

BHAKTI PANTHA



We learn about the following in this chapter,

- Ramanand, Chaitanya, Guru Nanak.
- The Bhakti Pantha in Karnataka.
- The effects of the Bhakti Pantha.
- The main features of Bhakti Pantha.

The development of the Bhakti Pantha is an important feature of the Delhi Sultanate period. The religious reformers and philosophers of this age advocated a life of devotion. Bhakti or Devotion means pure trust in God. The reformers upheld devotion and surrender to God. They attempted to develop feelings of brotherhood and preached the philosophy of religious harmony. They used to worship God by different names like Rama, Krishna and Allah. They suggested the path of Bhakti to achieve moksha or mukti. Pure mind and complete surrender to God was the main philosophy of the reformers. The Bhakti pantha became the Sufi pantha in Islam.

Ramananda

Ramananda was born in a Brahmin family in Prayaga. He was a follower of Ramanuja's philosophy. He established a Vaishnava religious school based on love and devotion. He travelled to several places in North India and popularized the worship of Rama and Sita. Varanasi was his headquarters. He condemned caste system and allowed people from every caste to join his sect. Kabir was one such follower.



Ramananda

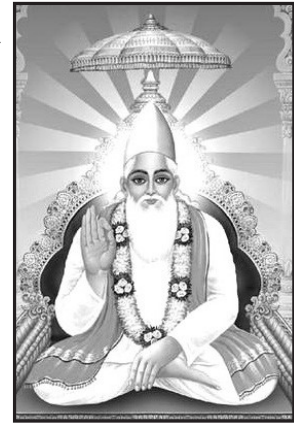
Do you know this?

Ramananda gave this unique message to people:

Do not question caste or creed

Think of the Lord and become one with Him.

Kabir : Kabir was another saint who lived in North India during this time. He was a student of Ramanand, and spent most of his time at Varanasi. He began to preach his new philosophy. He condemned caste system and multiple idol worship, and declared that God is one, and he is the same for both Hindus and Muslims. He tried to bring about harmony and tolerance between the two communities.



Kabir

Kabir composed couplets known as Dohas. Hindus and Muslims recite these Dohas even today in North India. The followers of Kabir are known as “Kabirpanthis”, meaning travellers who go on the path of Kabir. Kabir was the main religious and social reformer of India.

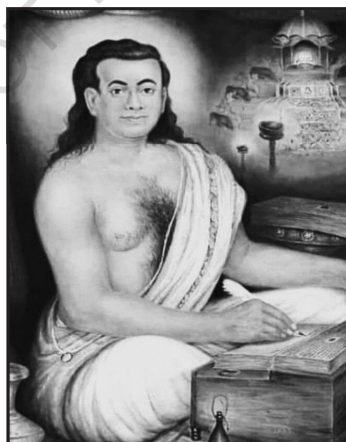


Chaitanya

Chaitanya : Chaitanya was one of the famous saints of the Bhakti movement. He preached that differences of caste can be removed by discipline, and man becomes pure through devotion. He popularized worship of Krishna. He composed many devotional songs in praise of Krishna. He opposed caste system and attempted to bring about a sense of brotherhood among the people. His philosophical thoughts and teachings are collected in the book called “Chaitanya Charitamruta”.



**Srimantha
Shankaradeva**



Madhavadeva

Srimantha Shankaradeva and Madhavadeva

The role of Srimantha Shankaradeva in the cultural and religious history of Assam is very important. (Srimantha does not mean the rich but Honorary Sri). His name is associated with bringing a newness in the culture and the music in

India. The Bhagavatha of Shankaradeva is in Sanskrit, Assamese and Brijavali. The Bhakti movement started by him in Assam spread

its influence over the other parts of India. The movement started by him was rightly called Ekasarana Dharma or Vaishnava movement. He says we must develop unstinted love for Krishna, sing songs on Him, and by listening to it we acquire devotion to the Lord. He must have good feelings as the servant of God. Like other Vaishnavas this movement does not worship Radhe along with Krishna.

Srimantha Shankaradeva started Sarniya system (a system of initiation into his movement). He waged against the inequality in the society. He associated with all people to bring in the movement. He says follow religious worship, have faith in Krishna. His disciple Sri Madhavadeva belonged to Shakta movement was a multi-faceted personality. Madhavadeva was very popular in the Bhakti movement. The contributions of the two saints in Vaishnava movement, its spread and popularity is great.



Gurunanak

Guru Nanak : Another advocate of the Bhakti movement was Guru Nanak who had religious learnings right from childhood. He preached that God was one and condemned idol worship. He emphasized good actions and pure, moralistic life. He had both Hindu and Muslim followers. They are called 'S ikhs'. His teachings are collected in the Sikh Holy book 'Guru Granth Sahib'.

Do you know this?

Guru Granth Sahib is called the Holy Book of the Sikhs. It is kept in the gurudwaras and worshipped.



Meerabai

Meerabai : The other name for the Bhakti movement is Meerabai who was the princess of Mewad. She renounced a life of luxury and became the most devoted follower of Lord Krishna. She composed songs of devotion towards Krishna. These are called 'Bhajans' and they are very popular. Even today, these bhajans are sung throughout India.

Many reformers tried to bridge the gap between Hindus and Muslims in different parts of India.

Vitthoba temple at Pandharapur on the banks of the river Bhima in Maharashtra, was the centre of the Bhakti movement. Gnaneshwar and Namdev, Eknath, Tukaram and Ramdas were the famous saints of the new sect. Purandaradasa and Kanakadasa were foremost among the reformers in Karnataka. Purandaradasa composed 'keertanas' and Kanakadasa composed 'Mohana Tarangini' and some keertanas in Kannada.

Some Sufi Saints

Mohin-Ud-Din chisti, Baba Farid, Nizam-Ud-Din Oulia, Malik Mohammed and Kwajha Bande Nawaz and Others,

Sufi Saints : The Sufi saints arrived from Persia and settled in different parts of India. They are called peer (teacher). Since they wore coarse woolen clothing called suf, these Muslim saints were called 'Sufis'. They preached that it was possible to reach God or Allah through love and devotion. They emphasised the importance of respecting people of all classes. They believed that dance and music filled with devotion take us closer to God. They composed many songs in Urdu and Hindi to proclaim the importance of devotion. The poetic works of 'Mrigavati' of Kutuban and 'Padmavat' of Mallik Mohammed Jaisi uphold Sufi philosophy.

Effects of the Bhakti movement

Reform of the Hindu practices and bringing about harmony between Hindus and Muslims were the two main purposes of the Bhakti movement. The reformers were successful in removing many weaknesses in the Hindu society. The regional languages of India flourished since the reformers wrote in these languages. This enabled development of Indian culture.

Do you know this?

The saints of the Bhakti movement composed keertans and bhajans in the languages they spoke. As a result, all these Indian languages flourished. In Hindi, Surdas composed 'Sursagar' and Tulsidas composed 'Ramacharitamanas'. Abhangs and Gnaneswari were written in Marathi by Gnanadeva.

EXERCISES

I. Fill in the blanks with suitable words :

1. Bhakti means _____ to God.
2. The famous follower of Ramanand was _____.
3. Kabir's followers are called _____.
4. The collection of Chaitanya's philosophical thoughts is called _____.

II. Answer the following questions by discussing with your group.

1. Who popularized worship of Rama and Sita? What are his services to society?
2. Who are Sikhs? Which is their holy book?
3. The role of Srimantha Shankardeva is prominent in cultural and religious history of Assam. How? Explain.
4. What are the effects of the Bhakti movement?

III. Activities.

1. Read the life histories of the Bhakti panth reformers.
2. Collect more information about the reformers from your teachers.

IV. Projects :

1. Prepare a detailed project about one of the reformers of the Bhakti panth. His life, work and achievements.
2. In groups, prepare a project about one of the reformers.
3. Discuss with the help of teachers about the values contained in the keertanas of Purandaradasa and Kanakadasa.
4. Practise and sing Kanakadasa and Purandaradasa's keertanas.

