

HISTORY

Chapter 8: Devotional Paths to the Divine



Important Questions

➤ Multiple Choice Questions :

Question 1. Gum Granth Sahib is the holy book of the:

- (a) Muslims
- (b) Hindus
- (c) Sikhs

Question 2. Ghazzali and Rumi were the great Sufis of the:

- (a) Central America
- (b) Central Asia
- (c) East Asia

Question 3. Sankaradeva was from:

- (a) Assam
- (b) Manipur
- (c) Mizoram

Question 4. Mirabai was a devotee of:

- (a) Lord Krishna
- (b) Vishnu
- (c) Shiva

Question 5. Nanak was born in:

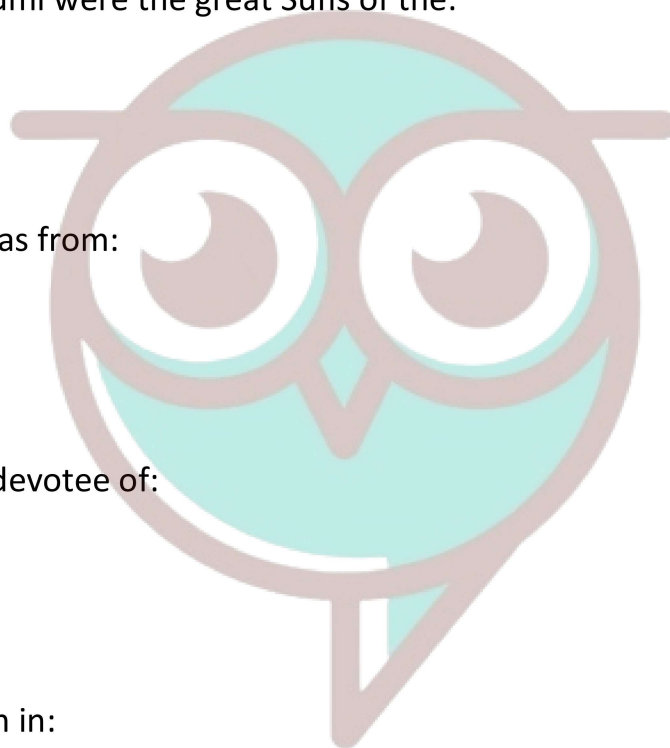
- (a) Ramdasapur
- (b) Talwandi
- (c) Banaras

Question 6. Islam propagated:

- (a) Submission to one God
- (b) Talwandi
- (c) Submission to many God

Question 7. The term 'langar' refer to:

- (a) Common place of worship
- (b) The Gurudwara
- (c) The Gums



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(d) Common kitchen

Question 8. Dargah Khwaja Muinuddin Chisthi is situated at:

- (a) Jaipur
- (b) Udaipur
- (c) Ajmer
- (d) Alwar

Question 9. Narsi Mehta was a saint of:

- (a) Maharashtra
- (b) Rajasthan
- (c) Punjab
- (d) Gujarat

Question 10. Muslim scholars developed a holy law called:

- (a) Shariat
- (b) Bhakti
- (c) Meditation
- (d) Salvation

Question 11. Where did the composition of Surdas compiled?

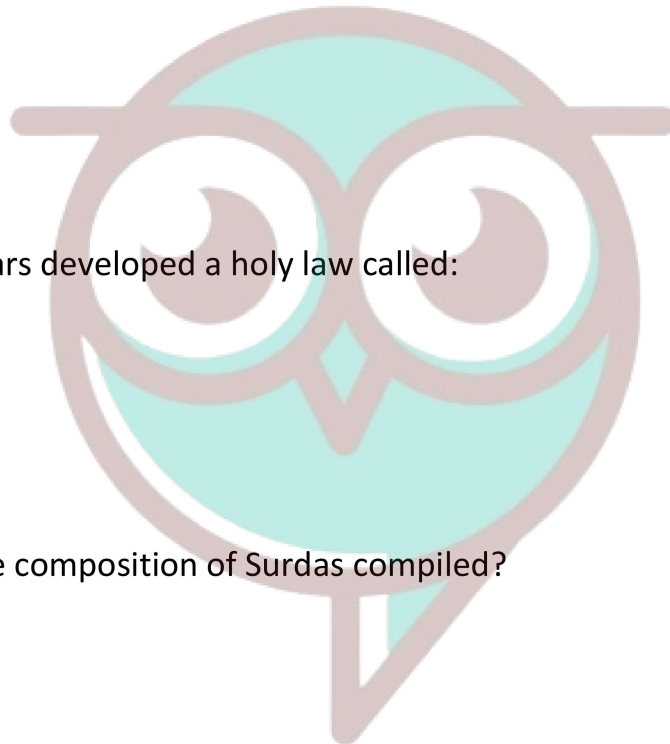
- (a) Sursagara
- (b) Sursaravali
- (c) Sahitya lahari
- (d) All of the above

Question 12. Where did Sufi masters held their assemblies?

- (a) In Ichanqahs
- (b) In public hall
- (c) In their houses
- (d) None of these

Question 13. Whose songs become popular in Rajasthan and Gujarat?

- (a) Surdas
- (b) Tulsidas
- (c) Guru Nanak
- (d) Mira Bai



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Question 14. Surdas was an ardent devotee of whom?

- (a) Vishnu
- (b) Krishna
- (c) Shiva
- (d) Durga

Question 15. Who were Sufis?

- (a) Mystics Hindu
- (b) Mystics Muslim
- (c) Mystics Buddha
- (d) None of these

➤ **Fill in the blanks :**

1. Shankara was an advocate of _____.
2. Ramanuja was influenced by the _____.
3. _____ was an important centre of the Bhakti tradition in Maharashtra.
4. In the process, local myths and legends became a part of the _____ stories.
5. Alvars' songs were compiled in the _____.

➤ **Write true (T) or false (F) :**

1. Tribal societies had rich oral traditions.
2. Pulaiyar and the Panars were the caste of barahamans.
3. Abhang is a Marathi devotional hymn.
4. Guru Granth Sahib, the holy scripture of the Hindu.
5. All of Nanak's compositions were compiled by Guru Arjan in 1604.

➤ **Very Short Questions :**

1. What did the Puranic stories consist of?
2. Who were the Pulaiyar and the Panars?
3. How many Alvars were there?
4. Name the two sets of compilations of Nayanar's songs.
5. Name the set of compilation of Alvars' songs.
6. What did Ramanuja propound?
7. What is abhang?

8. Name any two saints of Maharashtra.
9. Who were Sufis?
10. Name any two great Sufis of Central Asia.

➤ **Short Questions :**

1. Who were the Nayanars and Alvars? Write about them in brief.
2. Who was Ramanuja? What are the main points of his preachings?
3. What do you mean by Khanqahs? What purpose did it serve?
4. "The songs are as much a creation of the saints as of generations of people who sang them." Explain.
5. Who was Kabir? How do we know about him?

➤ **Long Questions :**

1. Write in brief about the ideas of Shankara and Ramanuja.
2. Write a brief note on new religious developments in north India.
3. What were the major teachings of Baba Guru Nanak?
4. What were the major beliefs and practices of the Sufis?

ANSWER KEY –

➤ **Multiple Choice Answer :**

1. (c) Sikhs
2. (b) Central Asia
3. (a) Assam
4. (a) Lord Krishna
5. (b) Talwandi
6. (a) Submission to one God
7. (d) Common kitchen
8. (c) Ajmer
9. (d) Gujarat
10. (a) Shariat
11. (d) All of the above
12. (a) In Ichanqahs
13. (d) Mira Bai

14. (b) Krishna
15. (b) Mystics Muslim

➤ **Fill in the blanks :**

1. Advaita
2. Alvars
3. Pandharpur
4. Puranic
5. Divya Prabandham

➤ **Write true (T) or false (F) :**

1. True
2. False
3. True
4. False
5. True

➤ **Very Short Answer :**

1. The Puranic stories consisted of local myths and legends.
2. They were considered untouchables.
3. There were 12 Alvars.
4. Tevaram and Tiruvacakam.
5. Divya Prabandham.
6. He propounded the doctrine of Vishishtadvaita or qualified oneness in that the soul even when united with the Supreme God remained distinct.
7. It is a Marathi devotional hymn.
8. Namdev and Tukaram
9. Sufis were Muslim mystics.
10. Ghazzali and Rumi.

➤ **Short Answer :**

1. The Nayanars and Alvars led religious movements in south India during seventh to ninth centuries. The Nayanars were devotees of Shiva while the Alvars were the devotees of Vishnu. They came from all castes including those considered 'untouchable' like the Pulaiyar and the Panars. They preaohe^gigidnt love of Shiva or Vishnu as the path to

salvation. They went from place to place composing beautiful poems in praise of the deities enshrined in the villages they visited and set them to music. There were 63 Nayanars who belonged to different caste backgrounds. There were 12 Alvars who came from equally divergent backgrounds.

2. Ramanuja was a Bhakti saint. He was born in Tamil Nadu in the 11th century. He was deeply influenced by the Alvars.

The main points of his preachings are:

- Ramanuja taught people that 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.
3. Khanqahs were houses of rest for travellers especially one kept by a religious order. Sufi masters usually held their assemblies here. Devotees of all descriptions including members of the royalty and nobility, and ordinary people flocked to these Khanqahs. Here, they discussed spiritual matters, sought the blessings of the saints in solving their worldly problems or simply attended the music and dance sessions.
 4. The works of the saints were composed in regional languages and could be sung. They became very popular and were handed down orally from one generation to another. Usually, the most deprived communities and women transmitted these songs. They even added their own experiences to them. Thus, the songs as we have them today are as much a creation of the saints as of generations of people who sang them. They have become a part of our living culture.
 5. Kabir probably lived in the fifteenth-sixteenth centuries. He was one of the most influential saints. He was brought up in a family of Muslim jalahas or weavers settled in or near the city of Benaras, now Varanasi. We have little reliable information about the life of Kabir. We come to know of his ideas from a vast collection of verses called sakhis and pads, which are said to have been composed by him and sung by wandering bhqjan singers.

➤ Long Answer :

1. Shankara. He was one of the most Influential philosophers of India. He 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, 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. He was born in Tamil Nadu in the eleventh century and was deeply influenced by the Alvars. He preached that 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 of qualified oneness in that the soul even when united with the Supreme God remained distinct.

2. During the thirteenth century a new wave of the Bhakti movement began in north India. This was an age when Islam, Brahmanical Hinduism, Sufism, various strands of Bhakti, and the Nathpanths, Siddhas and Yogis influenced one another. Ordinary people such as craftsmen, peasants, traders, etc. showed their interest in listening to these new saints. Kabir and Baba Guru Nanak did not approve orthodox religion. Tulsidas and Surdas accepted existing beliefs and practices but wanted to make these accessible to all. Tulsidas conceived of God in the form of Rama. His Ramacharitmanas is a unique creation, Surdas was an ardent devotee of Krishna. His compositions compiled in the Sursagara, Sursaravali and Sahitga Lahari, express his devotion. Shankaradeva of Assam 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. Saints like Dadu Dayal, Ravidas and Mirabai are worth-mentioning here. Mirabai was a Rajput princess and was married into the royal family of Mewar in the 16th century. She became a disciple of Ravidas, an untouchable saint. She devoted her life to Lord Krishna. She composed a number of bhajans expressing her intense devotion. A unique feature of most of the saints is that their works were composed in regional languages and could be sung. Therefore, they became very popular among the common mass.
3. **Teachings of Baba Guru Nanak:**
 - i. He emphasized the importance of the worship of one God.
 - ii. He insisted that caste, creed or gender was irrelevant for attaining liberation. His idea of liberation was not that of a state of inert bliss but rather the pursuit of active life with a strong sense of social commitment.
 - iii. He himself used the terms nam, dan and isnan for the essence of his teaching, which actually meant right worship, welfare of others and purity of conduct.
 - iv. His teachings underline the importance of right belief and worship, honest living, and helping others.
4. **Major beliefs and practices of the Sufis:**
 - i. Sufis were Muslim mystics. They rejected outward religiosity and emphasised love and devotion to God and compassion towards all fellow human beings.
 - ii. The Sufis often rejected the elaborate rituals and codes of behavior demanded by Muslim religious scholars.
 - iii. They sought union with God much as a lover seeks his beloved with a disregard for the world. Sufis too believed that the heart can be trained to look at the world in a different way.

- iv. They developed elaborate methods of training using zikr (chanting of a name or sacred formula), contemplation, sama (singing), raqs (dancing), discussion of parables, breath control, etc. under the guidance of a master or pir.



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