

**Chapter-16 : Bhakti Movement
(Art and Culture Notes)
(Revision or CRUX or Short
Notes)**

Bhakti Movement (14 – 15 C)



- Bhakti movement emphasised on devotion to a personal God as a means to attain moksha or salvation as against the pathways of action (Karma) and knowledge (Gyan).
- Their essential belief was need to unite with God. They laid stress on love or devotion as the basis of relationship with God.
- (for this Guru or Pir is needed)
- They stresses on the need for tolerance. Path to God does not lay in any rituals.

They attached:

- 1) Rigidity in religion – there is oneness of God is what they believed
- 2) Disregarded caste
- 3) Encourages women to join in religious gatherings.

Features of Bhakti Movement:

- Oneness of God
- Brotherhood of all Human Beings
- Surrender to God
- Intense personal devotion to God with emphasis on good moral life.
- Chanting name of God constantly purifies the soul (A true devotee does not want heaven or moksha)
- Concept of Guru or spiritual teacher (brought the system of Gharana and Shishya. Gharana is sanctified water offered) by master to pupil. Shishya accepting person as a trainee
- In northern India, there are 2 sects of Bhakti movement
 - 1) Nirguna Bhakti – Formless God
 - 2) Saguna Bhakti – Devotees of Ram and Krishna
- Major exponents of Nirguna – Nanak and Kabir
- Major exponent of Saguna – Tulsidas, Mirabai, Sardar, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu

Propounders:

1) Guru Nanak-

- He denounced idol worship, pilgrimage, sacrifice & rituals.
- He said purity of character and conduct is the first step of approaching GOD
- He emphasised Love and devotion for the one and only GOD
- Spiritual life can be attained while doing duties as a householder.

2) Ramanand:

- Born in Allahbad, brought up in Varanasi

“All men are equal in the eyes of GOD” His followers were

- i> Kabir (weaver by profession)
- ii> Sadhana (Butcher)
- iii> Ravidas (Cobbler)
- iv> Sena (Barber)



3) Kabir:





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- Kabir called for Hindu – Muslim unity
- Denounced idol worship as he was a Nirguna Saint

4) Chaitanya Mahaprabhu:

- From Bengal, Devotee of Lord Krishna
- In spite of being a Brahmin, he condemned caste system

5) Namdev:

- Tailor by profession, from Maharashtra

6) Mira:

- Devotee of Lord Krishna – Saguna Saint

SUFI Movement:

The term “Sufi” comes from “Suf” or garments of coarse wool worn by the Sufi saints.

The Sufis accepted the prophethood of Mahammad and the authority of Quran.

But also absorbed a variety of Ideas and practices from different sources such as Christianity, hindu philosophical systems, Buddhism and Zoroastrianism.

Sufis had 2 objectives.

- 1> their own spiritual development
- 2> Service to mankind

Sufis discouraged materialistic outlook of life but they encouraged working for the necessities of life.

They did not encourage complete renunciation of the world for attainment of spiritual personality (as against Bhakti Movement)

They emphasised on music as a means to remove the barrier between them and God and to attain spiritual ecstasy.

The Sufis in India were divided into several silsilah or ordus

- 1) **Chisti Silsilah** – Introduced by Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti.
 - The preachings of Chisti amounted to adopting a detached view towards the world and having no love for money, women, govt service or honours. They gave priority to social service over all other forms of devotion.
- 2) **Suhrawardi Silsilah** founded by Shihabuddin – Suhrawardi
 - Unlike Chistis, the saints of this order led a comfortable life. They made ample provisions for their families and even employed teachers on handsome salaries for education of their sons. They believed that there is no harm in possessing and dispensing of wealth if the heart is detached. They did not approve the Chisti practice of bowing before the Sheikh. They did not approve Sama i.e. Listening to music and song as a means of stimulating the spiritual urge.
- 3) **Kadri Silsilah** – founder was Sheikh Abdul Kadri Gilani

Similar to Suhrawardi, but emphasised on music

Dara Shiko was follower of Qadri Silsilah



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4) **Shattari Sisilah** – during Lodhi period

- They tried to bring Hindus and muslims closer by laying emphasis on the similarity of their spiritual thoughts and practices. Tansen was a follower
- Founded by Shah Abdullah.
- Believed in having comfortable worldly surroundings.

5) **Firdauli Silsilah** – introduced by Badrudden

- It said that Hunger is the root cause of all troubles.
- Any spiritual endeavour would not be fruitful if the basic need was not fulfilled.



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