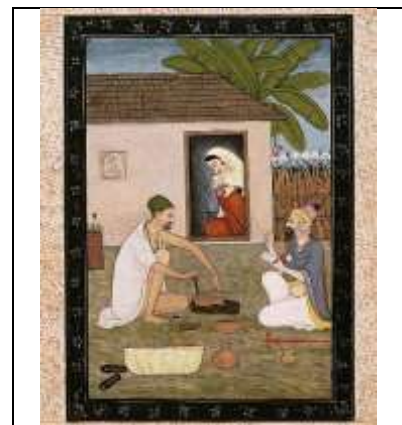
Bhakti during this period emerged in two forms - Nirguna (without attributes, formless) and Saguna (with attributes and form).

Nirguna Nirakar	Saguna Sakar
Worship of God without attributes , formless <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nam, Rup, Guna - all formless = ultimate Brahman reality. Thus, monotheist. He is Gunateet and Nirvachaniya who cannot be captured in limited words. 	Worship of God with attributes , with forms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Idol worship Dedication to personal individual ishta devata Reincarnation of God to play some role on earth (leela)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Believes in Advaita philosophy of Adi Shankara 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Believes in Dvaita philosophy or other forms of Advaita like Shuddhadvaita.
Social reform <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Denial of caste division Denied temple cult, pilgrimage and ritualism. Humanist egalitarianism Anti-communalism 	Social reform <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relatively less radical, some compromise with caste system Accepted priesthood and temple cult.
Examples <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kabir Nanak 	Vaishnavism, Shaivism, Shakti <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within Vaishnavism - Rama bhakti, Krishna bhakti and Vithoba bhakti Within Shaivism - Lingayata, Shaiva Siddhanta, Kashmiri Shaivism etc.

(Source of biographies of various saints: Bhaktamal by Nabhdas and Parchais by Anantdas)

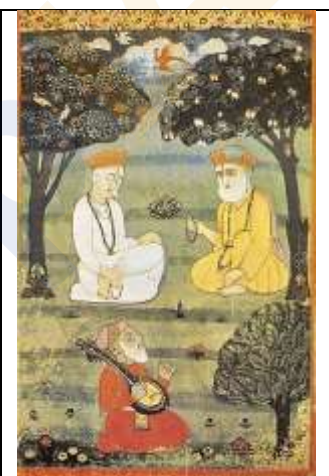
Nirguna Bhakti (North India)

- **Bhagat Pipa (b 1425)**
 - A Rajput king of Gagaraun garh, abdicated the throne to become a mystic poet and saint.
 - Became disciple of Ramananda.
 - His hymns are included in the Guru Granth Sahib.
- **Bhagat Dhanna Jat (Haryana)**
 - Mystic poet whose three hymns are present in Adi Granth.
 - Jat community getting socially upwardly mobile due to agriculture. Dhanna Jat represents the movement.
- **Dadu Dayal (b. 1544)**
 - A poet-saint from Gujarat, a religious reformer who spoke against formalism and priestcraft.
 - Called as Rajasthan ka Kabir.
 - Both were **nirguni** saints. Believed that devotion to God should transcend religious or sectarian affiliation, and that devotees should become non-sectarian (**Nipakh**)
 - Both focussed on communal harmony between Hindu-Muslim.
 - Doha's of both are popular. Dadu alludes to spontaneous (**sahaja**) bliss in his songs. Much of the imagery used is similar to that used by Kabir.
 - His compositions are compiled in Braj bhasha book called **Dadu Anubhav Vani**.
 - Some of his compositions are in Dhundhadi language.
 - In 1585, Dadu met Akbar in Fatehpur Sikri.
 - Two of his disciples are famous:
 - **Rajjab**: He lived his entire life in dulhe-ka-vesh and kept on spreading Dadu's thoughts.
 - **Sant Kavi Sundarads**: known for his contributions to Hindi language poetry.
- **Ravidas**
 - Disciple of Ramanand as per Bhaktmal. Young contemporary of Kabir.
 - Mystic poet-saint and social reformer of the bhakti movement.
 - **Religious Message:**
 - Discusses **Nirguna-Saguna themes**, as well as **Nathpanthi** philosophy.
 - **Sahaj bhakti**, a mystical state where there is a union of the truths of the many and the one.
 - Social Message
 - Taught removal of **social divisions of caste and gender**
 - He promoted **unity** in the pursuit of personal spiritual freedoms.

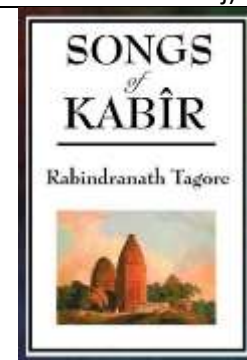


Ravidas as a shoemaker.
First generation after Manaku and Nainsukh of Guler, Pahari region, ca.1800–1810

- Strong anti-Brahmanical and anti-communal themes
- The devotional songs of Ravidas made a lasting impact upon the bhakti movement.
 - 41 songs were included in **Guru Granth Sahib** of Sikhs.
 - **Panch Vani** text of Dadupanthis also includes numerous poems of Ravidas.
- **Kabir (1398-1518)**
 - Most powerful monotheist saint.
 - He was a common weaver (**julaha**) from **Benaras** and a **disciple of Ramanand**.
 - **Religious teachings:**
 - Rejection of formal worship, idolatry and scriptural knowledge.
 - He believed in **personal experiences** to discover spiritual knowledge.
 - His philosophy was trying to seek absolute, very much like Nirguna Brahma of Adi Shankara.
 - **Social teachings:**
 - Social equality, universal brotherhood, peaceful coexistence, religious toleration. For Sikhs he is a precursor to Nanak. Muslims place him in Sufi lineages, and for Hindus he becomes a Nirguni saint.
 - He believed in simple living as a householder and rejected severe ascetism.
 - He accepted disciples from all backgrounds.
 - **Poetry:**
 - He preached in the local **Awadhi, Braj, Bhojpuri** dialects. He made a great contribution to the growth of literature through his **Dohas**.
 - His dohas are sometimes called **Shabad** (word) or **Sakhi** (witness).
 - They were later compiled into a book called **Bijak**.
 - Kabir was also a great satirist to **expose** the ridiculousness of some rituals and orthodox people through satire and wit. He employed a new literary device called **ulatbansi** to express his views.
 - Some of his verses were included in **Adi Granth**.
 - **Kabir Panth**

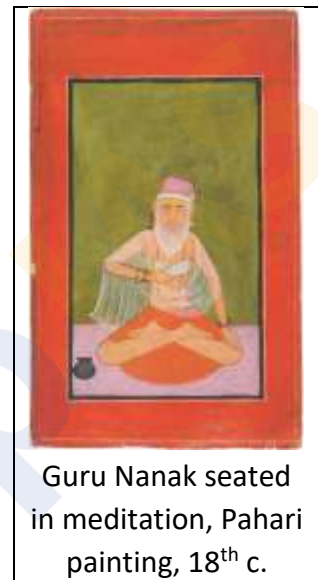


Nanak, Mardana and Kabir (1773 painting, by Alam Chand Raj)



Songs of Kabir were collected by Kshitimohan Sen and translated by Rabindranath Tagore in English

- Kabir did not found any distinct sect in his own lifetime but two of his disciples later found maths.
- Kabir Chaura (Banaras) by Surat Gopal
- Dham Khera (Chhattisgarh) by Dharamdas
- **Guru Nanak (1469-1539)**
 - First Guru of Sikhs
 - His birthday is celebrated as Prakash Guru Purab on Kartik Purnima.
 - Birthplace: Talvandi (Nankana Sahib), today's Pakistan
 - Died: Kartarpur, today's Pakistan
 - Stories of his extensive travels are found in **sakhis** and **udasis**.
 - He was from **Punjab** during 15th-16th c., when it was **exposed to continuous wars and invasions** leading to social and economic dislocations. He introduced his version of Nirguna bhakti to respond to the problems.
 - **Religious Teachings:**
 - Monotheism (Ik Omkar)
 - Rejection of idol worship and priestly intermediation.
 - Three practices: Naam jap (recite), Kirat karo (work honestly), Vand Chakko (share)
 - **Social Teachings:**
 - Selfless service
 - Universal brotherhood, Hindu-Muslim unity, Religious and social equality
 - Maintaining a balance between spiritual and worldly life
 - Utmost respect towards women. He spoke **against Sati as well**.
 - Whereas the other radical thinkers only criticized the existing system, Nanak **provided positive and practical alternative**, with definite socio-religious program:
 - He founded a new religion that helped unite the robust peasantry of Punjab. He regulated the community life of his followers.
 - In order to strengthen the feelings of unity and equality, Guru nanak introduced the practice of **sangat** (congregation of all) and **pangat** (communal dining for all) which presented new social order based on **liberal values**.
 - **Political Teachings:**
 - Nanak's drew a large number of **religious metaphors** from political life (e.g. **God = sacha padshah**).
 - **Kingship:** God himself elevated some people to rule and made other beggars. Kingship was not evil, but he reminded the **rulers to be just and work for people**.
 - He **blamed Sultan for not protecting his subjects in the battle of Panipat with Babur**.
 - He condemned the oppression of tyrannical rulers and **called their cruel, and greedy officials as butchers**.



- He made a great contribution to the **growth of Punjabi language**.
 - **Nathpanthi influence** – terms like **Shabad, Shunya**
 - Singing devotional songs with assistant playing Rabab
 - Anecdotes about his life are collected in **janam-sakhis**.
- His followers referred to themselves as **Sikhs**.

Common Characteristics and Contribution of Nirgun Bhakti

- **Religious Ideas:**
 - **Nirgun Bhakti:** They uncompromisingly believed in **only one God**.
 - God of Nanak was non-incarnate and formless (nirankar), eternal (akal) and ineffable (alakh).
 - Monotheists also emphasized the crucial importance of **repetition of divine name, spiritual guru, community kirtan** and companionship of saints (**satsang**).
 - There was only one way of establishing communion with God: it was the way of **personally experienced bhakti**.
 - This was also the way of the Vaishnava bhakti saints, but there was one fundamental difference of perceptions.
 - The monotheistic saints **travelled widely** to propagate their beliefs.
 - **Synthesis of three traditions:** All the monotheists were influenced in varying degrees by the **Vaishnava** concept of bhakti, the **Nathpanthi** movement and **sufism**.
- **Social Ideas:**
 - Most of the monotheists **belonged to the 'low' castes**. They **promoted social radicalism** – attacked caste system and ritual orthodoxy.
 - Their path was **independent of both Hinduism and Islam**.
 - They didn't try to create a new religion – **harmonizer of both and yet critical of both** Hinduism and Islam.
 - They denied their allegiance to either of them and criticized the superstitions and orthodox elements of both the religions.
 - They attacked idolatry, rejected the authority of the Brahmans and Maulavis and their religious scriptures.
 - Most of the monotheistic saints were not ascetics. They led **worldly life** and were married.
- **Literature and Music:**
 - They composed their poems in **popular languages**.
 - Not only reflected the emotions of common people but also used the **language of common people** - Hindawi, Awadhi, Punjabi, Braj etc.
 - Some of them used a language which was a **mixture of different dialects** spoken in various parts of North India.
 - They preferred **common language over their own native dialects** because they considered it fit for the propagation of ideas among the masses.
 - The monotheists also made use of **popular symbols and images** to propagate their teachings.

- Their utterances are expressed in **short verses** which could be easily remembered.
- Support to **local literature** too – Saqi, Ramani, Doha, Bijak
- **Development of music** – Guru Nanak and Rabab. Even today Raagis in Gurudwaras.
- **Three more points:**
 - **Ideological Affinity:** The saints were aware that there existed a unity of ideas among themselves.
 - **The popularity** of the monotheists broke territorial barriers.
 - A 17th c Persian work on comparative religion **Dabistan-i Mazahih** testifies to the continuing popularity of Kabir among the people of North India.
 - **Sect formation**
 - Despite the widespread popularity, the followers of each one of the major figures in the monotheistic movement like Kabir, Raidas and Nanak gradually organized themselves into exclusive sectarian orders called panths such as Kabir panth, Dadu panth, Nanak panth, etc.

Additional Data: Story of Sikh Gurus

Guru	
(1) Guru Nanak (1469-1539)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sangat and Pangat
(2) Angad Dev (1539-1552)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invented Gurmukhi script Took interested in education of children – both physical as well as spiritual. Popularized Guru ka Langar (started earlier by Guru Nanak)
(3) Amar Das (1452-1574)	<p>Guru Amardas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduced Anand Karaj marriage ceremony of Sikhs. Abolished Sati and Parda system among Sikhs
(4) Ram Das (1574-1581)	<p>Cordial Relations with Akbar</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> He was impressed by their teachings, spirit of reform and social service through langar. He visited Govindval twice to meet Sikh Gurus - once Amardas and then Arjan. He granted land in Amritsar to the Sikhs. <p>After Akbar's death the cordial relationship between the Sikh gurus and the Mughal rulers came to an end. Gradually, hostility rose with the beginning of Jahangir's reign.</p>
(5) Arjan Dev (1581-1606)	<p>He re-organized Sikhism.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transformed voluntary offerings into regular systematic tax/tribute. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Started systematic network for converting the people into the cult under Masands. Masands appointed their own deputies and made the people Sikhs of the Guru. Composed Sukhmani Sahib (later included in Adi Granth) Compiled Adi Granth Built Harmandir Sahab in 1604 (invited Mia Mir) Propounded the concept of Halemi/Halimi Raj (benign and just state, ideal state) <p>He was tortured and executed by Jahangir.</p>
(6) Har Gobind (1606-1644)	<p>Four important changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Miri-Piri swords: around Guru's gird – spiritual and temporal authority. Organized a small army of his own for armed resistance. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transformed the Sikh cult into a Sikh corps with such Saint Soldiers (sant sipahi) Explained that extreme non-violence and pacifism would only encourage evil. He taught that it was necessary to

	<p>take up the sword in order to protect the weak and the oppressed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Akal Takht: to hold court and conduct temporal business. • Build Lohagarh fort in Haryana. <p>Relations with Mughals:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Jahangir arrested the Guru and sent him to the fort of Gwalior where he remained for 12 years. 2. Shah Jahan initially maintained cordial relations but later, there were some armed conflicts.
(7) Har Rai (1644-1661)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He avoided any conflict with the Mughals but continued to maintain the army of sant-sipahis. Focused rather on missionary work. • He supported Dara Shukoh during his flight to Punjab. Aurangzeb called him to the court, but he sent his son Ram Rai instead who was detained as a hostage in Delhi.
(8) Har Krishan (1661-1664)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youngest of all Gurus, installed at the age of 5. • Symbol of service. Died due to smallpox, while serving epidemic and famine-stricken people of Delhi.
(9) Tegh Bahadur (1665-75)	<p>Maintained the political and militant character of Sikhism even more strongly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The aspiration of sovereignty is clear from the use of title Sachcha Padshah. • In his efforts to consolidate Sikhism, he turned first towards Khatri and then towards Jats. • Firm believer in the right to freedom of worship. For that reason, he was first asked to convert and then executed by Aurangzeb.
(10) Gobind Singh (1675-1708)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He evolved a theory of struggle to provide a moral justification for the use of force against enemies. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concept of God as the mightiest warrior and the investiture of weapons with divinity. • He was himself portrayed as Badshah Darvesh (both saint and a king) • Declared that the purpose of his life was to work towards dharma-yuddha, to raise the virtuous and uproot the wicked. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translation of Krishnavatar – Dasam skandha of Bhagavat Purana. • Khalsa formation (1699): Structural change in the body of Sikhism. His declaration had three dimensions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It redefined the concept of authority within the Sikh community. • It introduced a new initiation ceremony and code of conduct.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amrit Sanskar: initiation of Panj Pyare who became Singh/lions. He gave the Sikhs the name Singh (lion) or Kaur (princess). • Five K – kesh, kangha, kara, kirpan, kachha – closer community bond with separate identity. • Idea of equality – Khalsa followers not only were equal to each other's but were collectively as important as the Guru. • Baisakhi and Diwali congregations of armed Singhs at Anandpur • It provided the community with a new religious and political vision – Raj Karega Khalsa <p>He was assassinated by a Pathan in 1708 at Nanded. After that, Guruship came to end and vested on Khalsa and Guru Granth.</p>
(11) Guru Granth Sahib (1708--)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Composition of ten Gurus • Jaidev of Bengal • Namdev, Trilochan and Parmanand of Maharashtra • Sadhna of Sindh • Dhanna from Rajasthan • Bene, Ramanand, Kabir, Surdas and Ravidas from Uttar Pradesh • Sufi saint Baba Farid from Pak Pattan (now in Pakistan) • Also some hymns of the Bhattas or bards.

Sikhs urged to observe Dec. 26 as 'Sahibzade Shahadat Diwas'

Press Trust of India AMRITSAR

Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) chief Harjinder Singh Dhali on Sunday asked the Sikh community to observe the martyrdom day of the sons of Guru Gobind Singh as 'Sahibzade Shahadat Diwas' instead of 'Veer Bal Diwas'.

"Observing the martyrdom day of 'Sahibzades' as Veer Bal Diwas by the Government of India is a mischievous conspiracy to undermine the greatest martyrdom in the world's religious history," Mr. Dhali said.

"If the government really wants to pay homage to Sahibzadas, then what is the problem in observing

Modi had in January this year announced that December 26 will be observed as 'Veer Bal Diwas' to mark the martyrdom of Guru Gobind Singh's two sons

this day as 'Sahibzade Shahadat Diwas'," he asked.

He said that it's a historic fact that sacrifice of Guru Gobind Singh's two sons was important in uprooting the Mughals from north.

But, Mr. Dhali said, the way the government is insisting on marking the day as Veer Bal Diwas, it is clear that it is "playing politics at the behest of anti-Sikh forces". Mr. Modi had in January this year announced that December 26 will be observed as 'Veer Bal Diwas' to mark the martyrdom of the tenth Sikh guru's two sons - Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh.

The SGPC too had earlier objected to the name of the day and asked the government to change it to 'Sahibzade Shahadat Diwas'.

Mr. Dhali said that on the order of the Akal Takht, a committee of Sikh scholars had suggested the name 'Sahibzade Shahadat Diwas'. He said the SGPC had sent a letter in this matter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Ministry of Culture. "But still the government did not change the name."

ALL ARE CORDIALLY INVITED

Sahibzade Zorawar Singh Ji and Sahibzade Fateh Singh Ji chose death instead of deviating from the noble principles of religion. 'Veer Bal Diwas' is a fitting tribute to the courage of the Sahibzade and their quest for justice.

Narendra Modi, Prime Minister



Speaking on the circumstances of the Sahibzades' execution, Modi said, "Guru Gobind Singh stood steadfastly against the terrorism of Aurangzeb and his intentions to change India. Aurangzeb and his people wanted to change the religion of Guru Gobind Singh's children by the force of a sword".

He said that the history of the world was filled with atrocities and violence. "Three centuries ago Chamkaur and Sirhind wars were fought, on one side there was Mughal Sultanate blind to communal extremism and on the other there were our Gurus," Modi said.

"On the one hand, there was terrorism and on the other there's spiritualism, on the one hand there was communal mayhem while on the other hand there was liberalism... on one hand there were forces of lakhs while on the other there were Veer Sahibzade who didn't relent at all," he added.

December 26 is observed as Veer Bal Diwas, and commemorates the valour of 'Chhote Sahibzade', the two youngest sons of the tenth Sikh master Guru Gobind Singh.