

**DIRECTORATE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL**

**MASTER OF ARTS-HISTORY
SEMESTER -II**

**SOCIETY AND CULTURE OF INDIA (C.A.D.-
1206-1757)**

ELECTIVE-204

BLOCK-1

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL

Postal Address:

The Registrar,

University of North Bengal,

Raja Rammohunpur,

P.O.-N.B.U., Dist-Darjeeling,

West Bengal, Pin-734013,

India.

Phone: (O) +91 0353-2776331/2699008

Fax: (0353) 2776313, 2699001

Email: regnbu@sancharnet.in ; regnbu@nbu.ac.in

Website: www.nbu.ac.in

First Published in 2019



All rights reserved. No Part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without permission in writing from University of North Bengal. Any person who does any unauthorised act in relation to this book may be liable to criminal prosecution and civil claims for damages.

This book is meant for educational and learning purpose. The authors of the book has/have taken all reasonable care to ensure that the contents of the book do not violate any existing copyright or other intellectual property rights of any person in any manner whatsoever. In the even the Authors has/ have been unable to track any source and if any copyright has been inadvertently infringed, please notify the publisher in writing for corrective action.

FOREWORD

The Self Learning Material (SLM) is written with the aim of providing simple and organized study content to all the learners. The SLMs are prepared on the framework of being mutually cohesive, internally consistent and structured as per the university's syllabi. It is a humble attempt to give glimpses of the various approaches and dimensions to the topic of study and to kindle the learner's interest to the subject

We have tried to put together information from various sources into this book that has been written in an engaging style with interesting and relevant examples. It introduces you to the insights of subject concepts and theories and presents them in a way that is easy to understand and comprehend.

We always believe in continuous improvement and would periodically update the content in the very interest of the learners. It may be added that despite enormous efforts and coordination, there is every possibility for some omission or inadequacy in few areas or topics, which would definitely be rectified in future.

We hope you enjoy learning from this book and the experience truly enrich your learning and help you to advance in your career and future endeavours.



SOCIETY AND CULTURE OF INDIA

(C. A.D. 1206 – 1757)

BLOCK-1

Unit 1 BHAKTI MOVEMENT – NATHPANTHI, NAMDEV	7
Unit 2 BHAKTI MOVEMENT – NANAK AND CHAITANYA.....	27
Unit 3 BHAKTI MOVEMENT – KABIR AND DADU	52
Unit 4 BHAKTI MOVEMENT - TULSIDAS AND SANT	76
Unit 5 – SUFI – ORIGINS.....	98
Unit 6 - SUFI – CONCEPTS AND PRACTICES	122
Unit 7 – SUFI – RELATIONS WITH OTHER RELIGIOUS GROUPS.....	144

BLOCK-2

Unit-8 Domestic Sovereignty - Women's Agency in Turko-Mongol
Tradition

Unit-9 Domestic Sovereignty - Imperial Women and the establishment of
Mughal Rule, Harem and Sovereignty

Unit-10 Mughal Marriages with Rajput women

Unit-11 Nur Jahan's role in court politics and Jahanara's role in trade and
politics

Unit-12 Manliness in Mughal Court Culture: Body and Emotions –
Norms of Masculinity; Love, Erotic and Devotion in Mystical Thought

Unit-13 Women and Gender in Everyday Life: Gender Relations in the
Household; Women and the laws, Women in Economic Activities;
Crimes against Women, Marginalized women – Prostitutes and
Entertainers from 1206 to 1757.

Unit-14 Gender relations in the 18th Century: Family and gender in
biographical writings, Sexuality in Medical Treatises, Women's desires
in Rekhti and Riti Texts, Gender Relations in Quli Khan's Work from
1206 to 1757

BLOCK-1 SOCIETY AND CULTURE OF INDIA (C. A.D. 1206 – 1757)

Introduction to Block

Unit 1 – Bhakti Movement highlighting on Nathpanthi and Namdev

This unit is on the Nathpanthi traditions of Bhakti movement and life of Namdev.

Unit 2 – Bhakti Movement highlighting on Nanak and Chaitanya

This unit is about the lives and teachings of Nanak and Chaitanya.

Unit 3 - Bhakti Movement highlighting on Kabir and Dadu

This unit is about the life and teachings of Kabir and Dadu.

Unit 4 – Bhakti Movement highlighting on Tulsidas and Sant Tradition

This unit is about the lives of Tulsidas and Sant traditions.

Unit 5 – Sufiism discussing origin of Sufism.

This unit about the various origin and theories of Sufism.

Unit 6 – Sufism discussing on Concepts and practices.

This unit is about various concepts and practices in Sufism.

Unit – 7 Sufism connection with other religions.

This unit is about relationship of Sufism with other religions.

UNIT 1 BHAKTI MOVEMENT – NATHPANTHI, NAMDEV

STRUCTURE

- 1.0 Objective
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Nathpanthi
- 1.3 Namdev
- 1.4 Let's Sum Up
- 1.5 Keywords
- 1.6 Questions For Review
- 1.7 Suggested Readings
- 1.8 Answers to check your progress

1.0 OBJECTIVE

To study about Namdev

To know about Nathpanthi

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In the course of the evolution of these forms of worship, in many instances, poet-saints emerged as leaders around whom there developed a community of devotees. Further, while Brahmanas remained important intermediaries between gods and devotees in several forms of bhakti, these traditions also accommodated and acknowledged women and the “lower castes”, categories considered ineligible for liberation within the orthodox Brahmanical framework. What also characterised traditions of bhakti was a remarkable diversity. At a different level, historians of religion often classify bhakti traditions into two broad categories: saguna (with attributes) and nirguna (without attributes). The former 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 on the other hand was worship of an abstract form of god.

1.2 NATHPANTHI

Nath, additionally called Natha, are a Shaivist sub-convention inside Hinduism. A medieval development, it joined thoughts from Buddhism, Shaivism and Yoga conventions in India. The Naths have been a confederation of lovers who think about Shiva, as their first master or master, with shifting arrangements of extra rulers. Of these, the ninth or tenth century Matsyendranath and the thoughts and association for the most part created by Gorakhnath are especially significant. Gorakhnath is viewed as the originator of the Nath Panth.

Nath custom has broad Shaivism-related philosophical writing of its own, a large portion of which is discernible to eleventh century CE or later. Be that as it may, its underlying foundations are in undeniably progressively antiquated Siddha convention. An eminent part of Nath custom practice have been its refinements and utilization of Yoga, especially Hatha Yoga, to change one's body into a sahaja siddha condition of stirred self's character with outright reality. A cultivated master, that is yoga and otherworldly guide, is viewed as fundamental, and they have truly been known for their elusive and heterodox practices.

Their unusual ways tested every single standard reason, investigating dim and evaded practices of society as a way to getting religious philosophy and increasing inward powers. They shaped devout associations, vagrant gatherings that strolled significant stretches to sacrosanct destinations and celebrations, for example, the Kumbh Mela as a piece of their otherworldly practice. The Nath likewise have an enormous settled householder convention in parallel to its ascetic

gatherings. Some of them transformed into warrior religious zealots during the Islamic principle of the Indian subcontinent.

The Nath convention was impacted by other Indian customs, for example, Advaita Vedanta monism, and thus affected it just as developments inside Vaishnavism, Shaktism and Bhakti development holy people, for example, Kabir and Namdev.

Derivation and terminology

The Sanskrit word nātha नाथ truly signifies "ruler, defender, ace". The related Sanskrit term Adi Natha implies first or unique Lord, and is an equivalent word for Shiva, the originator of the Nāthas. Commencement into the Nātha sampradaya incorporates accepting a name finishing off with - nath.

The term Nath is a neologism. Before the eighteenth century they were called Jogi or Yogi. In any case, during the pilgrim rule, the term Yogi/Jogi was utilized with ridicule and arranged by British India evaluation as a "low status position". In the twentieth century, the network started to utilize the substitute term Nath rather in their advertising, while at the same time proceeding to utilize their authentic term of yogi or jogi to allude to one another inside the network. The term Nath or Natha, with the significance of master, is a term likewise found in Vaishnavism (for example Gopinath, Jagannath) and in Jainism (Adinatha, Parsvanatha).

The term yogi or jogi isn't restricted to Natha subtradition, and has been broadly utilized in Indian culture for any individual who is routinely dedicated to yoga. A few journals by explorers, for example, those by the Italian voyager Varthema allude to the Nath Yogi individuals they met, phonetically as Ioghes.

History

Nath are a sub-custom inside Shaivism, who follow their heredity to nine Nath masters, beginning with Shiva as the first, or "Adinatha". The rundown of the staying eight is to some degree conflicting between the locales Nath sampradaya is found, yet ordinarily comprises of c. ninth

Notes

century Matsyendranatha and c. twelfth century Gorakhshanatha alongside six more. The other six differ between Buddhist messages, for example, Abhyadattasri, and Hindu messages, for example, Varnaratnakara and Hathapradipika. The most widely recognized remaining Nath masters incorporate Caurangi (Sarangadhara, Puran Bhagat), Jalandhara (Balnath, Hadipa), Carpatha, Kanhapa, Nagarjuna and Bhartrihari.

The Nath custom was not another development, however one transformative period of an old Siddha convention of India. The Siddha custom investigated Yoga, with the reason that human presence is a psycho-substance process that can be consummated by a correct mix of mental, speculative chemistry and physical methods, along these lines enabling one to a condition of most elevated otherworldliness, living in prime condition not indispensable, and biting the dust when one so wants into a quiet, euphoric supernatural state. The term siddha signifies "idealized", and this reason was not restricted to Siddha convention yet was shared by others, for example, the Rasayana school of Ayurveda.

Deccan roots

As indicated by Mallinson, "most of the early printed and epigraphic references to Matsyendra and Goraksa are from the Deccan area and somewhere else in peninsular India; the others are from eastern India". The most seasoned iconography of Nath-like yogis is found in the Konkan area (close to the shore of Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka). The Vijayanagara Empire craftsmanships incorporate them, as do writings from a locale currently known as Maharashtra, northern Karnataka and Kerala. The Chinese voyager, named Ma Huan, visited a piece of the western shoreline of India, composed a journal, and he makes reference to the Nath Yogis. The most seasoned writings of the Nath convention that depict journey locales incorporate prevalently destinations in the Deccan district and the eastern conditions of India, with scarcely any notice of north, northwest or south India. This Community Also Can Be Found In Some Parts Of Rajasthan But These Are Normal Like Other Castes, Considered As Other Backward Castes(OBC).

Gorakhshanatha is generally credited with establishing the custom of renunciate religious zealots, however the most punctual literary references about the Nath plain request as a sorted out element (sampradaya), that have made due into the cutting edge period, are from the seventeenth century. Prior to the seventeenth century, while a notice of the Nath sampradaya as a devout foundation is missing, broad secluded notices about the Nath Shaiva individuals are found in engravings, writings and sanctuary iconography from prior hundreds of years.

The Navnath, as indicated by a Deccan portrayal

In the Deccan area, just since the eighteenth century as per Mallison, Dattatreya has been customarily included as a Nath master as a piece of Vishnu-Shiva syncretism. As indicated by others, Dattatreya has been the venerated as the Adi-Guru (First Teacher) of the Adinath Sampradaya of the Nathas, the primary "Ruler of Yoga" with dominance of Tantra (systems).

The quantity of Nath masters additionally differs between writings, running from 4, 9, 18, 25, etc. The most punctual known content that notices nine Nath masters is the fifteenth century Telugu content Navanatha Charitra. Separately, the names of Nath Gurus show up in a lot more established writings. For instance, Matsyendranatha is referenced as a siddha in segment 29.32 of the tenth century content Tantraloka of the Advaita and Shaivism researcher Abhinavagupta.

The notice of Nath masters as siddhas in Buddhist writings found in Tibet and the Himalayan areas drove early researchers to suggest that Nathas may have Buddhist starting points, yet the Nath precepts and religious philosophy is not normal for standard Buddhism. In the Tibetan custom, Matsyendranath of Hinduism is related to "Lui-dad", one alluded to as the first of "Buddhist Siddhacharyas". In Nepal, he is a type of Buddhist Avalokiteshvara.

As indicated by Deshpande, the Natha Sampradaya (Devanagari:नाथ संप्रदाय), is an improvement of the prior Siddha or Avadhuta Sampradaya, an antiquated ancestry of otherworldly masters.[32] They

Notes

might be connected to Kapalikas or Kalamukhas given they share their irregular way of life, however neither the conventions nor the proof that connections them has been revealed. The Nath Yogis were appreciated by Bhakti development holy person Kabir .

Natha Panthis

The Nath Sampradaya is customarily partitioned into twelve streams or Panths. As per David Gordon White, these panths were not so much a subdivision of a solid request, but instead an amalgamation of discrete gatherings slipped from either Matsyendranath, Gorakshanath or one of their understudies. Be that as it may, there have consistently been a lot more Natha orders than will helpfully fit into the twelve formal panths.

In Goa, the town called Madgaon may have been gotten from Mathgram, a name it got from being a focal point of Nath Sampradaya Mathas (cloisters). Nath yogis rehearsed yoga and sought after their convictions there, living inside caverns. The Divar island and Pilar stone cut caverns were utilized for contemplation by the Nath yogis. In the later 50% of the sixteenth century, they were oppressed for their strict convictions and compelled to change over by the Portuguese Christian ministers. Aside from few, the Nath yogi decided to forsake the town.

Contemporary Natha ancestries

The Inchegeri Sampradaya, otherwise called Nimbargi Sampradaya, is a genealogy of Hindu Navnath c.q. Lingayat instructors from Maharashtra which was begun by Shri Bhausheb Maharaj. It is motivated by Deshastha Brahmin Sant Mat educators as Dnyaneshwar, Eknath and Samarth Ramdas. The Inchegeri Sampraday has become understood all through the western world because of the prevalence of Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj.

The Nath convention has two branches, one comprising of sadhus (chaste priests) and other wedded householder laypeople. The householders are altogether more in number than priests and have the attributes of an endogamous caste. Both Nath sadhus and householders are found in Nepal and India, yet more so in areas, for example, West Bengal, Nepal, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Karnataka. The monks made

an oversight association called the Barah Panthi Yogi Mahasabha in 1906, which is based out of the Hindu consecrated town of Haridwar.

As indicated by a gauge by Bouillier in 2008, there are around 10,000 religious zealots (dominatingly guys) in the Nath parsimonious request, conveyed in around 500 cloisters crosswise over India yet generally in northern and western locales of India, alongside an a lot bigger householder Nath custom. The most seasoned known cloister of the Naths that keeps on being used, is close Mangalore, in Karnataka. This religious community (Kadri matha) houses Shaiva iconography just as three Buddhist bronzes from the tenth century.

An outstanding element of the priests is that the greater part of them are nomad, moving starting with one religious community or area then onto the next, never remaining in a similar spot for long. Many structure a coasting gathering of vagabonds, where they take an interest in celebrations together, share work and therefore structure an aggregate personality. They assemble in specific places consistently, especially on celebrations, for example, Navratri, Maha Shivaratri and Kumbh Mela. Many walk long separations over a time of months starting with one sacrosanct area then onto the next, crosswise over India, in their otherworldly interests.

The Nath priests wear undergarments and dhotis, little else. Normally they likewise spread themselves with remains, tie up their hair in dreadlocks, and when they quit strolling, they keep a hallowed fire called dhuni. These custom dressing, covering body with debris, and the body workmanship are, be that as it may, extraordinary with the householders. Both the Nath priests and householders wear a woolen string around their necks with a little horn, rudraksha dab and a ring appended to the string. This is called Singnad Janeu. The little horn is essential to their strict practice, is blown during specific celebrations, customs and before they eat. Numerous Nath priests and a couple of householders additionally wear striking hoops.

Practice

As per James Mallinson, the custom covering of debris, neckband and tripundra tilaka was likely absent before, and it might have developed in

Notes

the cutting edge period. Those Nath monks who do tantra, incorporate smoking bhang (cannabis) as a piece of their training. The convention is generally known for hatha yoga and tantra, yet in contemporary occasions, the steady practice of hatha yoga and tantra is remarkable among the Naths. In certain religious communities, the custom love is to goddesses and to their masters, for example, Adinatha (Shiva), Matsyendranatha and Gorakhshanatha, especially through bhajan and kirtans. They welcome each other with ades (articulated: "aadees").

Warrior religious zealots

The Yogis and Shaiva sampradayas, for example, Nath transformed into a warrior parsimonious gathering in the late medieval time, with one gathering calling itself sastra-dharis (attendants of sacred texts) and the other astra-dharis (managers of weapons). The last gathering developed and turned out to be especially noticeable during the Islamic attacks and Hindu-Muslim wars in South Asia, from about the fourteenth to eighteenth century. As per Romila Thapar, alongside Shakta Hindus, subtraditions inside the "Natha Jogis were known to take to arms.

Masters, Siddhas, Naths

The Nath custom love nine, twelve or more Nath masters. For instance, nine Naths are respected in the Navnath Sampradaya. The most adored educators over its different subtraditions are-

Matsyendranath

A Matsyendra (Macchendranath) Temple in Nepal, who is venerated by the two Buddhists and Hindus.

The foundation of the Naths as a particular verifiable faction purportedly started around the eighth or ninth century with a straightforward angler, Matsyendranath (once in a while called Minanath, who might be related to or called the dad of Matsyendranath in certain sources).

One of most punctual known Hatha content Kaula Jnana Nirnaya is credited to Matsyendra, and dated to the only remaining hundreds of years of the first thousand years CE. Different writings credited to him incorporate the Akulavira tantra, Kulananda tantra and Jnana karika.

Gorakshanath

Gorakshanath is viewed as a Maha-yogi (or incredible yogi) in the Hindu convention. Inside the Nath convention, he has been an adored figure, with Nath hagiography depicting him as a superhuman who showed up on earth a few times. The matha and the city of Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh is named after him. The Gurkhas of Nepal and Indian Gorkha take their name after him, as does Gorkha, an authentic area of Nepal. The religious community and the sanctuary in Gorakhpur perform different social and social exercises and fills in as the social center point of the city. The religious community likewise distributes messages on the way of thinking of Gorakhnath.

Gorakshanath didn't stress a particular supernatural hypothesis or a specific Truth, however underscored that the quest for Truth and profound life is important and a typical objective of man. Gorakshanath advocated Yoga, otherworldly control and a moral existence of self-assurance as a way to coming to siddha state, samadhi and one's own profound facts.

Gorakshanath, his thoughts and yogis have been exceptionally well known in country India, with religious communities and sanctuaries devoted to him found in numerous conditions of India, especially in eponymous city of Gorakhpur. Among urban elites, the development established by Gorakhnath has been derided.

The points of the Nathas

As indicated by Muller-Ortega (1989: p. 37), the essential point of the antiquated Nath Siddhas was to accomplish freedom or jivan-mukti while alive, and at last "paramukti" which it characterized as the condition of freedom in the present life and into a perfect state upon death. As per an ongoing Nath Guru, Mahendranath, another point was to maintain a strategic distance from resurrection. In *The Magick Path of Tantra*, he expounded on a few of the points of the Nathas;

"Our points in life are to appreciate harmony, opportunity, and joy in this life, yet in addition to keep away from resurrection onto this Earth plane.

This depends not on divine kindness, however in transit we ourselves think and act."

Hatha yoga

The most punctual messages on Hatha yoga of the Naths, for example, Vivekamartanda and Gorakhshasataka, are from Maharashtra, and these original copies are likely from the thirteenth century. These Nath writings, in any case, have a cover with the thirteenth century Jnanadeva editorial on the Hindu sacred writing Bhagavada Gita, called the Jnanesvari. This might be a result of shared impact, as both the writings coordinate the lessons of Yoga and Vedanta schools of Hinduism along these lines.

Various specialized treatises in the Hindu convention, formed in Sanskrit about Hatha Yoga, are ascribed to Gorakshanath.

Impact

The Hatha Yoga thoughts that created in the Nath custom affected and were embraced by Advaita Vedanta, however some exclusive practices, for example, kechhari-mudra were excluded. Their yoga thoughts were likewise compelling on Vaishnavism conventions, for example, the Ramanandis, just as Sufi fakirs in the Indian subcontinent. The Naths enrolled enthusiasts into their overlap independent of their religion or rank, changing over Muslim yogins to their overlay.

The Nath custom was likewise impacted by Bhakti development holy people, for example, Kabir, Namdev and Jnanadeva.

1.3 NAMDEV

Introduction

Namdev of Maharashtra was a saint of mediaeval India. He was not a servant of Lord Krishna, but His companion. Namdev was an Amsa (part) of Lord Krishna.

Namdev was a contemporary of Jnanadev, the famous saint of Maharashtra, being his senior in age by about five years. He was born in 1269 A.D. He came of a family of tailors who were sincere devotees of

Vittala of Pandharpur. The family members were observing the Wari of Pandharpur, i.e., going on pilgrimage twice a year on the first eleventh day of the Ashadh (June-July) and Kartik (October-November) months. The family originated from a village called Narsibamani on the bank of the river Krishna, near Karad, in district Satara. Being a great devotee of Vittala and wishing to improve his material prospects, Dama Setti, the father of Namdev, had moved to Pandharpur a year or two before his son's birth.

Namdev, from his very childhood; was like Prahlad. At the age of two, when he began to talk, the first correct word he uttered was 'Vittala', and since then, he continued with the repetition of that sacred name incessantly, without any help or instruction from others. He found great pleasure when every day his mother Guna Bai took him to the temple of Vithoba for offering worship to the Deity. His next step was, when at the age of about seven, he prepared a pair of cymbals and spent his time in dancing and singing, doing Bhajan, to the neglect of everything—food, studies in school, rest, sleep, etc. His devotion to Vithoba was so innocent and sincere that he used to treat Him sometimes as his dearest brother or as his playmate.

One day, as Namdev's mother was busy, she asked Namdev to take the plate of offerings to Vithoba. Namdev went to the temple, placed the plate of eatables before Vithoba and asked Him to accept the offering. However, when Namdev did not find any evidence of acceptance by Vithoba, he cried so bitterly that Vithoba actually assumed a human form and accepted the offerings gratefully. Namdev's mother was surprised when her son came back in great joy with an empty plate and explained to her that Vithoba had accepted the offerings by actually consuming the eatables presented in the plate. So, the next day, she herself accompanied Namdev (but without his knowledge) to see and verify for herself the correctness of Namdev's explanation. The same performance was repeated and the mother had the satisfaction of seeing the Lord actually accepting their offerings. Her joy and pride in Namdev was unbounded. She felt grateful to the Lord that she was the mother of such a great devotee.

Notes

Lord Vithoba—his only interest

In other respects, however, Namdev was the despair of his parents, and later, of his wife and other relatives. From the beginning he had no interest in worldly affairs; he neglected studies in school; he would not take interest in his father's profession as a tailor, or in any other trade. His sole interest was to spend day and night in devotion to Vithoba. His parents were getting old; the family prosperity was waning. Therefore, their dearest wish was that Namdev, while devoting a reasonable spare time to his devotions, should help in maintaining the family in comfort. So, Namdev was sent to the bazaar one day to sell a few pieces of clothes. But Namdev was innocent of the tricks of the trade. To him, such things as prices, and money and its value, were unknown subjects. He went to the bazaar with the clothes, because his father forced him. He sat there on a stone doing Bhajan, entirely forgetting that he had gone there to sell the clothes. After a few hours the sun set and it was time for him to go to the temple for the evening devotional performance. Then only he remembered that he had not sold the clothes and that he would get a thrashing from his father. He was impatient to go to the temple. He therefore sold all the clothes to the very stone on which he was seated, i.e., he kept the clothes on the stone, appointed another stone as a guarantee that the first one would pay the money the next day, and went to the temple.

Namdev's father was furious on hearing his son's adventures and asked him to bring forth Dhondya (which means a stone and which is also used as a proper name among certain classes of people of Maharashtra) who had guaranteed the money. The next day Namdev went back to the bazaar, found that the clothes had vanished during the night and took the second stone (Dhondya) home, as it refused to pay the money, and locked it in a room. He then went to the temple and narrated all the events to Vithoba and explained his difficulties also. When Namdev's father asked him to show him Dhondya who had guaranteed the money, Namdev replied that Dhondya had been kept in a closed room in the house and ran to the temple. When the father opened the room to demand the money, he found, to his surprise, a lump of gold. Great was the

father's joy; but Namdev was quite indifferent to it. He only praised God for saving him from a thrashing. Thus it went on.

His marriage

In the meantime, Namdev married Radha Bai. Radha Bai was a worldly-minded woman. In response to Namdev's invitation, Vittal attended the naming ceremony of Namdev's child in the guise of a human being, named the child 'Narayana' and gave good gifts on the occasion.

There was extreme poverty in the house of Namdev. Namdev neglected his worldly duties. Namdev's mother and wife abused Lord Krishna. Under the guise of Dharma Setti of Vaikunthapuram and the pretence of past friendship with Namdev, the Lord visited Namdev's house, gave magnificent gifts to Radha Bai and disappeared.

A Bhakta, named Parisha Bhagavat, propitiated Rukmini and got the philosopher's stone which could convert iron into gold. Parisha's wife gave the stone to her friend Radha Bai one day. Radha Bai showed the stone to her husband and said that his Bhakti was of no use and was inferior to the Bhakti of Parisha Bhagavat. Namdev threw the stone into the river. Next day Parisha came to know of everything and took Namdev to task. Namdev showed Parisha the place where he had dropped the stone. Parisha searched for the stone and found, not a single stone, but a whole lot. Parisha was struck with wonder. He admired the spirit of renunciation and the spiritual powers of Namdev.

Namdev felt it increasingly difficult to take interest in household affairs and in his parents, wife and children; and no amount of persuasion from all those people or his friends was successful in bringing him back to the worldly life. To him there was only one interest and that was Lord Vithoba. He used to spend hour after hour sitting before Vithoba, talking to Him, discussing spiritual matters with Him and doing Bhajan. To Namdev, Vithoba was the beginning and the end of everything.

Meeting with Jnanadev

When Namdev was about twenty years of age, he met the great saint Jnanadev at Pandharpur. Jnanadev was naturally attracted to Namdev as a great devotee of Vithoba. That he might benefit from the company of

Notes

Namdev, he persuaded Namdev to go with him to all the holy places on pilgrimage. Namdev did not want to go, as that would mean separation from Lord Vithoba of Pandharpur. However, wiser counsel prevailed and Namdev was induced to go on pilgrimage. This was the most important period in the life of Namdev. Practically from this time, the two great saints almost never separated till death parted them. The pilgrimage extended to all parts of India and almost all the holy places.

On the way, several miracles are reported to have been performed by both Namdev and Jnanadev. Once Namdev and Jnanadev reached the desert of Marwar. Namdev was dying of thirst. They found out a well, but the water was at such a low depth that it was impossible to get it by ordinary means. Jnanadev proposed to assume the form of a bird by his Laghima Siddhi and bring the water up in his beak. But Namdev proved superior to him. He prayed to Rukmini. The level of the water rose miraculously to the surface. The well is seen even today at Kaladji, ten miles off Bikaner.

Namdev and Jnanadev came to Naganathpuri. Namdev started Bhajan in the temple. There was a huge crowd. The temple priests were not able to enter the temple and so became angry. Namdev went to the western gate of the temple and spent the night in doing Kirtan. The image of the temple itself turned to his side.

A Brahmin of Bidar invited Namdev to do Bhajan in his house. Namdev went there with a large number of devotees. The Sultan mistook them for rebel troops and sent General Kasi Pant against them. The general reported to the Sultan that it was only a religious party. The Sultan ordered that Namdev should be arrested and prosecuted. He asked Namdev to rouse a butchered cow to life or embrace Islam. An elephant was sent to crush Namdev to death. Namdev's mother requested her son to embrace Islam to save his life. But Namdev was prepared to die. Namdev raised the dead cow to life. The Sultan and others were struck with amazement. Namdev won the admiration of the Sultan and his party.

Namdev and Jnanadev met Narsi Mehta at Junagarh; Kabir, Kamal and Mudgalacharya at Kashi; Tulsidas at Chitrakut; Pipaji at Ayodhya;

Nanak at a place in the Deccan and Dadu, Gorakhnath and Matsyendranath in other places.

When feeding of Brahmins was done by Namdev at the end of his pilgrimage, Vittal and Rukmini became the cooks and servers. They ate out of the very plate which Namdev used.

Namdev gained much, during the pilgrimage, from the society of Jnaneshwar and from Nivrutti who was Jnaneshwar's elder brother and Guru, and was able to look on this world with a wider vision as the manifestation of God.

As we saw earlier, Namdev's world began and ended with the Deity 'Vithoba' of Pandharpur and he would not recognize any other Deity as the symbol of God. The pilgrimage lasted about five years and during this period Jnanadev advised Namdev to adopt a Guru so that he might be in a position to realise completely the manifestation of the all-pervading God and thus fulfil his own mission in life. Again Namdev hesitated as he thought that such action might alienate his loyalty and devotion to Vithoba. He plainly said that as long as he had the love of Vithoba, he had nothing to desire except constant devotion to Him. In fact, Vithoba was his Guru. It was, however, clear to Jnanadev and other saints in the company that Namdev's view was rather narrow in the sense that he thought God was centred in the Deity of Vithoba of Pandharpur and they wanted him to acquire the wider vision which they themselves had attained.

One day, in such company, Gora, another saint and a potter by trade, was asked to ascertain which of them were half-baked, i.e., had not realised Brahman. Gora took a small, flat wooden board such as he used to prepare or test the pots and began to pat on the head of everybody. When he came to Namdev and patted on his head, Namdev cried aloud thinking he was hurt. Immediately, all the others in the company began to laugh saying that Namdev was only half-baked and had not become fixed in his spiritual position.

Adopting a Guru

Notes

Greatly mortified, Namdev repaired to Vithoba and complained to Him of his humiliation. He said that he saw no necessity for him to have a Guru as he had intimate relationship with Lord Krishna Himself. Lord Krishna said that Namdev did not really know Him. Namdev denied this. Lord Krishna challenged Namdev and asked him to find out His identity that day. Namdev agreed. Lord Krishna took the form of a Pathan horseman and passed before Namdev. Namdev could not recognize the Lord. Namdev agreed to go to a Guru. Lord Vithoba then advised him to adopt Visoba Khechar as his Guru.

Visoba Khechar was one of the disciples of Jnanadev and was living at the time at a village called Avandhya. Namdev proceeded to the village immediately and arrived there at about noon. He took shelter in a temple in order to take some rest. There in that temple he saw a man sleeping with his feet on the Deity Itself. Namdev was shocked, woke up the man and rebuked him for this sacrilege. The man was no other than Visoba himself. Visoba replied, "O Namdev, why did you wake me up? Is there a single spot in this world which is not permeated by God? If you think that such a spot can be found, kindly place my feet there". Namdev took the feet of Visoba in his hands and moved them to another direction, but the Deity was there. He then moved Visoba in still another direction, but the Deity was there too! Namdev could not find any direction or spot where he could place the feet of Visoba without treading on the Deity. God was everywhere. Having realised this great truth that God had permeated the whole universe, Namdev surrendered himself to Visoba gratefully and humbly. Visoba then advised Namdev at great length. A small portion of Visoba's advice is given below.

"If you want to be absolutely happy, fill this world with Bhajan and the sacred Name of the Lord. The Lord is the world itself. Give up all ambitions or desires. Let them take care of themselves. Be content only with the name of Vittal.

You need not undergo any hardship or penance in order to go to heaven. Vaikuntha will come to you of itself. Do not be anxious of this life or of your friends or relatives. They are like the illusions of a mirage. One has to spend a short space of time here like the potter's wheel which goes on

rotating even after the potter has left. Make the best of it by keeping the name of Vittal ever in your mind and on your lips and by recognizing Him everywhere and in everyone. This is my experience of life.

"Pandharpur was established on the banks of the river Chandrabhaga as a sort of boat for people to cross safely this ocean of life. Pandharinath is standing there as the boatman-in-charge to take you to the other side; and the most important point is that He does this without asking for any fee. In this way He has saved crores of people who have gone to Him in surrender. If you surrender to Him, there is no death in this world."

After initiation by Visoba, Namdev became more philosophical and large-hearted. His temple was no longer the small narrow space on the banks of the Chandrabhaga, but the whole world. His God was not Vitoba or Vittal with hands and legs, but the omnipotent infinite Being.

A few days after Namdev had adopted Visoba as his Guru, he was sitting at a place doing his Bhajan. In the meantime, a dog came to the spot and ran away with the bread he had prepared for his midday meal. Namdev ran after the dog—not with a stick in his hand, but with a cup of Ghee; and he addressed the dog thus: "O Lord of the world! Why do You want to eat the dry bread? Take some Ghee along with it. It will taste much better". Namdev's realisation of Atma was now complete and overflowing.

After Namdev had returned with Jnanadev from the long pilgrimage, the latter expressed his desire to take Samadhi at Alandi. Namdev therefore accompanied the party to Alandi as he could not part with Jnanadev. He was with Jnanadev to the last moment. He then accompanied the party until the other brothers, Nivrutti and Sopan, and their sister Muktabai, left the world. Namdev has left behind a detailed account of the ends of these four saints in beautiful poems. Namdev was so shocked by these events which occurred within a short space of one year that he himself was left with no desire to live in this world. He took his Samadhi at Pandharpur at the age of twenty-six in 1295 A.D.

Namdev was not an author of any big treatise; but he left behind him a large number of Abhangas or short poems, full with the nectar of Bhakti and love towards God. These are exceedingly sweet. Most of these are

Notes

lost, but there are extant about four thousand Abhangas, which to this day are a great source of inspiration to all who would read them. Some of the Abhangas are found in the Sikh Adi Granth.

The essence of Namdev's message is: "Always recite the Name of the Lord. Constantly remember Him. Hear His glory. Meditate on the Lord in your heart. Serve the Lord with your hands. Place your head at His lotus feet. Do Kirtan. You will forget your hunger and thirst. The Lord will be near you. You will attain immortality and eternal bliss".

Namdev's maid-servant Janabai

No account of the life of Namdev would be complete without a mention of Janabai. She was a maid-servant in the household of Namdev. Nothing is known of her life except that she was Namdev's maid-servant. She herself forgot sometimes that she had an existence apart from being the maid-servant of Namdev. In several poems on devotion which she has left behind, she describes herself as 'Nam's maid-servant' or 'Namdev's Jani'. She was one of the closest followers of Namdev and had no ambition other than to serve Namdev and sing the praises of the Lord Vithoba. For instance, in one of her poems she sings:

"Let me undergo as many births in this world as You please, but grant that my desires are fulfilled. They are that I see Pandharpur and serve Namdev in every birth. I do not mind if I am a bird or a swine, a dog or a cat, but my conditions are that in each of these lives, I must see Pandharpur and serve Namdev. This is the ambition of Namdev's maid."

In another place, Janabai writes:

"Give me only this girl, O Hari, that I shall always sing Your sacred Name. Fulfil my only desire that You will accept my humble homage and service. This is all that I desire. Have mercy on me and fulfil my desires. I want to concentrate my eyes and mind on You and have Your Name on my lips. For this the maid Jani falls at Your feet."

That sums up the philosophy of Janabai and how she attained her desired goal. So intense and sincere was her devotion to Vithoba that the Lord Himself used to lighten her household duties, which, as she became old, she found unable to perform. By her service and devotion to God, she

completely succeeded in effacing herself and she got completely merged in Him. A great soul—Janabai! And a greater Master—Namdev!

Check your progress –

1. Write about Namdev.

2. Write about Janabai

1.4 LET’S SUM UP

A number of religious groups that emerged during this period criticised the ritual and other aspects of conventional religion and the social order, using simple, logical arguments. Among them were hepatopathies, Siddhacharas and Yogis. They advocated renunciation of the world. To them the path to salvation lay in meditation on the formless Ultimate Reality and 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.

1.5 KEYWORDS

Bhakti - devotional worship directed to one supreme deity, usually Vishnu (especially in his incarnations as Rama and Krishna) or Shiva, by whose grace salvation may be attained by all regardless of sex, caste, or class. It is followed by the majority of Hindus today.

Siddhi - complete understanding; enlightenment.

1.6 QUESTION FOR REVIEW

1. Describe about Nathpanthis.
2. Write about the Haath Yoga.

1.7 SUGGESTED READING

BHAKTI MOVEMENT AND LITERATURE: Re-forming a Tradition

M. Rajagopalachary and K. Damodar Rao

1.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Section 1.4
2. Section 1.4

UNIT 2 BHAKTI MOVEMENT – NANAK AND CHAITANYA

STRUCTURE

- 2.0 Objective
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Guru Nanak
- 2.3 Chaitanya
- 2.4 Let's Sum Up
- 2.5 Keywords
- 2.6 Questions For Review
- 2.7 Suggested Readings
- 2.8 Answers to check your progress

2.0 OBJECTIVE

To learn about the life of Nanak

To learn about the life of Chaitanya

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Some of Bhakti saints like Chaitanya and Baba Guru Nanak rejected all orthodox religions. Others like 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.

2.2 GURU NANAK

There has been a general belief among all people since the earliest times that great leaders, teachers and founders of new systems are born

Notes

in times of great social and political depression and religious confusion. Indeed, all great religions of the world had their birth in the darkest of such ugly times. At the birth time of Guru Nanak, Behlol Lodhi was the Sultan of Delhi (1450 to 1488 A.D). By the time Guru grew to manhood, Sikandar Lodhi (A.D. 1488 to 1517) had ascended the throne. He was one of the few bigots who sat on the throne of India. He destroyed temples in the towns and forts that he took from Hindus, and he forbade the people to perform pilgrimages, and bathing on certain festivals at places on the sacred streams within his own dominions.

The Muslim of the time exhibited a spirit of intolerance towards the Hindu subjects. The rulers and their agents and officials, big and small, were licentious and haughty despots who rode roughshod on the subjects. Guru Nanak depicts their character and conduct in some expressive words, which may be translated as under: In Kali-Yuga has occurred, famine of truth, false hood spread.¹ Similarly, Greed and evil are king and counselor, falsehood their officer. Lust the officer who is called for advice-all three hold conclave to chalk out plane. The subjects, bereft of understanding are carcasses full of straw. In the words of S.M Latif, Great jealousy and hatred existed in those days between the Hindus and Muhammadans and the whole non-Musalman population subject to persecution by the Muhammadh rulers.

It was during this time Guru Nanak begin his crusade against the tyranny of irresponsible bigots and autocrats, and the corrupt practices of Islam, and declared that all human beings were the sons of the same father and, hence, equal in all respects, in race as in creed, in political rights as in religious hopes. It has been seen that it was religious fanaticism as well as a desire for plunder and sensual satisfaction that had prompted the Muslims to invade India. Thus the Muslim invaders were ruthless beyond description, massacring men without mercy, plundering their homes, lifting women, desecrating and demolishing their temples and robbing the wealth of offerings of centuries that accumulated there.⁴ All the ways like persecution, oppression, bribery, economic and political disabilities,

and all other conceivable means were employed to force the Hindus to forsake their religion. It gave free reins to the lust, greed and passions of all who had any power over the people. As a result crime, corruption and sin ruled all-around. Both the rulers and ruled, the oppressors and the oppressed, were deep down in moral degradation.

Birth and childhood of Guru Nanak

Guru Nanak was born in central Punjab at Rai Bho di Talwandi (known as Nankana Sahib, now in West Pakistan) in 1469 A.D. Some biographers have mentioned Kartik Purnima as the day of his birth, but others fix it on Baisakh Shudi .

Talwandi was then a small village situated in the midst of a dense forest and waste-land, away from seats of power and tyranny, away from centers of learning and dry philosophy, far off from the arena of political strife and struggle, and away from the horrid , sickening scenes, enacted by the religious bigotry allied with political power. It was in the seclusion of such a village that the great World-Teacher was born. Rai Bho, the ruler of Delhi, had been its founder and proprietor. He had owned about a dozen villages around Talwandi. After his death, his son, Rai Bular, had succeeded him. Both Rai Bular and his father were new converts to Islam. They had accepted the religion of the rulers under the effects of force or the influence of some other powerful persuasion.

Guru Nanak's father's name has come down in history as Mehta (Land agent or accountant) Kalu, by reason of his being the village land-surveyor (patwari) revenue officer and general factor to the lord of the demesne. He was also a small farmer, a man of moderate means and evidently generally respected for his honesty in dealings. By caste he was a Hindu Khatri of the Bedi Tribe, which would put him in the very best section of Hindu society. The Guru's mother's name was Tripta, who bore a daughter, besides her famous son Nanak. The name of Guru Nanak's sister has come down in history as Nanaki. The panjabi derivation of the names is indicative of the fact of both children being born to their mother in the home of her parents. For

Notes

the daughter of the family it was quite usual in the Punjab to go to her parents to be delivered of her first child, as also one or two even after. Little else is known of the family in which the Guru was born.

Like all Hindus, the happy father sent for the family astrologer, Hardial, to draw up the baby's horoscope. On hearing what the nurse to say, Hardial is said to have been filled with a mysterious awe and wonder. Before consulting his books and determining the star under which the baby had been born, he wanted to have a look at it. It was an unusual request, but Hardial's importunities prevailed. The astrologer, who had seen hundreds of babies in his life discerned in this one a light that was to fill all lands and to guide all people to the Eternal Abode of the Supreme Lord. He congratulated Mehta Kalu, saying, Fortunate, indeed, art thou, O Mehta, to have such a one as thy son. He will be a unique king, holding sway over vast dominions and adored by the all sections of humanity. His fame and name will spread far beyond the frontiers of India. Though I shall not live long enough to witness his conquest of the world yet I am happy to have seen him. I am blessed. Mehta Kalu was very happy to listen that his only son would acquire fame, wealth and rule. When Guru Nanak was just five year old, he began to talk of divine things. Sometime he sit for hours with half shut eyes but his father did not like this type of attitude of his only son because he wanted to see him a great man of the world. Teachers and Teachings To stop wasteful conduct his father decided to send his child to school and Guru Nanak agreed to go. Mehta Kalu took his son, destined to be a world-teacher, to a Pandha, a Brahmin school master. But within short time Pandha discovered that this new pupil was no ordinary child. He had often watched his close eyes and sit for hours as it in ecstasy. He talked very little, but whenever he had an opportunity to speak, his sweet words emphasized the ideal of the realization of ultimate reality.

In 1478 he was put under the tutorship of Pandit Brij Nath Sharma for learning Sanskrit, but within a very short time the Pandit realized the awakened potent faculties of the young child. At the age of eleven i.e. in 1480 the young Guru was sent to Maulana Qutb-ud-Din to learn

Persian. There, too, he astonished his teacher by the quickness with which he learnt all that the Mulla taught him. But the Mulla, too, soon found that his pupil was greater than he himself. There are numerous Persian words and some Persian verses of the Guru found in the Granth Sahib, and it may be accepted as a fact that he became a fair Persian scholar. His scholarly attainments were considerable, as shown by his erudite composition like the Japuji, Asa-di-Var, Siddh Gosti, and Onkar. He often referred to ancient writers and made apt use of classical stories, and had philosophical discussions with, learned Yogis, Pandits, and Sufis, whom he was always able to convince by the deep learning and hard common sense. Guru Nanak attended school for few days. One day school master asked Guru Nanak why he was not reading. was always able to convince by the deep learning and hard common sense.

Guru Nanak attended school for few days. One day school master asked Guru Nanak why he was not reading. Guru Nanak replied that he preferred the study of divine knowledge to secular studies then he composed the following hymns: Burn worldly love, grind its ashes and make it into ink; turn superior intellect into paper. Make divine love thy pen, and thy heart the writer, ask thy, Guru and write his instruction. Write God's name, write his praises, write that He hath neither, end nor limit. In 1478, the parents of the Guru called in their Purohit (Priest) to perform the sacrament of the sacred thread, but the young Guru refused to wear the breakable thread and asked for the permanent thread, which the Purohit could not supply.

In 1497, one day the Guru disappeared while taking a bath in a nearby stream. He was considered to have been drowned but to the surprise of every body he appeared again after three days from the same spot, where he had entered the water. This incident brought a great change in the life of the Guru. He had been summoned into the presence of the Lord, where he received the instructions for this future career. It was necessary for him to move into the world with his message; therefore he had to resign from his service. His first announcement was: "There is neither a Hindu nor a Muslim." He thought that the

Notes

condition of India could be reformed if Hindus became true Hindus and Muslims true Muslims. Thus Guru Nanak received instructions regarding his aim.

TOUR TO THE EAST

A little time after, the Guru Nanak planned to go on his extensive tours, called Udasis. He finally took leave of his family, devotees, and friends, and take Mardana along with him as his companion. In the beginning, the Guru propagated his mission in the neighboring areas, but soon he finalized his programme and set out for distant countries and lands. He traveled in all the four directions covering thousands of miles and remaining out of his own province for several years at a stretch. At all places which they visited, the Guru Nanak found the people irreligious, and try to put them on the right path. According to all most all Janam Sakhis, Guru Nanak in his first Udasi, entered the village Saidpur, now called Eminabed, in the district of Gujranwala, Pakistan. He went to the house of a low caste artisan, Lalo by name. On his request, Guru Nanak stayed with him for a few days which were uncommon for a person of high caste. News soon spread through the Hindu families that a highborn Kashatriya was staying with the low caste, Lalo, and went about with a Muslim as his companion. The news that a saint was staying at the house of low caste carpenter reached Malik Bhago, the chief of the town and a fellow caste man. He was corrupt and wicked. He imposed many hardships on the poor and extracted money from them by unfair and foul means.

Once, he was holding a sacrificial feast and had invited all holy men to partake of his repast. He also sent a servant to invite Guru Nanak. The Guru, however, refused to accept the invitation and this sorely pained Malik Bhago. Then Malik sent special representative and place before Guru Nanak variety of foods but Guru Nanak refused because his bread was ill-begotten and made from blood sucked from the poor. This made the chief very angry and he asked the Guru to prove his point. At this the Guru sent for a loaf from Lalo's house. In one

hand he held Bhago's bread and in the other that of Lalo's. When he squeezed both, from one oozed blood of the exploited poor and from the other the sweet milk of honest labour and human kindness. At this Bhago was touched by a consciousness of his guilt and repented his past mis-deeds and prayed for mercy. The Guru asked him to distribute to the poor his ill-gotten wealth and hence forth to live an honest life of love and service. Bhago was thus regenerated.

TEACHINGS

According to Guru Nanak one should earn his or her livelihood by hard labour and should share it with other needy persons. Man should not collect wealth through exploitation of the poor masses. Only the earning from one's own hard labour should be shared with other needy persons and not wealth accumulated through exploitation of the poor masses. This explains Guru Nanak's proper emphasis on sharing. So exploitation in any form is condemned by Guru as worst sin. According to Guru Nanak, the real cause of the difference and strife between the rich and the poor, low and high is socio economic and religious exploitation.

According to Guru Nanak the lowest is equal with the highest in race as in creed, in political rights as in religious hope. After leaving Saidpur, Guru Nanak and Mardana visited the house of a thag(robber) known as Shaikh Sajjan. He builds a temple for Hindu guests and a mosque for Muslim guests. He provided them everything necessary for their comfort and at night he robbed them. Similarly like other guests Guru Nanak and Mardana were also happily received.

From Kurukshetra the Guru moved on to Karnal and thence proceeded toward Panipat. From Panipat the Guru moved on to Delhi. Sikandar Lodi was then the Emperor. He was oppressing the Hindus and forcing them to choose between Islam and death. All men of religion who preached peace and toleration were picked out by him and put to great tortures. When Guru Nanak visited to Delhi, Guru Nanak and Mardana were, likewise, arrested and put in prison. Like

Notes

others they, too, were set to work at the handmills and given corn to grind. The Guru did the labour for a time. One day when Guru Nanak sang one of his beautiful, soul-stirring songs all prisoners forgot their mills and ills. The wardeners forgot their duty of enforcing labour. Emperor Sikander also heard of this. Sikander bowed to the Guru and begged forgiveness for his past sins. Sikandar understood what the Guru wanted him to do. He opened the prison-gates and set free all the prisoners.³⁸ The Guru then advised him to remember and serve God.

After visiting Kurkshetra Guru Nanak reached Hardwar, one of the most important ancient places of Hindu pilgrimage on the bank of the sacred river Ganga, on the Baisakhi festival, falling on 27th March, 1504. A great crowd was assembled from the four cardinal points for the purpose of washing away their sins. The Guru saw that, while they were cleaning their bodies, their hearts remained filthy; and none of them restrained the wanderings of his mind, or performed his ablutions with love devotion.³⁹ The people at Hardwar were then throwing water of the Ganges towards the rising sun in the east for the benefit of their ancestors in heaven. Nanak created a sensation by beginning to throw water in the opposite direction. When asked why he was throwing water towards the west Guru Nanak replied that he was watering his fields near Lahore. The people felt amused and asked Nanak how the water being thrown by him at Hardwar could reach such a distant place in the neighborhood of Lahore. Nanak gave an impressive reply. He said that if Brahman's handful of water could reach heavens, why his earnest effort would not make the water reach his field in the Punjab⁴⁰. In this way Guru Nanak tried to expose the vanity of the Brahmins and unfolded the mysterious superstitions woven around by them. Guru Nanak preached to the Brahmins the greatness of the Supreme one and the futility of empty religiosity. It was here at Hardwar that Guru Nanak satirized those who had sought to keep their cooking place pure by drawing a circle around their cooking area from being polluted by the shadow of the fourth Varna. Guru Nanak discarded rotten

traditions, fought against ignorance and superstitions and showed them new paths.

Submission to the Will of God (WAHEGURU)

Guru Nanak Dev ji gave the message of “Hukam Rajayee Chalna Nanak Likheya Naal“. Guru Nanak Dev ji says that everything happens by God’s Grace, so Rest assured that God knows better what is right or wrong for us. We should, therefore, accept His decisions without any grudge or question.

2. There is One God

Guru Nanak Dev ji said, ” I am neither Hindu Nor Muslim, I am a follower of god”, which actually spoke about his belief in one god. In Sikhism, the god is omnipresent, shapeless, timeless, and sightless. (Nirankar, akar, alakh). Sikhism stress that, before creation there was God, and because of His will (Hukam), the Illusion (maya of attachment and enticement) came into being. The God in Sikhism is not male/female, and can only be seen through inward eye. Guru Nanak Dev ji explained one thing clearly that there is only One who gives to everyone and we should not forget to Him. The Guru stressed that full knowledge of god is impossible in human form.

3. Goodwill for all –SARBAT DAA BHALAA

Guru Nanak dev ji passed the message of Universal brotherhood. He said that religion is not mere consistence of words but actually looks all men and women equally. Universal brotherhood is a strong theme in Gurbani written by Guru Nanak Dev ji. In our prayer, we say this line towards the end of daily Ardaas –“Nanak Naam Chardi Kala Tere Bhane Sarbat da bhala”, which can be translated as “Nanak asks for „Naam“ (name of God) with which comes wellbeing, happiness and positive spirit and with your blessings, Lord may everyone in the world prosper and be in peace“ or can be broken down as: With Naam comes Chardi Kala and with your blessings, may there be peace for all. We request Him for the welfare of the whole humanity and not just of our community or our family alone.

4. SACH SUNAISI SACH KEE BELA –

(to speak the truth)Guru Nanak Dev Ji told in front of King Babar “You are not Babar but JABAR”. We should always speak the truth without any fear. According to the Guru’s doctrine, the victory of truth is not dependent on ending or suppressing falsehood but in standing firmly by truth. That is why Guru Nanak Dev ji exhorts that to stick to truth and to remain on the side of truth when it is necessary is very essential –SACH KI BANI NANAK AAKHAI SACH SUNAISI SACH KI BELAI HAVE RELATED THE TRUE WORD OF THE TRUE LORD AS PER HIS WILL.

5. SEWA AND SIMRAN

Guru Nanak says that no one can save anybody else. It is only Guru who guides us to safety, and to be saved, one have to follow the right path of SEWA and SIMRAN told by him. Further the Guru is not to be found in big palaces, he lives with poor. Let us love the poor, God will bless us. If we recite Gurbani with love, we will find the Guru is speaking to us. We have been reminded of his observations many times in our life. When we barely make both ends meet, we are usually sincerely devoted to GURBANI and the Sikh way of life. But when we have excess money to spend on worldly pleasures we follow vices and ignore the real mission of human life. DHARAM is usually the first casualty when we become rich. About SEWA Gurbani explains: (In the midst of this world, do SEWA and you shall be given a place of honour in the Court of the Lord)

6. THE THREE PRINCIPAL

:Sharing with others, helping those with less who are in need
Kirat Karo:Earning/making a living honestly, without exploitation or fraud
Naam Japna:Chanting the Holy Name and thus remembering God at all times (ceaseless devotion to God)

7.SHUN FIVE EVILS

GuruNanak Dev Ji asked his followers to shun five evils which leads to illusion (maya) which eventually acts as roadblock towards attainment of salvation. The five evils are-Ego, Anger, Greed, Attachment and Lust

8. IMPORTANCE OF GURU

Guru Nanak Dev ji laygreat emphasis on having the importance of Guru in one's life. He put forward the thought that salvation occurs not from pilgrimage or rites etc, but through heart, spirit and soul. For this to happen continuous seeking of knowledge must take place which is dependent on one's guru. Guru according to him is the voice of the god, the true source of knowledge and salvation.

9. NO DISCRIMINATION

Guru Nanak Dev ji was strongly against all artificially created divisions and all discrimination, both in word and deed. He said that the caste of a person is based on what he does. His idea of a caste-free society transpired also in his concepts of Sangat and Pangat.

10. AGAINST RITUALS/SUPERSTITIONS

Guru Nanak Dev Ji preached against superstitions, false rituals, worship of demi-gods and goddesses. He stressed that only One God, the Formless, is to be glorified. In this way, he showed the path of truth and enlightenment. Relevance of Guru Nanak Dev ji's teachings in present time.

Five centuries after the passing of Guru Nanak, his words still resonate with his followers. Let's take a look at 10 of his teachings that make sense presently.

□ Never forget the poor.-This mantra was relevant in 1500 when there was no concept of poverty alleviation, and is just as relevant now, when poverty hasn't left the world. When Nanak was 12, his father gave him Rs. 20 to set up a business. Nanak bought food worth Rs. 20 and gave it away. When his father asked him about this

Notes

investment, Nanak to him it was a "true business". Today, a Gurudwara named Sacha Sauda (true business) exists, where Guru Nanak fed the poor.

□ There is only one god -Using religion to segregate people into categories is awful. In the Guru's own words, "There is neither Hindu nor Muslim." On his visit to Hardiwar, he saw people offering the water of the Ganges towards the sun in the east, as an offering to their ancestors in heaven. He began to throw water towards the West. When others ridiculed him, he said: "If Ganges water will reach your ancestors in heaven, why should the water I throw not reach my fields in the Punjab, which are far less distant?"

□ Women are equal-At a time when other Indian religions wanted quiet, demure women in the temple and no women in the mosque, he permitted women to join religious gatherings and openly sing their praises of God.

□ Running away to a forest won't give you enlightenment. -The essence of religion/ Is meekness and sympathy/ But a life of goodness and purity/ Amid the world's temptations..." (Guru Nanak) Maybe one could achieve enlightenment in forests centuries ago, but we're not capable of that today. And Guru Nanak doesn't even require you to do that. He believed that living as a householder was better than going away for a divine truth. Nanak himself was a farmer even after achieving enlightenment.

□ These five evils are probably ruining your life. a. Ego b. Anger c. Greed d. Attachment and e. Lust. Most, if not all, suffering of big city life comes from these five evils.

□ Be selfless The Punjab Golden Temple feeds over a 100,000 people of all religions every single day. Not because there is some divine gain, but because it is a sacred duty. For Nanak, the concept of selfless service was a way of life

□ Fight superstition of any kind. -Nanak devoted his life to attacking formal rituals, caste, and practices that didn't make any sense. This is the simplest way you can find meaning and purpose in your own life – cutting out the clutter of what society dictates you should do.

□Simplicity is beautiful.-Simplicity of human nature can enhance humanity. For humanity, everybody should be free from artificial beauty. To give enrichment of the soul man should follow bridging humanity.

CONCLUSIONIn present time guru ji's teaching are applicable in every field of life.Guru Nanak, emphasized Bhakti, and taught that the spiritual life and secular householder life are intertwined. In Sikh worldview, the everyday world is part of the Infinite Reality, increased spiritual awareness leads to increased and vibrant participation in the everyday world

2.3 CHAITANYA

Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was born in Mayapur in the town of Nadia, just after sunset on the evening of the 23rd Falgun, 1407 Advent of Sakabda answering to the 18th February, 1486 of the Christian era. The moon was eclipsed at the time of His birth and people of Nadia were then engaged, as usual on such occasions, in bathing in the Bhagirathi with loud cheers of Haribol. His father Jagannath Misra was a poor Brahmin of the Vedic order, and His mother Sachi Devi was a model good woman, both descended from Brahmin stocks originally residing in Sylhet.

Mahaprabhu was a beautiful Child and the ladies of the town came to see Him with presents. His mother's father. Pandit Nilambar Chakravarti, a renowned astrologer, foretold that the Child -would be a great Personage in time ; and he therefore, gave Him the name Visvambhar. The ladies of the neighborhood styled Him Gaur Hari on account of His golden complexion, and His mother called Him Nimai on account of the Nim tree near which He was born. Beautiful as the lad was every one heartily loved to see Him everyday. As He grew up. He became a whimsical and frolicsome Lad. After His fifth year, He was admitted into a Pathsala where He picked up Bengali in a very short time.

Early Anecdotes

Most of His contemporary biographers have mentioned certain anecdotes regarding Sri Chaitanya which are simple records of His early miracles. It is said that, when He was an infant in His mother's arms, He wept continually, and when the neighbouring ladies and His mother cried Haribol, be used to stop. Thus there was a continuation of the utterance of Haribol in the house, foreshowing the future mission of the Hero. It has also been stated, that, when His mother once gave Him sweetmeats to eat, He ate clay instead of the food. His mother asking for the reason, He stated that, as every sweetmeat was nothing but clay transformed, He could eat clay as well.

His mother who was also the consort of a Pandit explained, that every article in a special state was adapted to a special use. Earth, while in the state of a jug, could be used as a water-pot, but in the state of a brick such a use was not possible. Clay, therefore, in the form of sweetmeats was usable as food and not clay in its other states. The Lad was convinced and admitted His stupidity in eating clay and agreed to avoid the mistake in future.

Another miraculous act has been related. It is said that a Brahmin on pilgrimage became a guest in His house, cooked his food and read his grace with meditation on Krishna. In the meantime, the Lad came and ate up the cooked rice. The Brahmin astonished at the Lad's act cooked again at the request of Jagannath Misra. The Lad again ate up the cooked rice while the Brahmin was offering the rice to Krishna with meditation. The Brahmin was persuaded to cook for the third time. This time all the inmates of the house had fallen asleep and the Lad showed Himself as Krishna to the traveler and blessed him. The Brahmin was then lost in ecstasy at the appearance of the Object of his worship. It has also been stated that two thieves stole away the Lad from His father's door with a view to purloin His jewels and gave Him sweetmeats on the way. The Lad exercised His illusory energy and deceived the thieves back towards His Own house. The thieves for fear of detection, left the Boy there and fled.

Another miraculous act has been described of the Lad's demanding and getting from Hiranya and Jagadisha all the offerings they had collected for worshipping Krishna on the day of Ekadasi. When only four years of age. He sat on rejected cooking pots which were considered unholy by His mother. He explained to His mother that there was no question of holiness and un-holiness as regards earthen pots thrown away after the cooking was over. These anecdotes relate to the tender age up to the fifth year.

Scholastic Career

In His eighth year. He was admitted into the Tol of Gangadas Pandit in Ganganagar close by the village of Mayapur. In two years, He became well read in Sanskrit Grammar and Rhetoric. His readings after that were of the nature of self-study in His Own house, where He had found all important books belonging to His father who was a Pandit himself. It appears that He read the Smriti on His own, and the Nyaya also, in competition with His friends who were then studying under the celebrated Pandit Raghunath Siromani.

Now, after the tenth year of His age, Chaitanya became a passable scholar in Grammar, Rehotiric, the Smrti and Nyaya. It was after this that His elder brother Vishwarup left home and accepted the asram (status) of a sannyasi (ascetic). Chaitanya, though a very young boy, consoled His parents saying that He would serve them with a view to please God. Just after that, His father left this world. His mother was exceedingly sorry, and Mahaprabhu, with His usually contented appearance, consoled His widowed mother.

It was at the age of fourteen or fifteen that Mahaprabhu was married to Laksmhi Devi, the daughter of Ballabha Acharya, also of Nadia. He was at this age considered as one of the best scholars of Nadia, the renowned seat of Nyaya philosophy and Sakskrit learning. Not to speak of the smarta pandits, the naiyaiks were all afraid of confronting Him in literary discussions. Being a married man, He went to Eastern Bengal on the banks of the Padma for acquirement of wealth. There He displayed His learning and obtained a good sum of money. It was at this time that He

Notes

preached Vaishnavism at intervals. After teaching him the principles of Vaishnavism, He ordered Tapan Misra to go and live in Benares. During His residence in East Bengal, His wife Lakshmi Devi left this world from the effects of snakebite. On returning home, He found His mother in a mourning state. He consoled her with a lecture on the uncertainty of human affairs. It was at His mother's request that He married Vishnupriya, the daughter of Rakj pandit Sanatan Misra. His comrades joined Him on His return from pravasa, or sojourn. He was now so renowned that He was considered to be the best pandit in Nadia. Keshab Misra of Kashmere, who has called himself the Great Digvijayi, came to Nadia with a view to discuss with the pandits, of that place. Afraid of the so-called conquering pandit, the other professors of Nadia left their town on pretence of invitation. Keshab met Mahaprabhu at the Barokonaghat in Mayapura, and after a very short discussion with Him he got defeated by the boy and mortification obliged him to decamp. Nimai pandit was now the most important Pandit of His times.

It was at the age of sixteen or seventeen that He travelled to Gaya with a host of His students, and there took His spiritual initiation from Iswar Puri, a Vaishnava sannyasi, and a disciple of the renowned Madhavendra Puri. Upon His return to Nadia, Nimai Pandit turned out a religious preacher and His religious nature became so strongly represented that Avdaita Prabhu, Sribas and the others who had before the birth of Chaitanya already accepted the Vaishnava faith, were astonished at the change of the young man. He was then no more a contending naiyaika, a wrangling smarta and a criticising rhetorician. He swooned at the name of Krishna and behaved as an inspired man under the influence of His religious sentiment. It has been described by Murari Gupta, an eye witness that, He showed His heavenly powers in the house of Srivas Pandit in the presence of hundreds of His followers who were mostly well-read scholars.

It was at this time that He opened a nocturnal school of Kirtan in the compound of Srivas Pandit with His sincere followers. There He preached, there He sang, there He danced and there He expressed all sorts of religious feelings. Nityananda Prabhu who was then a preacher of Vaishnavism and who had then completed his travels all over India,

joined Him by that time. In fact, a host of Pandit preachers of Vaishnavism all sincere at heart, came and joined Him from different parts of Bengal. Nadia now became the regular seat of a host of Vaishnava Acharyas whose mission it was to spiritualize mankind with the highest influence of the Vaishnava creed.

Preaching and Sankirtan

The first mandate that He issued to Prabhu Nityananda and Haridas was this: "Go friends, go preaching and through the streets of the town, meet every man at his door and ask him to sing the Name of Hari with a holy life and you then come and report to Me every evening the result of your preaching." Thus ordered, the two preachers went on and met Jagai and Madhai the two most abominable characters. They insulted the preachers on hearing Mahaprabhu's mandate but were soon converted by the influence of Bhakti inculcated by their Lord. The people of Nadia were now surprised. They said, Nimai Pandit is not only a gigantic genius but He is certainly a Missionary from God Almighty." From this time to His 23rd year, Mahaprabhu preached His principles not only in Nadia but in all important towns and villages around His city. In the houses of His followers. He showed miracles, taught the esoteric principles of Bhakti and sang His Sankirtan with other Bkaktas. His followers of the town of Nadia commenced to sing the Holy Name of Hari in the streets and bazars. This created a sensation and roused different feelings in different quarters. The Bhaktas were highly pleased.

The Smarta Brahmins became jealous of Nimai Pandit's success and complained to Chand Kazi against the character of Chaitanya as un-Hindu. The Kazi came to Srivas Pandit's house and broke a Mridanga {khol} there and declared, that unless Nimai Pandit would cease to make noise about His queer religion, he should be obliged to enforce Mohammedanism on Him and His followers. This was brought to Mahaprabhu's notice. He ordered the town people to appear in the evening, each with a torch in his hand. This they did, and Nimai marched out With His Sankirtan divided in fourteen groups, and on His arrival in Kazi's house, He held a long conversation with the Kazi, and in the end

Notes

communicated into his heart His Vaishnava influence by touching his body. The Kazi then wept and admitted, that he had felt a keen spiritual influence which had cleared up his doubts, and produced in him a religious sentiment which gave him the highest ecstasy. The Kazi then joined the Sankirtan party. The world was astonished at the spiritual power of the Great Lord and hundreds and hundreds of heretics converted joined the banner of Visvambhar after this affair.

Sannyasa

It was after this that some of the jealous and low minded Brahmins of Kulia picked up a quarrel with Mahaprabhu and collected a party to oppose Him. Nimai Pandit was naturally a soft hearted Person though strong in His principles. He declared that party feeling and sectarianism were the two great enemies of progress, and as long as He should continue to be an inhabitant of Nadia belonging to a certain family, His mission would not meet with complete success. He then resolved to be a citizen of the world by cutting off His connection with a particular family, caste and creed and with this resolution He embraced the position of a Sannyasi at Katoa under the guidance of Keshav Bharati of that town, on that 24th year of His age. His mother and wife wept bitterly for His separation, but our Hero though soft in heart, was a strong Person in principle He left His little world in His house for the unlimited spiritual world of Krishna with mankind in general.

After His Sannyas He was induced to visit the house of Sri Advaita Prabhu in Santipur. Sri Advaita managed to invite all his friends and admirers from Nadia and brought Sachi Devi to see her Son. Both pleasure and pain invaded her heart when she saw her Son in the attire of a Sannyasi. As a Sannyasi, Sri Krishna Chaitanya put on nothing but a kaupin and a bahirvas (outer covering). His head was without hair and His hands bore a danda (stick) and a kamandalu (hermit's water pot). The Holy son fell at the feet of His beloved mother and said, "Mother! This body is yours and I must obey your orders. Permit Me to go to Vrindavan for My spiritual attainments". The Mother in consultation with Sri Advaita and others asked her Son to reside in Puri (town of Lord

Jagannatha) so that she might obtain some information about Him now and then.

Mahaprabhu agreed to that proposition and in a few days left Santipur for Orissa. His biographers have described the journey of Sri Krishna Chaitanya (that was the name He got after His Sannyas) from Santipur to Puri in great detail.

He traveled along the side of the Bhagirathi as far as Chhatrabhog situated now in Thana Mathurapur Diamond Harbour, 24 Parganas. There He took a boat and went as far as Prayag Ghat in the Midnapore District. Thence He walked through Balasore and Cuttack to Puri, seeing the temple of Bhubaneswar on His way. Upon His arrival at Puri He saw Lord Jagannath in the temple and put up with Sarvabhauma at the request of the latter.

Sarvabhauma and Vedanta

Sarvabhauma was a gigantic Pandit of the day. His readings knew no bounds. He was the best Naiyaik of the times, and was known as the most erudite scholar in the Vedanta Philosophy of the school of Sankaracharya. He was born in Nadia (Vidyanagar) and taught innumerable pupils in the Nyaya Philosophy in his Tol there. He had left for Puri sometimes before the birth of Nimai Pandit. His brother-in-law, Gopinath Misra, introduced our new Sannyasi to Sarvabhauma who was astonished at His personal beauty, and feared that it would be difficult for the young Man to maintain Sannyas-dharma during the long run of His life. Gopinath who had known Mahaprabhu from Nadia had a great reverence for Him and told everyone that the Sannyasi was not a common human being. On this point, Gopinath and Sarvabhauma had a hot discussion. Sarvabhauma then requested Mahaprabhu to hear his recitation of the Vedanta Sutras to which the latter tacitly submitted. Sri Chaitanya heard with silence what the great Sarvabhauma uttered with gravity, for seven days, at the end of which the latter said, "Krishna Chaitanya! I think you do not understand the Vedanta, as you do not say anything after hearing my recitations and explanations." The reply of Sri Chaitanya was that He understood the Sutras very well, but He could not

make out what Sankaracharya meant by his commentaries. Astonished at this, Sarvabhauma said, "How is it that you understand the meanings of the Sutras and do not understand the commentaries which explain the Sutras? Ah well! If you understand the Sutras, please let me have your interpretations."

Mahaprabhu thereon explained all the Sutras in His Own way without touching the Pantheistic commentary of Sankara. The keen understanding of Sarvabhauma saw the truth, beauty and harmony of arguments in the explanations given by Sri Chaitanya and obliged him to utter that it was the first time that he found One, Who could explain the Brahma-Sutras in such a simple manner. He admitted also, that the commentaries of Sankara never gave such natural explanations of the Vedanta-Sutras as he had obtained from Mahaprabhu. He then submitted himself as an advocate and follower. In a few days Sarvabhabma turned out as one of the best Vaishnavas of the time. Report ran out and the whole of Orissa sang the praise of Krishna Chaitanya, and hundreds and hundreds came to Him and became His followers. In the meantime, Mahaprabhu thought of visiting Southern India, and He started with one Krishnadas Brahmin for the Journey.

Tour in Southern India

His biographers have given us a detail of the journey. He first went to Kurmakshetra where He performed a miracle by curing a leper named Vasudeva. He met Ramananda Rai the Governor of Vidyanagar, on the banks of the Godavari and had a philosophical conversation with him on the subject of Prem-bhakti. He worked another miracle by touching (making them immediately, disappear) the seven Tal trees, through which Ram Chandra, the Son of Dasarath, had shot His arrow and killed the great Bali Raj.

He preached Vaishnavism and Nam Sankiratan throughout the journey. At Rangakshetra, He stayed for four months in the house of one Venkata Bhatta in order to spend the rainy season. There He converted the whole family of Venkata from Ramanuja Vaishnavism into Krishna-bhakti, along with the son of Venkata, a boy of ten years named Gopal, who

afterwards came to Vrindavan and became one of six Gosvamins or Prophets serving under their Leader Sri Krishna Chaitanya. Trained up in Sanskrit by his uncle Prabodhananda Sarasvati, Gopal wrote several books on Vaishnavism.

Sri Chaitanya visited numerous places in Southern India as far as Cape Comorin, and returned to Puri in two years by Pandarpur on the Bhima. In this latter place He spiritualized one Tukaram who became from that time a religious preacher himself. This fact has been admitted in his Abhangas which have been collected in a volume by Mr. Satyendranath Tagore of the Bombay Civil Service.

During His journey He had discussions with the Buddhists, the Jains and the Mayavadis in several places, and converted His opponents to Vaishnavism.

Dabir Khas and Sakar Mallik reclaimed

Upon His return to Puri, Raja Prataparudra Dev and several Pandit Brahmins joined the banner of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. He was now twenty-seven years of age. In his 28th year he went to Bengal as far as Gaud in Maldah.

There He picked up two greater personages named Rupa and Sanatan. Though descended from the lines of the Karnatik Brahmins, these two brothers turned out demi Musalmans by their continual contact with Hussain Shah, the then Emperor of Gaud. Their names had been changed by the Emperor into Dabir Khas and Sakar Mallik and their master loved them heartily, as they were both learned in Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit and were loyal servants of the state. The two gentlemen had found no way to come back as regular Hindus, and had written to Mahaprabhu. while He was at Puri for spiritual help. Mahaprabhu had written in reply that He would come to them and extricate them out of their spiritual difficulties. Now that He had come to Gaud, both the brothers appeared before Him with their long standing prayer. Mahaprabhu ordered them to go to Vrindavan and meet Him there.

Instructions to Rupa and Sanatan

Chaitanya returned to Puri through Santipur where He again met His dear mother. After a short stay at Puri, He left for Vrindavan. This time He was accompanied by one Balabhadra Bhattacharya. He visited Vrindavan and came down to Prayag (Allahabad,) converting a large number of Mohammedans not by the scriptures of Vaishnavism but by argument from the Quran. The descendants of those converts are still known as Pathan Vaishnavas. Rupa Gosvami met Him at Allahabad. Sri Chaitanya trained him up in spirituality in ten days and directed him to go to Vrindavan on missions. His first mission was to write theological works explaining scientifically pure Bhakti and Prem. The second mission was to revive the places where Krishna Chandra had, in the end of Dvapara yuga, exhibited His spiritual Lila for the benefit of the religious world. Rupa Gosvami left Allahabad for Vrindavan and Mahaprabhu came down to Benares. There He put up in the house of Chandrasekhar and accepted His daily bhiksha (meal) in the house of Tapan Misra. Here it was, that Sanatan Gosvami joined Him and took instruction for two months in spiritual matters.

The biographers, specially Krishnadas Kaviraj have given us details of Sri Chaitanya's teachings to Rupa and Sanatan. Krishnadas was not a contemporary writer, but he gathered his information from the Gosvamins themselves, the direct disciples of Mahaprabhu. Jiva Gosvami, who was nephew of Sanatan and Rupa and who has left us his invaluable work, the Sat-sandarbha, has philosophized on the precepts of his great Leader. We have gathered and summarized the precepts of Sri Chaitanya from the books of those great writers.

Prakashananda Saraswati

While at Benares Sri Chaitanya had an interview with the learned. Sannyasis of that town in the house of a Maharatta Brahmin who had invited all the sannyasis as an entertainment. At this interview Chaitanya showed a miracle which attracted all the samnyasis to Him. Then ensued reciprocal conversation. The Sannyasis were headed by their most learned leader Prakasananda Saraswati. After a short controversy, they

submitted to Mahaprabhu and admitted that they had been misled by the commentaries of Sankaracharya. It was impossible even for learned scholars to oppose Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu for a long time, as there was some spell in Him which touched their hearts, and made them weep for their spiritual improvement. Sannyasis of Benares soon fell at the Feet of Sri Chaitanya and asked for His grace (kripa).

Sri Chaitanya then preached pure Bhakti and instilled into their hearts spiritual love for Krishna which obliged them to give up sectarian feelings. The whole of Benares, on this wonderful conversion of the Sannyasis, turned out Vaishnavas, and they made a master 'Sankirtan with their new Lord. After sending Sanatan to Vrindavan, Mahaprabhu went to Puri again by the jungles with His comrade Balabhadra. Balabhadra reported that Mahaprabhu had shown a good many miracles on His way to Puri, such as, making tigers and elephants dance on hearing the Name of Krishna.

Assembly at Puri

From this time, i.e, from His 31st year, Mahaprabhu continually lived in Puri in the house of Kasi Misra, until His disappearance in His forty-eighth year at the time of Sankirtan in the temple of Tota Gopinath. During these 18 years, His life was one of settled love and piety. He was surrounded by numerous followers, all of whom were of the highest order of the Vaishnavas and distinguished from the common people by their purest character and learning, firm religious principles and spiritual love in Radha-Krishna.

Svarup Damodar, who had been known by the name of Purushottam Acharya while Mahaprabhu was in Nadia, joined Him from Benares, and accepted His service as His secretary. No production of any poet or philosopher could be laid before Mahaprabhu, unless Svarup has passed it as pure and useful. Rai Ramananda was his second mate.

Both he and Svarup sang, while Mahaprabhu expressed His sentiment on a certain point of worship. Parmanada Puri was His minister in matters of religion. There are hundreds of anecdotes described by His biographers,

Notes

which we do not think it mete here to reproduce. Mahaprabhu slept short. His sentiments carried Him far and far in the firmament of spirituality, every day and night, and all His admirers and followers watched Him throughout. He worshipped, communicated with His missionaries at Vrindavan, and conversed with those religious men who newly came to visit Him. He sang and danced, took no care of Himself and often times lost Himself in religious beatitude. All who came to Him, believed Him as the All Beautiful God, appearing in the nether world for the benefit of mankind. He loved His mother all along, and sent her mahaprasad now and then with those who went to Nadia. He was most amiable in nature. Humility was personified in Him. His sweet appearance gave cheers to all who came in contact with Him. He appointed Prabhu Nityananda as the missionary in charge of Bengal. He dispatched six disciples (Gosvamins) to Vrindavan to preach love in the up-country. He punished all of His disciples who deviated from a holy life. This He markedly did in the case of junior Haridas. He never lacked in giving proper instructions in life to those who solicited them. This will be seen in His teachings to Raghunath Das Gosvami. His treatment to Haridas (senior) will show how He loved spiritual men and how He defied caste distinction in case of spiritual brotherhood

Check your progress –

1. Write about the childhood of Chaitanya.

2. Describe the south Indian tour of Sri Chaitanya.

2.4 LET'S SUM UP

It was due to Guru Nanak that a synthesis of Hinduism and Islam happened up in the north of India. In Bengal, Vaishnavism was saved by Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

2.5 KEYWORDS

Tol – primary school for learning Sanskrit

Dvait – Dualism

2.7 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Write about the teachings of Guru Nanak.
2. Write about the teachings of Chaitanya.

2.8 SUGGESTED READINGS

Guru Nanak: His Life & Teachings by Roopinder Singh

Teachings of Lord Chaitanya by AC Bhaktivedanta Prabhupada

2.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Section 2.4
2. Section 2.4

UNIT 3 BHAKTI MOVEMENT – KABIR AND DADU

STRUCTURE

- 3.0 Objective
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Kabir
- 3.3 Dadu
- 3.4 Let's Sum Up
- 3.5 Keywords
- 3.6 Questions For Review
- 3.7 Suggested Readings
- 3.8 Answersto check your progress

3.0 OBJECTIVE

To learn about the life of Kabir

To learn about the life of Dadu

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Kabir, who probably lived in the fifteenth-sixteenthcenturies, was one of the most influential saints. Hewas brought up in a family of Muslim julahas orweavers settled in or near the city of Benares (Varanasi).We have little reliable information about his life.

Dadu Dayal was a poet-sant from Gujarat, India, a religious reformator which have said against formalism and priestcraft. "Dadu" means brother, and "Dayal" means "the compassionate one".

3.2 KABIR

Kabirdas (1398-1518) was the saint of northern India during the 15th century. A rebel against all that was unspiritual in religion, Kabir—rightly called the Luther of India—helped to reform both Hinduism and Islam. He spoke of God with authority. He taught the common people in their own mother tongue, Hindi. He spoke of the 'living God's like Sri Aurobindo spoke of divine presence in every human being. As a result, a powerful religious social awakening soon followed. The period from 5th to 18th century A.D. in India reveals the development of a special religious atmosphere. During the 6th century some grotesque aberrations of tantra entered into the

Vedic religion.

For example, during Raja Bhoja's time, a philosophy called *Neelapari Darshan* advocating 'triratna' of wine, woman and meat was widely preached. However, the common man in the north was more drawn to the simple religion of *pancharatra vaishnavism* and of *panchadevata* worship. The religion preached by several saints of the 8th-9th century, had many things in common, such as opposition to rituals and external observances, insistence on purity of mind, and necessity of self-realization. Kabir is said to be the Adi-sant.

It is interesting to note that the nirguna worship in the north developed as a product of the alvar vaishnavism of the south, and the yoga and jnana cult of the Nathyogis of the north. A Nath yogi, Gorakhnath, was the first to accept Ratan Haji, a Muslim, as his disciple. This movement advanced under Swami Ramananda, disciple of Swami Raghavananda. The latter belonged to the fourth generation of successors to Ramanuja. Ramananda was a religious revolutionary of the time, for he accepted even women and those of lower classes as his disciples. He reconverted some Muslims and for this he suffered ex-communication by his own guru. It was left to Kabir to promote this movement for Hindu-Islam harmony further and this he did with eminent success. The Vedantic teaching of the one Atman pervading all creation means that all men are equal spiritually. Kabir took this up and, compounding it with the Islamic

Notes

ideals of monotheism and the brotherhood of man, evolved a panth or sect which broke all barriers of caste, sex and religion, and propagated the unity of man and the harmony of Hinduism and Islam. Not much historical data is available about the time or place of Kabir's birth or about his parents. So we rely on the strong traditions of the Kabirpanthis. According to Ramaananda Digvijaya, Kabir was born of a celestial being who abandoned the child on a lotus leaf in a lake at Lahartara near Kashi (present Varanasi).

According to another tradition, Kabir-s father was a Sannyasin named Swami Ashtananda and his mother was a celestial being named Pratichi. Prahlada, the famous devotee of Narayana, was himself born to them as Kabir. A third tradition says that Swami Ramananda blessed a Brahmin virgin, unawares, saying, -putravati bhava, Be you the mother of a sorf (a usual blessing, of course). When the virgin gave birth to the child, she left him for obvious reasons, near the Lahartara lake as mentioned earlier. Niru and Neema were a pious couple belonging to the Julaha caste and living in Kashi. They found the child Kabir at Lahartara lake and took him home. Naturally there was some commotion in the community. Some women taunted Neema saying, 'How did you get this baby? Neema silenced them by her firm but disarmingly honest reply, 'I got him without giving birth

to him! The Julaha caste had its origin from nath yogis and from the jogi caste, both connected with Islamic traditions. Hence the parents called in a muslim kazi (judge) for naming the child. He opened the Koran at random, with the intention of giving the child the first name that would come up. And 10! It was 'Kabir', which meant 'great' and which referred to Allah! How could this name be given to this insignificant Julaha boy? The kazi once again opened the Koran, to find this time *Akbar, a synonym of Kabir! The more he opened the book the more he got the other synonyms: Kubra, Kibriya, Zinda, Khijwar, Pir, Aqua, and so on. At this point, the baby Kabir opened his lisping lips to utter an oracle, a 'Shabd'. "I was not born of a woman but manifested as a boy. My dwelling place was near Kashi. A weaver found me there. I am wisdom personified. I have come in a spiritual form and my name is of great significance. These are the words of Kabir, the Indestructible." The kazi

was stunned and unhesitatingly named the child Kabir. Kabir was a precocious boy even at that tender age, he was seen to have an intense love for the name of God, both of Islam and of Hinduism. He called Him sometimes Allah, sometimes Rama. He would wear a sacred thread. If his Brahmin friends objected, he would retort, 'I am a weaver, dealing in threads. If I wear a thread, what is that to you?' With all the love for his foster child, Niru could not send him to any school because of his poverty. A Julaha boy was welcome neither in the muslim madrasa nor in the Hindu pathshala. Kabir learnt the hereditary craft, weaving. Kabir was very austere in his food and dress. He spent much of his time in prayer and contemplation. Feeding and serving holy men was one of his favourite pastimes. His mother sometimes felt anxious about Kabir's future. He would smilingly tell her: 'Ammi Jan (Mother dear) would God, who protects all his other creatures, forget only us?' Thus japa, prayer and contemplation became the whole and sole education of Kabir about which he said later:

Laying studies aside, "Into a stream the books Kabir threw. Out of alphabets fifty-two, He memorized Ra, Ma --- only two!" He proudly proclaimed: 'I did not touch ink or paper: nor did I ever hold a pen in hand!'

Kabir had two wives-Ramjaniya and Loi. After the former died, Kabir married the latter. Like Kabir, Loi was an orphan child, abandoned on the banks of the Ganga and found and nurtured by a holy man. One day the holy man suddenly died. The girl somehow grew up to be a practical, intelligent young woman. One day Kabir, with some more holy men, chanced to visit her home.

She entertained them all with a cup of milk each. All but Kabir drank the milk. When asked Kabir replied, 'I drink the divine name.' Impressed by Kabir's lofty life and spiritual powers Loi came to his home as his bride. As Kabir's preoccupation with prayer and contemplation deepened, his bread-earning work suffered. The family often faced starvation. He prayed only to his Rama: 'O Lord, empty stomach is no good for devotion; how can I approach anyone but you for help? Please grant me the barest minimum of food, shelter and raiment.' On two different

Notes

occasions Kabir had called back to life a dead boy and a dead girl. They were the greatest miracles of Kabir. Both the boy and the girl came to live with him as his children and were named kamal and Kamali respectively. When Kamali came of age, Kabir found a bridegroom for her in a strange way. A pundit came to Kamali at the village well and asked for drinking water. The young woman gave it to him from her pitcher. After quenching his thirst, the man started accusing her, a Muslim, of 'defiling' his high caste! At this point, Kabir appeared on the scene and thundered: "What is defilement, can you say? Fishes and tortoises are defiling daily the water you drink. The earth of the vessels you use contains crores of dead bodies. The cloth you wear is woven by a low caste weaver. Can you prevent these defilements? Dispel such illusions take the name of Rama. "

The pundit was moved by the power behind those words of the saint; he repented and took the hands of Kamali in marriage. The spiritual power of Kabir was manifesting thus, always enlightening the ignorant and saving the sinner. At the present spot of Kabir Choura in Kashi once stood Kabir's home, surrounded by a number of houses of prostitutes. Though Kabir did not mind their presence in the least, the ill-famed women wanted him to go away from there so that his night-long singing of prayers did not affect their unholy trade'. Seeing Kabir unwilling to oblige, the women set fire to his hut and stood calmly watching it burn, all the while singing the name of Rama. Suddenly a spark from the flames darted off to set on fire all the neighbouring huts of the prostitutes. The terrified women ran out, and finding all their paramours disappearing without lending any help, they took refuge at Kabir's feet. He had pity on them and miraculously saved their huts from total destruction. By his loving teaching, they were changed away from their sinful ways.

As Kabir intensified his spiritual practices he felt more and more the need to have a formal guru. He had a great fascination to have Swami Ramananda of Kashi as his guru. His Muslim background, he thought, might dissuade Ramananda from initiating him. So one early morning before sunrise he laid himself on the steps of a ghat on the Ganga where Swami Ramananda came for his daily bath. Unconsciously Stepping

upon the head of Kabir in the darkness, Ramananda uttered aloud the name of God as 'Rama' up rose Kabir, repeating the same name as his mantra. Ramananda was overwhelmed when he saw the great yearning and devotion of this disciple. Kabir later said about this historic incident: 'When he got Ramananda as his guru, his sorrows were destroyed, and his doubts disappeared. Such is the power and grace of the guru. Kabir taught nirguna bhakti which included the concept of Shankara's Advaita- -the oneness of jiva with the supreme self. He stressed on God's grace as most essential for spiritual illumination. "He emphasized the importance of cleaning the mind of its desires and living a life of truthfulness, simplicity, and self-control. Kabir called his God 'nirguna', in the sense that He was free from the three gunas and their derivatives- ego, mind, senses. Though a jnani by temperament, Kabir preached to the common man the love of God as the means for highest spiritual enlightenment." Kabir did not accept either the avataras of Hinduism or the 'last and best messiah-hood of Mohammed.' He preached against all exclusiveness, privileges and priest craft in Hinduism as well as in Islam. He preached against the habits of meat-eating and consuming intoxicants, and spoke strongly against the evils of adultery. He laid greatest stress on faith in the guru and serving him in every way. Listening to and serving holy men, he said, was powerful force for spiritual upliftment.

For some inexplicable reason, Kabir left Kasi in 1518 for a nearby town, Maghar, at the ripe old age of 120. Here came his end. At the time of death he sang in joy about God:

"A sweet song of blessing,

Sing, O bride handsome!

Rama, my Beloved, has come to my home."

Kabir had a message for the world. Kabir's teaching were given through inspired poetry. Besides sakhi, he also employed other metres like doha, chaupai, rameini and sabda. Experts have named Kabir's language as santa-bhasa. Unlike common Hindi, this language contains many words from other Indian languages and is happily free from grammatical stringency. The power and simplicity of Kabir's language, it is said, swept grammar off its feet! The rules of grammar had to yield to cater

Notes

for the profundity and power of Kabir's ideas. Though there are quite a few compilations of Kabir's teachings—like Sukha-nidan and Amarul. Those recorded in the books Bijak and in the Adi Granth of the Sikhs are considered the most authentic. Following are a few of his selected teachings:

On God: "O God, I am your child and you are my Mother. Won't you pardon me my errors? The child may commit numberless blunders; would the Mother ever mind them? If the baby pulls the Mother's braids, wouldn't the Mother remain unruffled? Kabir is convinced that the child's sorrow is also the mother's, nay, the mother's is still more!"

On External observances:

"Why do you bathe and wash, Without feeling the God indwelling?

You wash the vessel outside,

While within it's foul-smelling.

Wash you may a hundred times will;

Without the Name, you can't avoid the hell!"

On Guru: 'Kabir says that those who think lightly of their guru are blind, indeed. When God frowns upon us, the guru is our refuge; but when the guru frowns, we have no refuge

anywhere!. "If body is a venomous creeper Guru is a tank full-o-nectar. Should you give for Guru your head?

Still the price is far less paid."

On Remembrance of God:

"Merged in the joy of God-remembrance,

Remain with your mouth closed in silence.

Shut out the senses from the world outside,

Open the mind and see Him inside.

Ages passed telling your beads,

Yet the mind's crookedness mending needs;

Leave aside then telling beads by hand.

Tell, instead, your beads by mind."

On Duty: Kabir says that this body is sure to go away; before it dies, apply it to some good purpose. He asks us to serve holy men and sing the glory of God.

On Egotism:

"He who says always 'my' and 'I'

His ego does everything destroy.

It binds the feet tight as a chain,

It acts like a noose of death and pain."

On Death: Whoever is born must depart some day, be he a king or a slave or a saint. The only difference is that the king departs after sitting on throne, while the servant has to go after suffering much pain. '

"In this body-cage with ten doors open

Is lodged the bird of Life;

It's wonder if it stays even for second's time,

Nothing to wonder if it leaves anytime!"

On Maya: 'Very few are aware that both maya and a shadow behave alike. Run away from them and they chase us; face them boldly and see them both run away from us!

On Practice: There are many to preach; alas, so few to practise. It is better that empty precepts are dumped in streams, for preaching without practice is nothing but senseless screams.'

On Adultery:

"The neighbour's wife is a deadly knife. Bring her never into your life. Ravana, though ten-headed, lost his life, Because of his desire for Ram's wife."

On Truthfulness:

Notes

"Dressed in love's attire Kabir would dance in mirth, And would sacrifice his all On one who spoke only truth."

On Holy Men:

To become a holy man esteemed by all

Is like climbing a palm tree tall;

Succeed, you enjoy the delicious juice;

Fall, you're a heap of broken bones!

He who's above the greed for gold

And who's free from woman's hold,

On such a holy man's feet

I'll lie like dust, says Kabir."

Real Heroism: 'He is no hero who fights with bow and arrow. True heroism consists in overcoming maya and attaining divine love for God.'

In many of the above teachings, one cannot miss the lofty message of Sri Ramakrishna expressed in almost the same language more than four centuries later. In fact, the similarities between Kabir and Sri Ramakrishna are astonishing. Both were near-illiterates. Both attained supreme illumination through yearning alone. Both taught in their own native tongue; not from scriptural learning but from the depth of their own realization.

Both preached the harmony of religions. Both practiced Hinduism and Islam. Both preached essentials of religion rather than its externals. Both saw in man the manifestation of the divine and hence preached equality of man and man, and man and woman. Both had followers from more than one religion, and both were originators of a powerful spiritual-social awakening. Both preached that advaitic experience could be attained through pure and intense love of God. Both had great concern for the upliftment of the masses and the women, not only spiritually but also socially and economically. Both were hailed and worshipped as the highest manifestation of God as guru by their followers. Similarities between Kabir and Swami Vivekananda are also significant. Both of

them wanted a 'root and branch' reform in the Indian society but on the basis of spirituality. Both preached morality as the foundation for all spiritual life and progress. Both used a very strong language against oppressors and charlatans. Both upheld the need for a new approach and application of religion under the changed conditions of Indian society. Both preached yoga to the masses along with jnana and bhakti. In fact, Swamiji spoke of Kabir as his ideal of 'reformation through spiritual upliftment.

PHILOSOPHY OF KABIR – DOHAS AND INFLUENCE OF OTHER SPIRITUAL PATHS

According to some critics mystical approaches of Kabir Das are the result of Sufi impact. But such mystical approaches are scattered here and there in Upanishadas too. If it is accepted, then, what would be the source of Kabir's thoughts and feelings, such as transitoriness of worldly life the shapeless presence of Divine entity, the ground of devotion of unexpressed in the form of 'Parpati' etc. Even if it is accepted that the source of knowledge is Vedanta even then the problem remains unsolved.

What is the true shape of Kabir's Bhakti ? It requires careful consideration Kabir's Bhakti called 'Prema Bhakti' seems to have emerged from vaishnave Bhakti. The impact of Vaishnava Bhakti is proved by the fact that Kabir never showed his appreciation for sufis in Bani. On the contrary he has appreciated Vaishnavas very much and called them his close companion. Some Padas of Kabir have the feeling of couple love which cannot be other than divine love. So it cannot be justified to say that kabir was influenced by sufi mysticism.

Kabir's truth is nothing but the sincere truth of man, and his prescribed path of life is the best and easiest,? It is the chief speciality of Kabir Bani that it introduces simple truth of daily experience in larger scope. This simple expression of true removes the complicacy and intricacy of traditional expressions. It also gave shattering blow to communal and religious differences. Kabir did his best to set humanity

Notes

free from differences between high and low, and to bring into one unity. It evaporated individual sense of greatness of meanness, and filled all with the sense of equality. Kabir's unique achievement lies in his power to make scholarly thoughts easy to understand by all.

Jain cult seems to have slight impact on Kabir's doctrine of Karma. According to Jainism it is the Vicious actions of this earthly life that make man full of victim to old age and death and suffer from different types of sorrows and sufferings man can attain salvation only after shattering these bondages of sufferings. This thing is acceptable to Kabir because he, too preaches the same doctrine of Salvation, but he is unable to accept this theory of Jainism that 'Kaivalya Gyan' can be attained only through severe penance, because Kabir looks down upon pilgrimage, fasts, penance etc. as is proved by this words 'Japa, tapa dikhen dhokhara'. Kabir's "Kaivalya" may not be the true copy of Jain 'Kaivalya*' but both of them have some similarity.

Kabir Bani and Jain Bani are similar in many other things which are also found in Siddha Bani. So it is very difficult to say what is the true source of Kabir Bani. Prohibition of Tantra-Mantra, Ghat-Tirtha, sahaj-sadhana of mind. Jal, saindhava-samarasata etc are visible in above mentioned works. Some part of Kabir Bani shows close similarity with Siddha 'Hohokosha' and Jain 'Pahur doha'. So this question becomes still more difficult to answer. Jain poets generally give 'Prema bhavana' and 'Niranjan bhavana' extraordinary expression for which Kabir is known.

To be brief it may be said that a faint source of Kabir's thought about general conduct, spiritual life and sadhana can be seen in the works of Jain poets. Sufi Cult : The impact of sufism on Kabir Bani cannot be ignored. Sufi cult is an off shoot of Islam. There is no doubt about it, but sufis had developed a more purified and chastened shape of religion. Faith in one God of Islam and Spiritualism of Vedant have reached uncompromising term in non-dualism of Sufism.

The followers of Sufism learnt the secret of Yoga sadhana from Buddhists and Shaivas. Is it wrong to say that 'Duniya-a-phani' bears the impact of Buddhist 'Shanika vada' and 'Shunya vada* ?

and did 'Pind Brahmamand Vada' of Sahaj Yani Sadhana not inspire Sufis to find 'Yar ka deedar' in their own heart and mind?

It may be that Kabir's critical method has a little influence of Islam, but this is also found in Siddhas and Nathas etc. If it is confessed that Islam had its impact on Kabir even then it will be clear that, too, had its influence on Kabir. This influence might be direct or indirect. It is said that inspiration to criticise casteism and idolatry came to Kabir from Islam, but it can easily be seen that the contribution of Buddhists and Nathas in this field is not negligible. Those who seek the impact of sufism in Kabir's 'Viraha Bedana ki tibrata', can easily see that 'Gopi Viraha' of Bhagwat and 'Paramvirahasakti' of Nardiya bhakti is not less intense, though they lack the mundane feeling of hyperbolic sufi style

Sufi attempt to bridge the gap between Hindus and Mislms is praiseworthy. In every thing pervades the light of same God. Sufi attempt of unity with this feeling is, indeed, very important. A faint shadow of such attempts (if these are not original attempts) can be seen Kabir's sense of unity(Akya Sadhana).It would be worth while to say that far sighted Kabir's Bani bears the stamp of Sufism . But we have no solid proof to prove it. The vehement manner of Kabir's scolding to Shekhtaki shows that sufism had little influence on Kabir Bani. Quite contrary to it Kabir's respectful appreciation for Vaishnava Bhakti and Vaishnavas leads us away from sufi impact.

Charvak philosophy had its slight influence . There is no doubt about it. Kabir was the devotee of God - and charvak cult is atheist- What influence can charvak philosophy, the doctrine of eat,drink and be merry, exert on Kabir ? How can Kabir, the strict observer of social decorum, accept charvak doctrine that is quite indifferent to all sorts Of discipline and decorum.

So it is not worthwhile to seek charvak unrestrained freedom and indifference in Kabir Bani. The source of its faith should be sought in the established faith of devotees. Buddhism had lost its glory in the period of Kabir. The doctrine of non-dualism of Shankar had inflicted crushing defeat on Buddhism.

Notes

The Bhakti cult started by Alvaras of south was accepted by Ramanuj with some modification. Ramanuj gave it the shape of a movement. This movement had began long before in reaction to 'Maya Vada' of Shankar. It was also helped by several Shaiva scholars. But the movement started by Ramanuj opened path for other movements. The reaction did not stop with 'Vishistadvaita Vada', but went on through 'Dvaita Dvait' doctrines etc. The shape of Buddhism adopted by Bajra Yani and Sahaj Yani Siddhas has become extremely deformed with the major addition of 'Yoga Vritti'. Not only those people who were not the followers of Buddhism, were angry with its 'Paurukshya' and 'Kaustha' but also many among the followers of Siddha cult became its opponent.

Gorakh nath himself who is called the founder of Nath cult, was a traditional Siddha of Siddha Cult. He found ugliness in it, which was practised behind siddhi and which was a great black spot on the cult. So Gorakh Nath founded Nath Cult in reaction to Siddha Cult. Nath Cult deprecated 'Nag sadhana' vehemently. But Gorakh Nath accepted many things of Siddha Sadhana, and rejected many others of the cult. Yet he adopted many them as new Sadhana with new meanings.

To say that Kabir adopted only Nath Doctrines is a fallacious statement, but he lived in close proximity and is indebted to it in many respects. Yet this thing cannot blot out the importance and originality of Kabir literature. Seeing some particular words used in Kabir Bani some critics of Buddhist tendency trace their source in Bajrayani and Siddhayani diction, which is no correct, because all the sources of this diction had been lost by the time of Kabir. Besides this Kabir expressed his disregard for eighty four siddhas by his criticism. If it is accepted that Kabir got acquainted with them through other sources which cannot be other than Natha Cult which was still popular in Kabir's time,.

'Shunya', 'sahaj' etc. of Kabir Bani are very old, yet they have been used in new garb and with new meaning. They changed their meaning in the Bani of Nathas and they further changed their meaning in

Kabir Bani 'Khasam' word is an example of this,. Indeed it is a word of Buddhist origin, and it means 'AAakashwata' or 'Shunyawata' but Kabir has given it the meaning of Arabi word 'Khasam* (Pati) which was current those days.

Thus we see that Kabir's relation with siddhas is not direct but indirect and long journey of time has made it indistinct. As it has already been stated earlier that Natha cult was extant in the time of Kabir. Kabir has expressed his respect and appreciation to Gorakh Nath who lived long before him. It makes it clear that Kabir was a great supporter of the principles and doctrines of Natha cult. Besides this, Kabir's spiritual teacher, Ramanand appears to have been influenced by some practices of Natha cult, such as purity of conduct and behaviour, emphasis on the importance of Guru, Sharp criticism of caste and creed and his use of popular language to Preach his audience etc. are the main.

These things must have come to Kabir through Ramanand. Much importance has been attached to Guru in the Yoga cult of Gorakh nath. Guru is the root of all the achievements, and only an 'Awadhut' can deserve to be a Guru or spiritual teacher. Every sentence of a Guru has the significance of a Veda, his every step is a place of pilgrimage and his every sight possesses the salvation of 'Kaivalya'. He has total renunciation in one hand and carnality in the other and yet he remains untouched with both renunciation and carnality. Neither any one is greater than him nor on a par with him. Such a impartial Yogi attains Natha Pantha has also laughed at bookish knowledge. Kabir, too, has laughed at such learned book-worms as have failed to understand the significance

The supreme desire of an 'Avadhuta' of Natha cult is to reach the stage of Salvation which is far beyond the contradictory feeling of dualism and non-dualism. In Avadhuta song it has been stated that some people prefer non-dualism while some like dualism more, but nobody realize the mysterious element lying in the feeling of dualism and non-dualism. It is called Samtatwa'. If heavenly God is static

Notes

and permanent, then, is this imaginary idea of dualism and non-dualism not fallacious ?

Kabir has composed the following Pad expressing similar idea :

"Gorakh, Ram eko nahin

Uajtfwan n^wah^veda bichara,

Harihar brahma na shiva

shakti na wah tirthachara,

Hay bap guru jake nahin

so houn duja ke akela,

Kahahin kabir jo abaki b

ujhe soi guru ham chela.(Bijak Shabda

The extra-ordinary, 'Swayam Joti Satya' on which the followers of Nath cult focus their thought, is extraordinary like Kabir's "Ram Niranjana". According to Kabir the supreme Math of Nathas, whose only light pervades in all the three world is 'Parbrahma' or the supreme'soul' . This statement is found in that prayer of Siddha Jalandhar in which 'Hath' has been sung as extra-ordinary, supreme among Yatis and in the form of Shanker'. According to some 'Sruti' has no 'Sadhika' . Kabir too has the similar idea Kabir says at one place : "Va-onakar aadi jo jane,

likhi ke metai tahi somane.Vo-tuNkar Kahai sab koi,

Jinha yah lakha jo biralehoi.”

Kabir resembles Nathas in his idea of pilgrimage and fasts. In Natha cult no value is attached to "SmartsAacharyas". This peculiarity leads it against "SmartsHindu dharma". At one place in Gorakh Siddhant it has been stated. People often call 'Aachar, aachar, but this aachar is a derivative of "Atyachar."

Whatever food you serve comes from a"charmpatra" and the shoes you give to wear are also made of leather. At the time of solar eclipse you throwaway clay pots culling them defiled. Why do

you not throw away your corns and clothes. The truth is that 'aachar' itself is quite imaginery. Wise men never observe it. But we should not think that there is no 'aachar' in our mind. It is present but quite separate from thought ? Are these sayings not shattering like the sayings of Kabir. So it is not worthwhile to say that such maxims were not in use in India before Kabir Das and is it not wrong to say that these sayings of Kabir are the direct result of foreign impact. Most of the sects that were present in the time of Kabir were the supporters of Yoga. There were many touchables and untouchables among the followers of these sects. Those cults or sect in which caste difference was maintained went on declining

Aryans and Anaryans embraced those cults. Those daystantras were dominant. Tantras had different branches such as Buddhist, Shaiva, Shakta, Vaishnava etc which were similar in many things, and had place for untouchables. Many current cults accepted tantras. Different doctrines of different tantras dissolved in several sects and cults and these removed the differences to a large extent. Puranas, too, attempted to bring unity, but their attempt was insufficient, Casteism was creating violent opposition in Indian society, and attempts to stop this sharp reaction through Ram literature started to be made in sixth century. The creators of Puranas, no doubt, made some effort to slacken the tie of Brahmanism, but they failed to bring meaner castes on equality, they could give them only some easy approaches. Tantras framed and prescribed their own path in reaction to this easy going way. Tantras gave meaner castes not only higher regard through 'Chandalini', 'Rajaki', 'Domini' etc sadhanas but they also called them holier. Tantra practitioner supposed not only casteism, but also expressed sharply bitter disapproval against Brahman cult and doctrines. Due to its nature of opposition 'Tantra marga' was called 'Varna marga'. I will do against what you are doing is speciality of Tantras. This resulted in the development of anti-social deeds among Tantra-Sadhakas"due to extreme opposition of "Brahman vadi".

Tantra sadhana wore the garb of mystery, when reached the top. Yet "Vama Margi sadhana" of Tantra cults could refrain from

Notes

influencing rightist" Brahman vadi' sects. Vaishnava Tantra remained close to Brahman tradition. One can reach this conclusion after going through "Diksha niyam' of vaishnava cult, but every caste has been given the equal right of Bhakti. Ramanujacharya adopted "Panch Ram Aagmas". "Dakshin Panth" and "Varna Panth" are also found in 'Shaivagamas" Dakshin Panthi"has close similarity with Brahman Vada" but "Vama Margis" are extreme revolutionaries,. Even later puranas could not remain untouched with the changed shape of"Vama Marg". The whole fabric of "Krishna-Gopi-Rati' of Srimad Bhagwat and Brahma Vaivarta Purana is on Tantrika line."Rag Sadhana" is the chief speciality of "Vamamarg! it stresses on the attainment of supreme Siddhi"through "Rag" but in Indian philosophy much emphasis has been laid on the control of "Ragas"

"Patanjali Yoga" is quite different from 'Vama Margi Yoga'. 'Nari Yoga 'of Tantra Yoga is nothing but 'Chakra Yoga' and there is mention of 'Chakra Sadhana' in 'Patanjali Yoga Darshan'.

In sixth century 'Rag Sadhana' tantra-Sadhana', Chakra-Sadhana' etc tried to be on a par with "Brahman Vadi' sects.Tantrika Buddhists, too, adopted 'Chakra Sadhana'like other followers of Tantras., Like all other Tantrikas they, too, started worshipping idols, "Kavach""Vastra" "Vahan", "Astra", "Shasya" and Shakti-shaktiman etc. But Vaishnava Tantrikas adopted the unity of Shakti-shaktiman and the adoration and devotion of its Raman' 'Vilas' etc. With the imaginery shape of Radha they started the adoration of Radha-Krishna vilas'.There is no need to say that the whole literature of Krishna Bhakti developed with doctrine of Shakti-shaktiman. The favourable interpretation of Shakti-Shaktiman in p anch Aagmas reveals the prominent adoption of medieval vaishnava Bhaktas .Kabir and other saints like him showed no inclination towards 'Rag Lila'. They borrowed only 'Tantrika-Chakra-Sadhana' or Tantrika Yoga', whose close source was 'Natha-Chakra-Sadhana'.

It would not be unjustified to think that the 'Chakra-Sadhana' which has found favourable interpretation in Natha literature really belongs

to the tradition of Buddhists and Buddhist Siddhas. There is no doubt about it that Nathas accepted it in its purified form. 'Lata-Sadhana' that was present in 'Chaura-Sadhana' of Buddhist and Shaiva Tantrikas was the culmination of misconduct and misbehaviour. Chakra-Sadhana which Gorakh Nath accepted was based on 'Rag-daman' Kabir, too, renounced it. Yet we have to agree with this thing that Kabir is indebted to the Bani of Buddhist Tantrikas for his chakra-Sadhana, Shabda-Sadhana, 'Dhyan-prakriya' and 'Pratik-puddhati'. But the contribution of Natha cult which has its clear stamp in Kabir Bani, should not be forgotten. To understand the originality of Kabir, the contribution of sects like Nath cult etc is very helpful

The main source of Kabir's peculiar style of expression may be traced back into the Banis of Buddhist Tantrikas. Symbolised expression and the expression of opposites are based on the style of Buddhist Tantrikas. Even before Nathas, Siddhas popularised "Loka Bhasa" and "Loka Vedas". Here the contribution of 'Jain Stotra' is worth considering. It would not be wrong to say that the rustic language which in traditional use of Buddhist Tantrikas got stability in Kabir Bani. It is popular language that establishes relation of Kabir with Siddhas and Nathas. To make their expression effective and easily graspable they have drawn their similes from popular life. The flow of this stream is incessant. 'Antarmukti' :

Kabir accepted 'Maya Dvaitavada' of Sanker on one hand and preached the doctrine, of 'Tatwamasi' and on the other he accepted 'Shunya' or 'Niranjan'. Yet he did not adopt anything that could shatter the doctrine of Bhakti or might go against Yoga. Is it worthwhile to seek mysticism based on Yoga, harsh criticism of the social life and 'Ki shistmarg' in the traditional conventions of Tantra cults? Is there no contribution of Kabir's daring spirit in the reformation?

To conclude 'Mantras' are the real source of Kabir's philosophy and Sadhana, but it would be wrong to say that Kabir Bani is based on only one 'Stotra', Kabir was a free thinker. He was not a blind supporter

Notes

of any cult or sect. He accepted only those things that appealed to his critical brain.

So Kabir was a keen eyed and sharp minded man who could grasp the soul and essence of a thing. Kabir's sharp mind also helped him in his 'Sadhana'. His essence grasping calibre had two things-basic elements and (helping elements. Naradi Bhakti (Prema Bhakti) was the base of Kabir's sadhana and Yoga etc. Were the helping elements. Helping elements were drawn from Tantras. Faint impact of Tantra is also visible on the sweet feelings of Bhakti. No doubt, Kabir was an extra-Ordinary Sadhak .

Kabir was an extra-ordinarily talented man. Every aspect of popular life bears his mark. Kabir was a free thinker. At many places he has given fine expression to his unique experiences. Kabir has an unique place in Hindi literature. His expression and interpretation are new but not surprising. There can be no distinction between 'Sakar' and Nirakar, because 'Sakar' becomes 'Nirakar' and 'Nirakar' changes into 'Sakar' as the time demands. Kabir had a different path to follow. He disliked artificiality of all sorts whether it is in social life.

.Real prayer springs from purer heart. Kabir's God was not imaginary, but it was a God that pervades the whole universe, Kabir worshipped 'Nirakar' and wished to reach that place which was unique to common man. Kabir wanted to present God in anew shape, and for this thing 'Nirakar' was more helpful, because the common people were hurled in the deep sea of despair. There was no ground before them to stand on. That was why Kabir's spiritual thoughts provided solid ground to the people to stand on. The ideal presented by Kabir could bridge the gap between noble works. Kabir tried hard to establish his thoughts on a solid ground to help the people. Kabir's work that helped progress of the society deserves praise from all Hindus and Muslims.

3.3 DADU

Dadu Dayal is known as the saint of compassion. Dayal, meaning compassionate or merciful, is in part from where Dadu's title as the saint of compassion stems. His compassionate actions and religious teachings earned him the title after death. The other reason for his title is from his divine birth and mysterious origins leading to the creation of his religious panth. There are mysterious circumstances surrounding his birth and his unordinary beginning to life is very similar to other northern Indian saints such as Kabir and Nanak. Dadu Dayal was born in 1544 CE in Ahmedabad and lived in Narayana in the state of Rajasthan till his death in 1603 CE. Dadu's major religious teachings surrounded self-realization and japa along with the goal of unification of the divergent faiths. Dadu along with Kabir, Namdev, Nanak and Radias are considered the backbone of the Northern Indian Saint tradition. Dadu is the founder of the Dadu-Panth and is renowned for both his ability to compose hymns and his religious teachings. The main area in which his panth is presently established is Narayana in Rajasthan and is run by a disciple in the lineage of Dadu. The Dadu-Panth has changed in contemporary times by adapting to the changing societal patterns and norms allowing it to maintain influence in its major centre.

The Dadu-Panth mostly recognizes the story in which Dadu was found in and taken from Sabarmati River near Ahmedabad. He was then raised by a brahmin family and received initiation from an old sadhu and that in his early adult life he worked as a cotton carder before beginning his religious journey. The second most accepted within the panth is the story that he was born to a dhuni-woman which means a women of the river and was abandoned and was raised in a merchant family and pursued a career as a cotton carder until later becoming interested in religious life. A cotton carder cleans and processes the raw cotton into lose strands to then later be further processed. Most scholars, however, think that Dadu came from a Muslim family. This fact was concealed or changed to him being raised by a brahmin family or that he was adopted after being found in the river by a brahmin family.

Notes

Although these origins are similar in nature, key differences are the source of much debate between scholars and followers. One story describes Dadu's divine birth to a woman and another his divine appearance upon the bank of a river. Many scholars theorize that the reason there are two conflicting accounts of his origins stems from the fourteenth verse of the Grantha Sadha Mahima. The fourteenth verse can be translated in one of two ways, the first being "Dadu was born in the womb of a dhuni-woman" the second being "Dadu was found in a river". All tell the tale that his religious interest stemmed from a feeling of exclusion from the strict caste system and Vedic teachings. In all accounts he was a cotton carder by trade and his renunciation and rise to religious power was not widely accepted by the Hindu caste system. His low caste birth but higher class upbringing made him an ideal teacher in the sant parampara tradition.

Like Kabir, one of his greatest influences was that he was born into a low class but with great religious knowledge which allowed him to form his own opinions and beliefs outside of the strict Hindu tradition. Dadu died in 1603 at the age of fifty nine in Narayana city in Rajasthan. It is rarely speculated how Dadu died but some texts say he ascended to heaven from his shrine in Narayana when his work was done. In the same fashion as Kabir many sources speculate that his body miraculously disappeared after his death. Although his origins are mysterious he is only referred to under one incarnation unlike Kabir who in his panth is theorized to have appeared before.

Dadu's religious teachings stemmed from his inability to find roots in the Vedas. Even though he was a man of great knowledge and devotion he struggled with some of the ideas and concepts within the Vedic teachings. In Dadu's religious panth he rejected the concept that the Vedas held ultimate knowledge. In turn he believed in the power of self-realization and inner experience for achieving moksa. Dadu believed that to fulfil this realization followers must surrender their lives entirely to god and subsequently reject their egotism. He also rejected the class system and its social and religious conventions. Dadu identifies himself as a house holder and believed that this stage was ideal for achieving self and spiritual realization. Dadu encouraged his disciples to write in Hindi

and to translate Sanskrit texts into Hindi to further the accessibility of these texts to everyone. This he hoped would further his ideal of uniting the divided faiths.

The Dadu-Panth which was founded by Dadu himself, is a part of the Northern Indian sant parampara tradition. Its epicenter is located at its main temple in Narayana in Rajasthan. The Dadu-Panth is closely linked to Kabir's Satguru Kabir panth and the Sikh tradition. In the Dadu-Panth Kabir is held in a revered position and his influence is noted in the Dadu-Panth text. In panth traditions the founder is often revered as the real guru, whereas in the Dadu-Panth it is Dadu's book of teachings and hymns, the Dadubani, and the Ram Mantra which receives the most attention. The repeated recitation of the Ram Mantra is considered a form of japa in the Dadu-Panth. Dadu did not initially seek to begin a panth but to expand his own concept of religious life. Dadu prohibited the eating of meat and all violence, but did not prohibit his disciples from marrying or still holding businesses in the world. His disciples were allowed to pursue their religious life along with their social life within society to create a balance. Dadu's poetic aphorisms and devotional hymns were collected by his disciples and arranged into a 5,000 verse bani (classical Indian music genre) titled the Dadubani (Gold 94). The book is revered as a sacramental object and a hand written copy is the most divine object within the panth.

The main center of the Dadu-Panth is still located in Narayana in Rajasthan where majority of followers in this panth live. Though the influence has dwindled through time the panth still is quite powerful within the area. The panth still holds some socio religious roles in Narayana and surrounding area. The panth has allowed makanvale (house-dwelling monks) to have wives and children unofficially. This breaks away from the tradition of monastic celibacy, previously seen as favorable within the panth, although it was never strictly upheld. The temple in Narayana is where Dadu was laid to rest in 1603 CE. Over time this site has been up kept by the lineage of Dadu's disciples.

In the present day an annual festival is held in Narayana on the anniversary of Dadu's birth which is said to fall on the eighth day of the

Notes

bright half of Phalgun. The eighth day of Phalgun, which is the twelfth month in the Hindu calendar, falls in the end of February or beginning of March in the Gregorian calendar. Though Dadu is not considered to have an important role in the Sikh tradition he is still respected as a great poet in his own right. There is a story about Guru Gobind Singh in the Sikh tradition commenting on Dadu's poetry and the Guru bowed his bow in front of a great shrine to Dadu out of respect

Check your progress-

1. Write about the birth of Dadu Dayal.

2. Write about Dadu Panth.

3.4 LET'S SUM UP

Kabir was a 15th-century Indian mystic poet and saint, whose writings, according to some scholars, influenced Hinduism's Bhakti movement. Kabir is considered one of the first disciples of Ramananda. Many Hindu sects consider him as a reformer and great Bhakt. Dadu Dayal was a poet-sant from Gujarat, India, a religious reformator which have said against formalism and priestcraft. "Dadu" means brother, and "Dayal" means "the compassionate one". He was reputedly found by an affluent business man floating on the river Sabarmati.

3.5 KEYWORDS

Julaha – Weaver

Doha – Couplet

Panth – Path

3.6 QUESTION FOR REVIEW

1. Write about the teachings of Kabir.
2. Write about Dadu Dayal.

3.7 SUGGESTED READINGS

The Historical Development of The Bhakti Movement in India Theory and Practice by Teiji Sakata and Katsuyuki Ida Iwao Shima.

3.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRSS

1. Section 3.4
2. Section 3.4

UNIT 4 BHAKTI MOVEMENT - TULSIDAS AND SANT

STRUCTURE

- 4.0 Objective
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Tulsidas
- 4.3 Sant
- 4.4 Let's Sum Up
- 4.5 Keywords
- 4.6 Question For Review
- 4.7 Suggested Reading
- 4.8 Answer to check you progress

4.0 OBJECTIVE

To know about the life of Tulsidas

To know about the Sant

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Tulsidas was born in Rajpur, in the district of Banda in Uttar Pradesh, in Samvat 1589 or 1532 A.D. He was a Sarayuparina Brahmin by birth and is regarded as an incarnation of Valmiki, the author of Ramayana written in Sanskrit. His father's name was Atmaram Shukla Dube and his mother's name Hushi. Tulsidas did not cry at the time of his birth. He was born with all the thirty-two teeth intact. In childhood his name was Tulsiram or Ram Bola.

Sant tradition comprises those medieval monotheistic and devout personalities belonging to different shades of Indian society who are supposed to have been quiet, tranquil nonsectarian, opposed to Brahmanical ritualism, piously tired of the duplicity of the world but otherwise deeply conscious and critical of the outrageous anomalies professed by certain vested interests among the people around. In general terms these mystical personalities are known as nirgun bhaktas or more commonly sants. The Sanskrit form of the term sant is rooted in sam meaning `appeased* or `pacified`

4.2 TULSI DAS

Tulsidas conceived on 1532 and kicked the bucket on 1623, otherwise called Goswami Tulsidas, was a Hindu Vaishnava holy person and artist, famous for his dedication to the divinity Rama. Tulsidas composed a few well known works in Sanskrit and Awadhi; he is best known as the creator of the epic Ramcharitmanas, a retelling of the Sanskrit Ramayana dependent on Rama's life in the vernacular Awadhi tongue of Hindi.

Tulsidas consumed the vast majority of his time on earth in the city of Varanasi. The Tulsi Ghat on the Ganges River in Varanasi is named after him. He established the Sankatmochan Temple devoted to Lord Hanuman in Varanasi, accepted to remain at where he had seeing the god. Tulsidas began the Ramlila plays, a people theater adaption of the Ramayana.

He has been acclaimed as perhaps the best writer in Hindi, Indian, and world writing. The effect of Tulsidas and his takes a shot at the craftsmanship, culture and society in India is far reaching and supposedly dates in vernacular language, Ramlila plays, Hindustani old style music, mainstream music, and TV arrangement.

Transliteration and historical underpinnings

The Sanskrit name of Tulsidas can be transliterated in two different ways. Utilizing the first Sanskrit, the name is composed as Tulasīdāsa. Utilizing the Hunterian transliteration framework, it is composed as Tulsidas or Tulsīdās mirroring the vernacular elocution (since the

Notes

composed Indian dialects keep up the minimal letters that are never again articulated). The lost vowels are a part of the Schwa cancellation in Indo-Aryan dialects and can fluctuate between districts. The name is a compound of two Sanskrit words: Tulasī, which is an Indian assortment of the basil plant thought about promising by Vaishnavas (enthusiasts of god Vishnu and his symbols like Rama), and Dāsa, which means slave or worker and by augmentation, aficionado.

Sources

Tulsidas himself has given just a couple of realities and clues about occasions of his life in different works. Till late nineteenth century, the two broadly realized antiquated sources on Tulsidas' life were the Bhaktamal formed by Nabhadas somewhere in the range of 1583 and 1639, and an editorial on Bhaktamal titled Bhaktirasbodhini made by Priyadas in 1712. Nabhadas was a contemporary of Tulsidas and composed a six-line stanza on Tulsidas depicting him as a manifestation of Valmiki. Priyadas' work was formed around a hundred years after the demise of Tulsidas and had eleven extra stanzas, portraying seven wonders or profound encounters from the life of Tulsidas. During the 1920s, two progressively old memoirs of Tulsidas were distributed dependent on old original copies – the Mula Gosain Charit created by Veni Madhav Das in 1630 and the Gosain Charit formed by Dasanidas (otherwise called Bhavanidas) around 1770.

Veni Madhav Das was a devotee and contemporary of Tulsidas and his work gave another date for Tulsidas' introduction to the world. The work by Bhavanidas introduced more accounts in more prominent detail when contrasted with the work by Priyadas. During the 1950s a fifth old record was distributed dependent on an old original copy, the Gautam Chandrika made by Krishnadatta Misra out of Varanasi in 1624. Krishnadatta Misra's dad was a nearby buddy of Tulsidas. The records distributed later are not viewed as credible by some cutting edge researchers, while some different researchers have been reluctant to reject them. Together, these five works structure a lot of conventional life stories on which present day life stories of Tulsidas are based.

Manifestation of Valmiki

He is accepted by numerous individuals to be a resurrection of Valmiki. In the Hindu sacred writing Bhavishyottar Purana, the god Shiva tells his better half Parvati how Valmiki, who got a shelter from Hanuman to sing the greatness of Rama in vernacular language, will manifest in future in the Kali Yuga (the present and last Yuga or age inside a cycle of four Yugas).

Nabhadas writes in his Bhaktamal (actually, the Garland of bhakt or enthusiast) that Tulsidas was the re-manifestation of Valmiki in the Kali Yuga. The Ramanandi group accepts that it was Valmiki himself who manifested as Tulsidas in the Kali Yuga.

As indicated by a customary record, Hanuman went to Valmiki various occasions to hear him sing the Ramayana, yet Valmiki turned down the solicitation saying that Hanuman being a monkey was dishonorable of hearing the epic. After the triumph of Rama over Ravana, Hanuman went to the Himalayas to proceed with his love of Rama. There he scripted a play adaptation of the Ramayana called Mahanataka or Hanuman Nataka engraved on the Himalayan rocks utilizing his nails. When Valmiki saw the play composed by Hanuman, he foreseen that the magnificence of the Mahanataka would overshadow his own Ramayana. Hanuman was disheartened at Valmiki's perspective and, being a genuine bhakta with no craving for magnificence, Hanuman cast every one of the stones into the sea, a few pieces of which are accepted to be accessible today as Hanuman Nataka. After this, Valmiki was told by Hanuman to accept birth as Tulsidas and create the Ramayana in the vernacular.

Early life

Birth

Tulsidas was conceived on saptami, the seventh day of shukla paksha, the splendid portion of the lunar Hindu schedule month Shraavana (July–August). Despite the fact that upwards of seven spots are referenced as his origination, most researchers distinguish the spot with Sookar Kshetra Soron, District Kasganj in Uttar Pradesh, a town on the banks of the waterway Ganga. In 2012 Sukarkhet Soron was pronounced authoritatively by the administration of Uttar Pradesh as the origination of Tulsi Das. His folks were Hulsi and Atmaram Dubey. Most sources

Notes

distinguish him as a Saryupareen Brahmin of the Parashar Gotra (heredity), albeit a few sources guarantee he was a Kanyakubja or Sanadhya Brahmin.

There is distinction of conclusion among biographers with respect to the time of birth of Tulsidas. Numerous sources depend on Veni Madhav Das' record in the Mula Gosain Charita, which gives the time of Tulsidas' introduction to the world as Vikrami Samvat 1554 (1497 CE). These sources incorporate Shivlal Pathak, prominent versions of Ramcharitmanas (Gita Press, Naval Kishore Press and Venkateshvar Press), Edwin Greaves, Hanuman Prasad Poddar, Ramanand Sarasvati, Ayodhyanath Sharma, Ramchandra Shukla, Narayandas, and Rambhadracharya.

A second gathering of biographers drove by Sant Tulsi Sahib of Hathras and Sir George Grierson give the year as Vikram 1589 (1532 CE). These biographers incorporate Ramkrishna Gopal Bhandarkar, Ramghulam Dwivedi, James Lochtefeld, Swami Sivananda and others. A third little gathering of creators which incorporates H. H. Wilson, Garse De Tasse and Krishnadatta Mishra gives the year as Vikram 1600 (1543 CE). The year 1497 shows up in numerous current-day life stories in India and in pop culture. Biographers who can't help contradicting this year contend that it makes the life expectancy of Tulsidas equivalent 126 years, which as they would see it is improbable if certainly feasible. Interestingly, Ramchandra Shukla says that an age of 126 isn't unimaginable for a Mahatma (incredible soul) like Tulsidas. The Government of India and commonplace governments praised the 500th birth commemoration of Tulsidas in the year 2011 CE, as indicated by the time of Tulsidas' introduction to the world in pop culture.

Adolescence

Legend goes that Tulsidas was brought into the world in the wake of remaining in the belly for a year, he had every one of the thirty two teeth in his mouth during childbirth, his wellbeing and looks resembled that of a five-year-old kid, and he didn't cry at the hour of his introduction to the world yet expressed Rama instead. He was in this manner named Rambola (actually, he who articulated Rama), as Tulsidas himself states

in Vinaya Patrika. According to the Mula Gosain Charita, he was brought into the world under the Abhuktamūla star grouping, which as per Jyotisha (Hindu crystal gazing) makes impending peril the life of the dad. Because of the unfavorable occasions at the hour of his introduction to the world, he was surrendered by his folks on the fourth night, sent away with Chuniya (a few sources call her Muniya), a female worker of Hulsī. In his works Kavitavali and Vinayapatrika, Tulsidas bears witness to his folks forsaking him after birth because of an ominous visionary arrangement.

Chuniya took the youngster to her town of Haripur and cared for him for five and a half years after which she passed on. Rambola was left to fight for himself as a devastated vagrant, and meandered from entryway to entryway asking for donations. It is accepted that the goddess Parvati expected the type of a Brahmin lady and bolstered Rambola consistently.

Commencement from master and learning

At five years old years, Rambola was received by Narharidas, a Vaishnava plain of Ramananda's religious request who is accepted to be the fourth devotee of Ramananda, or on the other hand, the follower of Anantacharya. Rambola was given the Virakta Diksha (Vairagi inception) with the new name of Tulsidas. Tulsidas portrays the discourse that occurred during the principal meeting with his master in an entry in the Vinayapatrika. At the point when he was seven years of age, his Upanayana ("sacrosanct string function") was performed by Narharidas on the fifth day of the brilliant portion of the period of Magha (January–February) at Ayodhya, a journey site identified with Rama. Tulsidas began his learning at Ayodhya. After some time, Narharidas took him to a specific Varaha Kshetra Soron (a blessed spot with sanctuary devoted to Varaha – the pig symbol of Vishnu), where he originally portrayed the Ramayana to Tulsidas. Tulsidas makes reference to this in the Ramcharitmanas.

Most creators recognize the Varaha Kshetra alluded to by Tulsidas with the Sookarkshetra is the Soron Varaha Kshetra in present day Kasganj, Tulsidas further notices in the Ramcharitmanas that his master over and

Notes

again portrayed the Ramayana to him, which drove him to comprehend it fairly.

Tulsidas later went to the holy city of Varanasi and considered Sanskrit language, four Vedas, six Vedangas, Jyotisha and the six schools of Hindu way of thinking over a time of 15–16 years from master Shesha Sanatana who was based at the Pancaganga Ghat in Varanasi. Shesha Sanatana was a companion of Narharidas and a famous researcher on writing and reasoning.

Marriage and renunciation

There are two differentiating sees with respect to the conjugal status of Tulsidas. As indicated by the Mula Gosain Charita and some different works, Tulsidas was hitched to Ratnavali on the thirteenth day of the brilliant portion of the Jyeshtha month (May–June) in Vikram 1583 (1526 CE). Ratnavali was the girl of Dinbandhu Pathak, a Brahmin of the Bharadwaja Gotra, who had a place with Mahewa town of Kaushambi region. They had a child named Tarak who passed on as a little child. When Tulsidas had gone to a Hanuman sanctuary, Ratnavali went to her dad's home with her sibling. When Tulsidas came to know this, he swam over the Yamuna waterway in the night to meet his significant other. Ratnavali rebuked Tulsidas for this, and commented that if Tulsidas was even half as gave to God as he was to her group of fragile living creature and blood, he would have been recovered. Tulsidas left her in a flash and left for the sacred city of Prayag. Here, he repudiated the Grihastha (householder's life) arrange and turned into a Sadhu (Hindu parsimonious).

A few creators consider the marriage scene of Tulsidas to be a later insertion and keep up that he was a lone ranger. They incorporate Rambhadracharya, who deciphers two sections in the Vinayapatrika and Hanuman Bahuka to imply that Tulsidas never wedded and was a Sadhu from adolescence.

Later life

After renunciation, Tulsidas invested a large portion of his energy at Varanasi, Prayag, Ayodhya, and Chitrakuta however visited numerous

other close by and distant spots. He ventured out crosswise over India to numerous spots, concentrating various individuals, meeting holy people and Sadhus and pondering. The Mula Gosain Charita gives a record of his movements to the four journeys of Hindus (Badrinath, Dwarka, Puri and Rameshwaram) and the Himalayas. He visited the Manasarovar lake in current-day Tibet, where custom holds he had Darshan (locate) of Kakabhushundi, the crow who is one of the four storytellers in the Ramcharitmanas.

Darshan of Hanuman

Tulsidas alludes to a few places in his works, that he had met up close and personal with Hanuman and Rama. The point by point record of his gatherings with Hanuman and Rama are given in the Bhaktirasbodhini of Priyadas. As indicated by Priyadas' record, Tulsidas used to visit the forested areas outside Varanasi for his morning ablutions with a water pot. On his arrival to the city, he used to offer the rest of the water to a specific tree. This extinguished the thirst of a Preta (a sort of phantom accepted to be ever anxious for water), who appeared to Tulsidas and offered him an aid. Tulsidas said he wished to see Rama with his eyes, to which the Preta reacted that it was past him. In any case, the Preta said that he could control Tulsidas to Hanuman, who could give the shelter Tulsidas requested. The Preta disclosed to Tulsidas that Hanuman comes regular masked in the mean clothing of an outcast to tune in to his Katha, he is the first to show up and last to leave.

That night Tulsidas noticed that the primary audience to land at his talk was an old untouchable, who sat toward the finish of the social affair. After the Katha was finished, Tulsidas unobtrusively pursued the pariah to the forested areas. In the forested areas, at the spot where the Sankat Mochan Temple stands today, Tulsidas immovably fell at the pariah's feet, yelling "I know what your identity is" and "You can't escape me". From the outset the outcast pretended obliviousness yet Tulsidas didn't yield. At that point the untouchable uncovered his unique type of Hanuman and favored Tulsidas. When allowed a shelter, Tulsidas revealed to Hanuman he needed to see Rama up close and personal.

Notes

Hanuman instructed him to go to Chitrakuta where he would see Rama with his very own eyes.

Toward the start of the Ramcharitmanas, Tulsidas quits a specific Preta and requests his elegance (Ramcharitmanas, Doha 1.7). As indicated by Rambhadracharya, this is the equivalent Preta which drove Tulsidas to Hanuman.

Darshan of Rama

According to Priyadas' record, Tulsidas adhered to the guidance of Hanumana and began living in an Ashram at Ramghat in Chitrakuta. One day Tulsidas went to play out the Parikrama (circumambulation) of the Kamadgiri mountain. He saw two rulers, one dull and the other reasonable, wearing green robes pass by mounted on horsebacks. Tulsidas was delighted at the sight, anyway he couldn't remember them and took his eyes off them. Later Hanuman inquired as to whether he saw Rama and his sibling Lakshmana on steeds. Tulsidas was disillusioned and repentful. Hanuman guaranteed Tulsidas that he would have seeing Rama by and by the following morning. Tulsidas reviews this occurrence in a tune of the Gitavali and mourns how "his eyes turned his own adversaries" by remaining fixed to the ground and how everything occurred in a trice. On the following morning, Wednesday, the new-moon day of Magha, Vikram 1607 (1551 CE) or 1620 (1564 CE) according to certain sources, Rama again appeared to Tulsidas, this time as a youngster.

Tulsidas was making sandalwood glue when a youngster came and requested a sandalwood Tilaka (a strict imprint on the temple). This time Hanuman gave an insight to Tulsidas and he had a full perspective on Rama. Tulsidas was enchanted to such an extent that he overlooked the sandalwood. Rama took the sandalwood glue and put a Tilaka himself on his temple and Tulsidas' brow before vanishing. This acclaimed frequency is portrayed in the refrain चित्रकूट के घाट पर हुई संतन की भीर तुलसीदास चन्दन घिसे तिलक देते रघुबीर.

In a stanza in the Vinayapatrika, Tulsidas insinuates a specific "supernatural occurrence at Chitrakuta", and says thanks to Rama for

what he accomplished for him at Chitrakuta. A few biographers infer that the deed of Rama at Chitrakuta alluded to by Tulsidas is the Darshan of Rama.

Darshan of Yajnavalkya and Bharadvaja

In Vikram 1628 (1572 CE), Tulsidas left Chitrakuta for Prayag where he remained during the Magha Mela (the yearly reasonable in January). Six days after the Mela finished, he had the Darshan of the sages Yajnavalkya and Bharadvaja under a banyan tree. In one of the four exchanges in the Ramcharitmanas, Yajnavalkya is the speaker and Bharadvaja the listener. Tulsidas depicts the gathering among Yajnavalkya and Bharadvaja after a Magha Mela celebration in the Ramcharitmanas, it is this gathering where Yajnavalkya portrays the Ramcharitmanas to Bharadvaja.

Ascribed supernatural occurrences

Most tales about Tulsidas will in general be fanciful, and have been conveyed forward by listening in on others' conversations. None of them were connected by Tulsidas himself, along these lines making it hard to isolate truth from legend and fiction. In Priyadas' memoir, Tulsidas is ascribed with the intensity of working wonders. In one such wonder, he is accepted to have breathed life into back a dead Brahmin. While the Brahmin was being taken for incineration, his widow bowed down to Tulsidas in transit who tended to her as Saubhagyavati (a lady whose spouse is alive). The widow disclosed to Tulsidas her better half had simply kicked the bucket, so his words couldn't be valid. Tulsidas said that the word has passed his lips thus he would re establish the dead man to life. He asked everyone present to close their eyes and articulated the name of ruler Rama, on doing which the dead Brahmin was raised back to life.

Tulsidas was acclaimed in his lifetime to be a resurrection of Valmiki, the arranger of the first Ramayana in Sanskrit. He is likewise viewed as the author of the Hanuman Chalisa, a prevalent reverential psalm committed to Hanuman, the monkey god and celestial enthusiast of master Rama.

Notes

In another supernatural occurrence portrayed by Priyadas, the sovereign of Delhi, Akbar gathered Tulsidas on becoming aware of his breathing life into back a dead man. Tulsidas declined to go as he was excessively engaged in making his sections however he was later persuasively brought before the Akbar and was approached to play out a supernatural occurrence, which Tulsidas declined by saying "It's an untruth, all I know is Rama." The ruler detained Tulsidas at Fatehpur Sikri, "We will see this Rama." Tulsidas would not bow to Akbar and made a stanza in commendation of Hanuman and recited it (Hanuman Chalisa) for forty days and all of a sudden a multitude of monkeys plummeted upon the town and unleashed destruction in all sides of Fatehpur Sikri, entering each home and the head's group of concubines, scratching individuals and tossing blocks from bulwarks. An old Hafiz told the sovereign this was the wonder of the detained Fakir. The ruler fell at Tulsidas' feet, discharged him and apologised. Tulsidas halted the threat of monkeys and requested that the sovereign relinquish the spot. The head concurred and moved back to Delhi. As far back as Akbar turned into a dear companion of Tulsidas and he additionally requested a firman that supporters of master Rama, ruler Hanuman and different Hindus, ought not be badgering in his realm.

Priyadas portrays a supernatural occurrence of Tulsidas at Vrindavan, when he visited a sanctuary of Krishna. At the point when he started bowing down to the icon of Krishna, the Mahant of the sanctuary named Parshuram chose to test Tulsidas. He disclosed to Tulsidas that he who retires from any god with the exception of their Ishta Devata (valued type of heavenly nature) is a trick, as Tulsidas' Ishta Devata was Rama. Accordingly, Tulsidas presented the accompanying on the spur of the moment formed couplet.

Abstract life

Tulsidas began creating verse in Sanskrit in Varanasi on the Prahlada Ghat. Custom holds that every one of the refrains that he made during the day, would lose all sense of direction in the night. This happened day by day for eight days. On the eighth night, Shiva – whose well known Kashi Vishwanath Temple is situated in Varanasi – is accepted to have

requested Tulsidas in a fantasy to create verse in the vernacular rather than Sanskrit. Tulsidas woke up and saw both Shiva and Parvati who favored him. Shiva requested Tulsidas to go to Ayodhya and make verse in Awadhi. Shiva likewise anticipated that Tulsidas' verse would fructify like the Sama Veda. In the Ramcharitmanas, Tulsidas indicates having the Darshan of Shiva and Parvati in both dream and stirred state.

Tulsidas is likewise credited with having made a number out of shrewd expressions and dohas containing exercises forever.

In the year Vikram 1631 (1575 CE), Tulsidas began making the Ramcharitmanas in Ayodhya on Tuesday, Ramnavami day (ninth day of the splendid portion of the Chaitra month, which is the birthday of Rama). Tulsidas himself bears witness to this date in the Ramcharitmanas. He made the epic more than two years, seven months and twenty-six days, and finished the work in Vikram 1633 (1577 CE) on the Vivaha Panchami day (fifth day of the brilliant portion of the Margashirsha month, which commemorates the wedding of Rama and his significant other Sita).

Tulsidas came to Varanasi and recounted the Ramcharitmanas to Shiva (Vishwanath) and Parvati (Annapurna) at the Kashi Vishwanath Temple. A mainstream legend goes that the Brahmins of Varanasi, who were condemning of Tulsidas for having rendered the Sanskrit Ramayana in the Awadhi, chose to test the value of the work. An original copy of the Ramcharitmanas was kept at the base of heap of Sanskrit sacred texts in the sanctum sanctorum of the Vishvanath sanctuary in the night, and the entryways of the sanctum sanctorum were bolted. In the first part of the day when the entryways were opened, the Ramcharitmanas was found at the highest point of the heap. The words Satyam Shivam Sundaram (Sanskrit: सत्यं शिवं सुन्दरम्, actually "truth, propitiousness, excellence") were recorded on the original copy with the mark of Shiva. The words were likewise heard by the individuals present.

Per conventional records, a few Brahmins of Varanasi were as yet not fulfilled, and sent two cheats to take the original copy. The cheats attempted to break into the Ashram of Tulsidas, however were stood up to by two gatekeepers with bows and bolts, of dim and reasonable

Notes

appearance. The criminals had a difference in heart and came to Tulsidas in the first part of the day to ask who the two gatekeepers were. Accepting that the two gatekeepers could be none other than Rama and Lakshmana, Tulsidas was wronged to realize that they were guarding his home around evening time. He sent the original copy of Ramcharitmanas to his companion Todar Mal, the account clergyman of Akbar, and gave all his cash. The criminals were improved and became fans of Rama.

Last works

Around Vikram 1664 (1607 CE), Tulsidas was harassed by intense torment all over his body, particularly in his arms. He at that point created the Hanuman Bahuk, where he depicts his real torment and enduring in a few stanzas. He was assuaged of his agony after this arrangement. Later he was additionally beset by Bartod bubbles (Hindi: बरतोड़, furuncles brought about by hauling out of the hair), which may have been the reason for his passing.

The Vinaypatrika is considered as the last arrangements of Tulsidas, accepted to be composed when Kali Yuga began alarming him. In this work of 279 stanzas, he importunes Rama to give him Bhakti ("dedication"), and to acknowledge his appeal. Tulsidas bears witness to in the last stanza of Vinaypatrika that Rama himself marked the original copy of the work.[76] The 45th stanza of the Vinaypatrika is sung as the night Aarti by numerous Hindus.

Passing

Tulsidas left his body at the Assi Ghat on the bank of the stream Ganga in the Shraavan (July–August) month of the year Vikram 1680 (1623 CE). Like the time of his introduction to the world, conventional records and biographers don't concede to the definite date of his demise. Various sources give the date as the third day of the brilliant half, seventh day of the splendid half, or the third day of the dim half.

Work

Twelve works are broadly considered by biographers to be composed by Tulsidas, six significant works and six minor works. In view of the

language of the works, they have been ordered into two gatherings as pursues

Awadhi works – Ramcharitmanas, Ramlala Nahachhu, Barvai Ramayan, Parvati Mangal, Janaki Mangal and Ramagya Prashna.

Braja works – Krishna Gitavali, Gitavali, Sahitya Ratna, Dohavali, Vairagya Sandipani and Vinaya Patrika.

Other than these twelve works, four additional works are famously accepted to be made by Tulsidas which incorporate Hanuman Chalisa, Hanuman Ashtak, Hanuman Bahuk and Tulsi Satsai.

Ramcharitmanas

Ramacharitamānas (रामचरितमानस, 1574–1576), "The Mānasa lake overflowing over with the adventures of Lord Rāma" is an Awadhi rendering of the Ramayana account. It is the longest and soonest work of Tulsidas, and draws from different sources including the Ramayana of Valmiki, the Adhyatma Ramayana, the Prasannaraghava and Hanuman Nataka. The work comprises of around 12,800 lines isolated into 1073 stanzas, which are gatherings of Chaupais isolated by Dohas or Sorthas. It is isolated into seven books (Kands) like the Ramayana of Valmiki, and is around 33% of the size of Valmiki's Ramayana. The work is created in 18 meters which incorporate ten Sanskrit meters (Anushtup, Shardulvikridit, Vasantatilaka, Vamshashta, Upajati, Pramanika, Malini, Sragdhara, Rathoddhata and Bhujangaprayata) and eight Prakrit meters (Soratha, Doha, Chaupai, Harigitika, Tribhangi, Chaupaiya, Trotaka and Tomara).

Other significant works

The five significant works of Tulsidas separated from Ramcharitmanas include:[81]

Dohavali (दोहावली, 1581), truly Collection of Dohas, is a work comprising of 573 various Doha and Sortha stanzas for the most part in Braja with certain sections in Awadhi. The sections are truisms on subjects identified with affability, political astuteness, exemplary nature and the reason forever. 85 Dohas from this work are likewise found in

Notes

the Ramcharitmanas, 35 in Ramagya Prashna, two in Vairagya Sandipani and some in Rama Satsai, another work of 700 Dohas credited to Tulsidas.

sahitya ratna or ratna Ramayan (1608–1614), actually Collection of Kavittas, is a Braja rendering of the Ramayana, made totally in meters out of the Kavitta family – Kavitta, Savaiya, Ghanakshari and Chhappaya. It comprises of 325 sections remembering 183 stanzas for the Uttarkand. Like the Ramcharitmanas, it is partitioned into seven Kands or books and numerous scenes in this work are unique in relation to the Ramcharitmanas.

Gitavali (गीतावली), actually Collection of Songs, is a Braja rendering of the Ramayana in melodies. Every one of the stanzas are set to Ragas of Hindustani traditional music and are appropriate for singing. It comprises of 328 melodies separated into seven Kands or books. Numerous scenes of the Ramayana are expounded while numerous others are shortened.

Krishna Gitavali or Krishnavali (कृष्णगीतावली, 1607), truly Collection of Songs to Krishna, is an assortment of 61 tunes out of appreciation for Krishna in Braja. There are 32 tunes dedicated to the youth sports (Balalila) and Rasa Lila of Krishna, 27 melodies structure the exchange among Krishna and Uddhava, and two tunes depict the scene of stripping of Draupadi.

Vinaya Patrika (विनयपत्रिका), actually Petition of Humility, is a Braja work comprising of 279 stanzas or psalms. The stanzas structure an appeal in the court of Rama requesting Bhakti. It is viewed as the subsequent best work of Tulsidas after the Ramcharitmanas, and is viewed as significant from the perspectives of reasoning, intelligence, and eulogistic and graceful style of Tulsidas. The initial 43 psalms are routed to different divinities and Rama's retainers and specialists, and remaining are routed to Rama.

Minor works

Minor works of Tulsidas include:

Barvai Ramayana (बरवै रामायण, 1612), actually The Ramayana in Barvai meter, is a compressed rendering of the Ramayana in Awadhi. The work comprises of 69 stanzas formed in the Barvai meter, and is partitioned into seven Kands or books. The work depends on a mental structure.

Parvati Mangal (पार्वती मंगल), actually The marriage of Parvati, is an Awadhi work of 164 stanzas portraying the retribution of Parvati and the marriage of Parvati and Shiva. It comprises of 148 sections in the Sohar meter and 16 refrains in the Harigitika meter.

Janaki Mangal (जानकी मंगल), actually The marriage of Sita, is an Awadhi work of 216 stanzas portraying the scene of marriage of Sita and Rama from the Ramayana. The work remembers 192 sections for the Hamsagati meter and 24 refrains in the Harigitika meters. The account varies from the Ramcharitmanas at a few spots.

Ramalala Nahachhu (रामलला नहछू), truly The Nahachhu function of the kid Rama, is an Awadhi work of 20 stanzas made in the Sohar meter. The Nahachhu service includes cutting the nails of the feet before the Hindu Samskaras (customs) of Chudakarana, Upanayana, Vedarambha, Samavartana or Vivaha. In the work, occasions happen in the city of Ayodhya, so it is considered to depict the Nahachhu before Upanayana, Vedarambha and Samavartana.

Ramagya Prashna (रामज्ञा प्रश्न), actually Querying the Will of Rama, is an Awadhi business related to both Ramayana and Jyotisha (crystal gazing). It comprises of seven Kands or books, every one of which is partitioned into seven Saptakas or Septets of seven Dohas each. Hence it contains 343 Dohas taking all things together. The work portrays the Ramayana non-consecutively, and gives a strategy to look into the Shakuna (sign or omen) for celestial expectations.

Vairagya Sandipini (वैराग्य संदीपनी, 1612), actually Kindling of Detachment, is a philosophical work of 60 refrains in Braja which portray the province of Jnana (acknowledgment) and Vairagya (dispassion), the nature and significance of holy people, and good direct. It comprises of 46 Dohas, 2 Sorathas and 12 Chaupai meters.

4.3 SANT TRADITION

The most comparable strand of Indian spirituality to the Gnostic tradition is the medieval and modern Sant tradition, an eclectic philosophy concerned with traversing spiritual realms to reach God. Resembling Gnostic metaphysics, there is a God beyond all gods, and this God invites the soul to know It. One achieves God-Realization by turning within one's own consciousness, realizing the microcosm/macrocosm relationship with the Divine. A Sant is one who has accomplished this--an enlightened soul.

For a Westerner the term "saint" usually connotes a holy person, one who has sacrificed one's life to serve humankind in some way. In India, these attributes are likewise inherent in a Sant, but, more importantly, a Sant has merged the spirit entity into the Highest Reality, losing all identity. Having reached the highest state of consciousness, one is no longer subject to any form of illusion (maya) or ego (ahamkara). Such a person is considered, in effect, the embodiment of the Divine. This ineffable being, also called the satguru (the true guru), is believed to appear/return in every age to awaken souls from ignorance. Thus, unlike Christianity, salvation is not a onetime event in which the Son of God incarnates once and for all for the salvation of humankind. In other words, the salvific process in the Sant tradition is a continuous one, and a Sant is born in every age to enlighten/free human beings from their ignorance.

While this tradition can clearly be traced back to the North Indian mystic Kabir in the fifteenth century C.E. (as well as Guru Nanak and Dadu), some speculate that it has even earlier roots, manifesting in the twelfth or thirteenth century in Maharashtra under the non-sectarian Vaishnava poet-Sants Namdev and Jnaneshvar (otherwise known as Jnanadeva), and later spread under the influence of Eknath (1548-1600) and Tukaram (1598-1649).

Recent scholarship suggests that there are really two distinct yet related strands of the "tradition of the Sants": The first, the Maharashtra poet-Sants who flourished from the thirteenth to the eighteenth century, are devotees of the god Vitthala or Vithoba of Pandharpur and contemplate

his form (svarupa). Saguna bhakti, worship of a manifestation of the Divine, characterizes the attitude of the Maharashtrian Sants. Vaishnava Hinduism, which was based upon Bhagavata Purana and promoted bhakti (or devotion), plays an extremely important role in shaping this movement; in fact, early in their history, these Sants did not set themselves apart from it. Yet, this group of poet-Sants appear as more or less heterodox, since they pride themselves in being advocates of "true" Vaishnavism, challenging many of the practices and beliefs of the orthodox Vaishnava bhakti tradition. For instance, the Sants, often belonging to the lower strata of the Hindu and the Muslim society, emphasize egalitarian social values, believing in essence that salvation was not the exclusive rite of the "twice-born." Along with the rejection of the caste system, they emphatically insist that ethical behavior is a basic requirement for every devotee, not just the priestly caste. And perhaps what sets this religious tradition apart the most from orthodox Hinduism is the claim that devotion to the Divine Name of God is the only means to attain salvation. Altogether, however, the Maharashtrian Sants are generally placed within the Hindu milieu, primarily because they do not openly reject the authority of the Vedas.

The second branch of the Sant tradition spans the area of the Punjab and Rajasthan as well as eastern Uttar Pradesh and has been active from the fifteenth century up until today. Like the Maharashtrian Sants, the northern Sants rebuff orthodox Hinduism for the value it places on rituals, holy books, and idol worship, and they ridicule the caste system, which presents moksha as the privilege of the Brahmin pandit. But, even more extremely, they vehemently reject the authority of the Vedas. Such a severe anti-Brahminical attitude places the northern Sants outside the Hindu fold.

While the Maharashtra poet-Sants attribute anthropomorphic characteristics to God by referring to It as "father and mother," the North India Sants generally do not. They seem to reject a saguna God, and, instead, direct their efforts towards a nirguna one. Nirguna bhakti suggests that God cannot be captured in an icon or temple, since God is beyond all attributes and distinctions. Yet, several scholars have pointed out that while the northern Sants may conceptually conceive of a

Notes

Supreme Being beyond qualities (nirguna brahman), there are also strong elements of saguna bhakti, especially in relation to the satguru . The dual structure between the devotee and the object of devotion (the guru) allows for an intense emotional experience (anubhava), which is said to pull the devotee towards (but not into) the nirguna God. This religious quest (based both upon separation and union) certainly presents contradictions that are not easily reconcilable (and perhaps not meant to be). Also, repeating the name of God, their primary meditative practice, inherently concedes some form to God by suggesting a quality of saguna bhakti.

On ethical issues, there is little differentiation between the northern and southern Sants. While frowning upon rigid asceticism, both greatly stress living a moral life that entails three basic requirements: 1) ahimsa (non-violence), which implies maintaining a strict vegetarian diet, free of meat, fish, chicken, and eggs; 2) no intoxicants, such as alcohol; and 3) a moral life in society, including sexual restraint (i.e., no illicit sex).

If we look at the Sant tradition as a whole, it seems to be a mixture of Vaishnava bhakti and the esoteric Tantric tradition of the Nath yogis: the Maharashtrian Sants present a "purified" Vaishnavism and the northern group, led by Kabir, advocate a form of Tantric Buddhism in which there is an ineffable Reality transcending all attributes (i.e., sunya). According to Charlotte Vaudeville, a renowned scholar of this movement, "the Sant sadhana or the Sant ideal of sanctity therefore may be viewed as a subtle blending of two main traditions of Hindu mysticism, apparently antagonistic to each other: Vaishnava bhakti and an esoteric Tantric tradition, whose most popular representatives are Gorakhnath and the Nath Yogis, often referred to by Kabir and his followers."

Additionally, several scholars argue that there is a great deal of Sufi influence on the Sants. As Bruce Lawrence points out, there is an apparent affinity between Sant poetry and the Sufi worldview--namely, the repudiation of scriptural authority, the inner vision of a Transcendent God, the emphasis on the pangs of separation of a bereaved soul and God (viraha), and intense love and devotion to God (prema-bhakti).

Arguably, though the Maharashtian Sants and the northern Sants may differ somewhat in their theological approach there are certain underlying characteristics that both share which marks them as a distinctive group. Each stresses the necessity of devotion to and the practice of the Divine Name as the means to achieve salvation, along with three cardinal principles: satsang, satguru, shad. The following is an explanation of these three immanent foci:

1) Satsang: satsang to the fellowship of the true believers who have congregated to hear the spiritual discourse of the satguru. Also, internally satsang refers to the union of the soul with God.

2) Satguru: The satguru is, employing Max Weber's terminology, the charismatic leader (both of the exemplary and ethical type). Initiates generally refer to the guru as the physical embodiment of the Divine/Numinous, and, as such, all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-loving. What we are confronted with in the guru is a classic hierophany: a profane object which manifests the sacred. Yet, this hierophany has a penultimate theological twist: the human guru not only manifests God, acting as a conduit between the Transmundane and the mundane (axis mundi or tirtha--cross place from profane to sacred), but is, in point of spiritual fact, God Itself. Ideally, this is exactly how the guru is to be regarded.

According to the Sant tradition, as exemplified by Tulsi Sahib, one must follow a living guru. It is said that past Sants cannot take the soul back to the God. This is due to two main reasons:

1) the original message of the Sants is believed to be misconstrued after the Sant passes away, while the teachings of a living Sant are pure and charged;

2) and guru-bhakti (devotion to one's guru) aids one's spiritual progress, simply because it is believed to be easier to love someone alive and tangible than someone who has been dead for centuries. At all times, contends this philosophy, at least one God-realized soul ("Son of God") walks the face of the earth imparting divine secrets for those spiritually searching souls.

Notes

3) Shabd: And lastly, the Sants, emerging as heirs to a mixed tradition, can be distinguished from other followers of Indian spirituality by the emphasis they give to a practice known as surat shabd yoga, perhaps the most distinctive feature of the Sant tradition. Surat simply means spirit entity or soul, shabd refers to the sound-current, and yoga, in this context, means union. Hence, it is the ancient science of joining the soul with the sound-current. This sound-current is believed to be the manifestation of the Divine that resounds in every being in creation and upholds all creation. It is also known as the "Audible Life Stream," "Music of the Spheres," "Nad, " "Logos," "Akash Bani," "Divine Melody/Harmony," "Word," "Light and Sound," etc. One who seeks liberation (moksa) from the unending cycle of birth and death (samsara) must sit in meditation, withdraw one's consciousness from the body, contact this divine melody within, and attach oneself to it.

Check your progress –

1. Discuss about the Sant tradition in Maharashtra.

2. Discuss about Sant tradition in north India.

4.4 LET'S SUM UP

Tulsidas was born in Rajpur, in the district of Banda in Uttar Pradesh, in Samvat 1589 or 1532 A.D. He was a Sarayuparina Brahmin by birth and is regarded as an incarnation of Valmiki, the author of Ramayana written in Sanskrit. His father's name was Atmaram Shukla Dube and his mother's name Hulsī. Tulsidas did not cry at the time of his birth. He was born with all the thirty-two teeth intact. In childhood his name was Tulsiram or Ram Bola.

Sant tradition. In Indian religions, a sant is a holy or dedicated religious person. He or she is thus equivalent to a sādhu (fem., sadhvī). More specifically, Sant traditions are those in which a succession of styles and teachings have been developed and transmitted.

4.5 KEYWORDS

Sant – Saint

Nirguna – without qualities

Saguna – Positive qualities

4.6 QUESTION FOR REVIEW

1. Write about the life of Tulsidas.
2. Discuss about the Sant tradition.

4.7 SUGGESTED READING

Bhakti and Bhakti Movement: A New Perspective by Krishna Sharma

4.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Section 4.4
2. Section 4.4

UNIT 5 – SUFI – ORIGINS

STRUCTURE

- 5.0 Objective
- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Origin
- 5.2 Let's Sum Up
- 5.4 Keywords
- 5.5 Questions For Review
- 5.6 Suggested Readings
- 5.8 Answers to check your progress

5.0 OBJECTIVE

To learn about the origin of Sufism.

To learn about the theories of Sufism.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Sufism, being the marrow of the bone or the inner dimension of the Islamic revelation, is the means par excellence whereby Tawhid is achieved. All Muslims believe in Unity as expressed in the most Universal sense possible by the Shahadah, la ilaha ill'Allah. The Sufi has realized the mysteries of Tawhid who knows what this assertion means. It is only he who sees God everywhere. Sufism can also be explained from the perspective of the three basic religious attitudes mentioned in the Qur'an. These are the attitudes of Islam, Iman and Ihsan. There is a Hadith of the Prophet (saw) which describes the three attitudes separately as components of Din(religion), while several other traditions in the

Kitab-ul-Iman of Sahih Bukhari discuss Islam and Iman as distinct attitudes varying in religious significance. These are also mentioned as having various degrees of intensity and varieties in themselves. The attitude of Islam, which has given its name to the Islamic religion, means Submission to the Will of Allah. This is the minimum qualification for being a Muslim. Technically, it implies an acceptance, even if only formal, of the teachings contained in the Qur'an and the Traditions of the Prophet (saw). Iman is a more advanced stage in the field of religion than Islam. It designates a further penetration into the heart of religion and a firm faith in its teachings. Ihsan, the third quality, is the highest stage of spiritual advancement. At this stage the devotee has such a realization of the religious truths which amounts almost to their direct vision. This quality of Ihsan, which was later termed as Mushahidah (Directseeing) by the Sufis, is described in the Tradition by the Prophet (saw) as: "Ihsanis to adore Allah as though thou do see Him for even if thou do not see Him, He nonetheless sees thee."

5.2 SUFI - ORIGIN

According to these three stages of religiosity, Sufism may be defined as the Spiritual Progress of a devotee from the initial stage of Islam to the final stage of Ihsan. Macdonald in his book, "The Religious Attitude," writes, "From the earliest times there was an element in the Muslim church which was repelled equally by traditional teaching and intellectual reasoning. It felt that the essence of religion lay elsewhere; that the seat and organ of religion was in the heart. In process of time, all Islam became permeated with this conception, in different degrees and various forms. More widely than ever with Christianity, Islam became and is a mystical faith. Sufism in the sense of 'mysticism' and quietism", was a natural development of the ascetic tendencies which manifested themselves within Islam during the Umayyad period. To understand Sufism, we must understand mysticism.

The Greek root *mye* in, "to close the eyes," is also the root of "mystery"; the mystic's goal is not to be reached by the intellect or by ordinary means. Fundamentally, mysticism is love of the Absolute, the

Notes

One Reality, also called Truth, Love, or God. According to Sarraj's classic definition of Sufism, "The Sufis are people who prefer God to everything and God prefers them to everything else." Sufism is necessary because it is to Islam what the heart is to body. There is no Sufism without Islam because Sufism is the spirituality or Mysticism of the religion of Islam. It is said that science deals with the universe outside us, and spirituality with the universe inside us. Thus, Sufism can be said to be a movement which aims at making people good and better Muslims. It is a call to them to actualize truly and internally those teachings of Islam they have accepted only formally or intellectually as part of their inheritance. A Sufi relinquishes the worldly pleasures, the cheap sensations, the materialism and the corruptions, but not in the least withdraws from the worldly living. He earns his own bread and is never a parasite or a menace to the society. He abides by the Shari'at, the cannon law of Islam, goes by Tariqat, the Spiritual Path, to achieve Abudiat. i.e. The Unity with the Allah, his beloved.

Etymology of the Word Sufi

On the origin of the word of Sufi, and its adoption, there are many different opinions among the learned. The following is a list of the various Arabic and other words which are supposed to be the origin of the word of Sufi.

1. Safaa-which means cleanliness, particularly the purity of heart, soul and actions of a man.. Ahle

2. Suffa-During the life time of Holy Prophet (saw) there were certain ascetics (Zahids and Abids) whose sole occupation in life was nothing but continuous study and recitation of the Holy Qur'an, meditation, prayers and absolute devotion to God in the Prophet's historical mosque at Medina..

3. Suff-means row [Those Muslims who always tried to offer their Namaz (prayers) in the coveted first row of the 'five daily' congregations during the Prophet's (saw) time].

4. Soofa-It is the name of an old Arab tribe who were dedicated to the service of Kaaba (Mecca).

5. Safoot-ul-Qafa-The hair that grows at the back of the neck.

6. Siyu Soofia-It is a Greek word which means Divine knowledge.

7. Sufana-A kind of Plant.

8. Soof-means Wool.

According to Imam-Al-Qushairi, "Those who had the good fortune of being in the company of the Holy Prophet (saw) in his lifetime and his descendants after the Prophet's (saw) death commanded special respect and status by virtue of this distinction which they enjoyed in the Islamic Society. They were therefore, distinguished as 1) Sahaaba2) Taabayeen and 3) Taba Taabayeen. After their respective periods came the Zahid and Abid classes of pious persons and succeeding them, another particular class of ascetics came on the scene that were called Sufis. By the end of 200 A.H, the word of Sufi, had become the recognized title or badge of all Muslim mystics, According to Maulana Jami, the first person to assume the title of Sufi was Sheikh Abu Hasham Kufi (died 150 A.H.).

Many different opinions and interpretations have been offered concerning the derivation of the word sufi.

1. Abu Rayhan Biruni derived the word sufi from the Greek sophia, meaning wisdom, which also forms the root of the word "philosophy" (philo + sophia, "the love of wisdom"). Biruni maintained that Muslims who held views similar to those of the Greek sages were given this name.

2. The best-known opinion on the origin of the word is that it comes from suf, meaning "wool," and signifies "pertaining to wool," the term being used because Sufis wore woolen robes. From ancient times it was the custom of ascetics, the poor, and the pious to wear such garments. As the Prophet (saw) of Islam said, "You should wear garments of wool that you may find in your hearts the sweetness of faith." (Kashf al-mahjub). Shehab ad-Din Sohravardi, in his classic of Sufism, the 'Avaref al-ma'aref, cites the following tradition, attributed to Anas ebn Malek, "The Messenger of God would accept invitations even from slaves, ride upon donkeys, and

wear (coarse) woolen clothes." Moreover, both Jesus and Moses, according to legend, also used to wear wool. Hasan of Basra has related that he met seventy of the Prophet's Companions, veterans of the Battle of Badr, and that all of them wore wool. Jalal al-Din Rumi also considered wool the appropriate dress for Sufis. The Sufis chose to wear wool to indicate their rejection of the luxuries of the world and to demonstrate to those who desired to enter the Spiritual Path that Sufism demanded ascetic practices. In short, a number of derivations have been proposed at different times for the term Sufi, but it is now quite certain that it is derived from the word *suf*, "wool," which view is confirmed by the equivalent *pashmina-push*, "wool-wearer," applied to these mystics in Persian

Definitions of Sufism

Sufism, the religious philosophy of Islam is described in the oldest extant definition as 'the apprehension of divine realities,' and Mohammedan mystics are fond of calling themselves *Ahl al-Haqq*, 'the followers of the Real.' The Gnostic view of Sufism has been very popular with modern scholars, both western and eastern. They render Sufism as Islamic or Muslim Mysticism, and understand by that term the attempt of the people believing in Islam to know the mysteries of life and the world.

Reynold Nicholson the most outstanding of all western Scholars of Sufism begins his discussion of Sufism by quoting the words of Ma'ruf 'l-kharki (d.200/815) which he translates as: 'Sufism is the apprehension of Divine Realities'. Titus Burckhardt, another eminent scholar, goes a step further when he makes doctrine, not only apprehension, the criterion of real Sufism, the basis as well as the goal of the Sufi Tariqah. Sufi masters have offered numerous and seemingly varied definitions of Sufism and the Sufi. These differences, however, arose only from the fact that each master was speaking from his own spiritual station to the station and level of understanding of his listeners. Thus, each definition uncovers a different aspect of Sufism, each correct in its proper context, and to grasp Sufism as a whole, one must consider as wide a range of definitions as possible. In order to clarify the nature of Sufism, therefore, the following definitions have been chosen

and assembled, definitions that through study will lead to a more profound understanding of the two terms.

Maruf al Kharki defines it as “The apprehension of Divine Realities”.

□Abul-Husayn an –Nuri defines it as “Abandonment of all the portion of the carnal soul”.

□Abu Sahl Saluki defines it as “Obtaining from objections”.

□Abu Muhammad af-Jarini defines it as “Building up of good habits and freeing of the heart from evil desires”.

□Abu Ahij Qazwani defines it as “Nothing but pleasing manners”.

□Al-Junayd defines it as “The purification of the heart from associating with created beings, separation from natural characteristics, suppression of human qualities, avoiding the temptations of the carnal soul, taking up the qualities of the spirit, attachment to the sciences of the reality, using what is more proper to the eternal, counseling all the community, being truly faithfully to God and following the Prophet (saw) according to the law”. Thus, the essence of Sufism lies in the purification of the senses and the will, the building up of inner and outer life and the attainment of eternal felicity and blessedness by apprehending the Divine Realities.

Various Sayings on Sufism

1.Jonayd, asked to define Sufism, replied, "It is that one should be with God, without any attachment (to other than Him)." (al-Loma')

2.Hojviri has quoted Jonayd as also saying, "Sufism is based on eight qualities: generosity, contentment, patience, allusion, exile, the wearing of wool, travel and poverty. Generosity is symbolized by Abraham, contentment by Isaac, patience by Job, allusion by Zacharias, exile by John, the wearing of wool by Moses, travel by Jesus, and poverty by Mohammad (saw). God bless them all and give them peace!"

3.Jonayd further said: "Sufism is that God makes you die to yourself and live in Him." (Resalat al-Qoshayri)

Notes

4. Jonayd has also said, "Sufism is election; the Sufi is chosen (by God) from amongst all those things that are 'other than Him'".

5. On another occasion, when asked about Sufism, Jonayd responded, "It is the purification of the heart from all conformity with creatures, the separation of oneself from the moral attitudes of the natural world, and the stamping out of all the attributes of human nature. It is to shun everything to which the ego (nafs) beckons you, to keep company with the qualities of spiritual men, to hold fast to the sciences of the Truth, to be always busy with what is appropriate (to a Sufi), to give sincere admonition to all Moslems, to keep faith with God, and to follow the Prophet in the Shari'at. (Asrar al-Tawhid).

6. Jonayd also said, "Sufism is a quality; the servant takes up residence within it." He was then asked, "A quality of God or of the individual?"

7. "In essence," he replied, "A quality of God, but outwardly of the Sufi himself. That is, it's being demands the annihilation (fana) of the servant's attributes, which in turn implies the subsistence (baqa) of God's Attributes. So, Sufism is a quality of God, even though outwardly it demands constant striving on the Sufi's part, which is an attribute of the servant." (Kashf al-Mahjub).

8. Asked about the essence of Sufism, Jonayd replied, "You must accept its outward aspect and ask nothing of its essence, for that would be to commit an injustice against it." (Tadhkerat al-Awliya)

9. Abu 'Ali Rudbari has said, "Sufism is the gift of God's free men." (Tadhkerat al-Awliya').

10. Rudbari also said, "Sufism is to weep at the Beloved door, even if He spurns you." (Resalat al-Qoshayri).

11. Sari Saqati: "Sufism is a word that signifies three characteristics: The Sufi's light of Gnosis never extinguishes the candle of his piety; he does not speak of esoteric knowledge which contradicts the exoteric meaning of the Koran and traditions; and he never allows his own miraculous deeds to unveil the secrets of saints or sinners." (Tadhkerat al-Awliya).

12.Ma'ruf Karkhi: "Sufism is to grasp the realities, speak of the subtleties, and despair of everything else in creation." (Tadhkerat al-Awliya).

13.Abu Bakr Shebli: "Sufism is to sit without cares with God."(Resalat al-Qoshayri).

14.Shebli: "Sufism is to control the faculties and observe the breaths." (Ibid)

15.Ja'far Kholdi: "Sufism is to throw the ego (nafs) into slavery, emerge from human nature, and gaze wholly upon God." (Tadhkerat al-Awliya').

16.Abol-Hasan Sirvani: "Sufism is one-pointed concentration and solitude (with God)." (Tara'eq al-haqa'eq).

17.Abol-Hassan Hosri: "Sufism is the purification of the heart from the turbidity of oppositions." (Tadhkerat al-Awliya').

18.Abol-Hosayn Nuri: "Sufism is neither formal practice nor science, but rather moral qualities and virtues." The author of the Kashf al-Mahjub comments, "If Sufism were formal practice, it could be acquired through effort; if it were science, it could be learned through study. But Sufism is virtues; seek within yourself for their properties and apply them correctly within yourself; pay from yourself their just price, or you will never acquire Sufism. "The difference between formal practice and virtue is that the former is an activity inspired by personal motives and affectations such that the inner and the outer man are in conflict; such action lacks spiritual significance. Virtues are also actions, but praise-worthy, devoid of all affectation and dubious motives.' The outward harmonizes with the inward; all pretension vanishes."

19.Abu Mohammad Morta'esh, upon being asked to define Sufism, replied, "Obscurity, complication and concealment." (Nafahat al-ons).

20.Morta'esh: "Sufism is beauty of character." (Kashf al-Mahjub)

21.Dinavari: "Sufism is to make a show of wealth; thereby choosing anonymity in that people will not recognize you (as a

Notes

darvish) and to disdain all that cannot be used (on the Path)." (Tadhkerat al-Awliya')

22.'Ali ebn Sahl Esfahani: "Sufism is to wash one's hands of 'other-than-God' and to be empty of all but Him." (Nafahat al-Ons)

23.Abu Mohammad Jorayri: "Sufism is to watch closely (Moraqabah) one's states and to maintain Adab (the correct manners of the Path)." (Resalat al-Qoshayri)

24.Jorayri also said that Sufism is "To assume all exalted virtues, leaving all lowly dispositions behind." (al-Loma')

25.Abu 'Amr Demashqi: "Sufism is to contemplate created existence as a fault, or rather to ignore all imperfections by gazing upon that which transcends them." (Nafahat al-ons)

26.Hojviri quotes this saying as, "Sufism is to gaze upon created existence as imperfection, or rather to disregard it altogether!" He explains, "If one is still gazing at imperfection, one's human attributes after all still survive; if one disregards imperfection, these attributes have been annihilated, for the "gaze" itself belongs to created existence. When no such existence survives, no gazing is possible. This disregard is a God-given insight; he who no longer sees through himself sees through God." (Kashf al-Mahjub)

27.Abu Bakr Kattani: "Sufism is noble character; if anyone outranks you in that, he outranks you in purity as well." (Resalat al-Qoshayri)(The author of the Kashf al-Mahjub ascribes this saying to Mohammad ebn'Ali al-Husayn ebn 'Ali ebn Abi Taleb, a great-grandson of 'Ali, but in place of the word "purity" he uses "Sufism.")

28.Abol-Hasan Mozayyen: "Sufism is to be led by God." (Resalat al-Qoshayri)

29.Asked to define the "Science of Sufism," Qaysari replied that it was "the science of God's Names and Attributes and the loci in which they manifest themselves; the states of the Beginning and End (that is, creation and resurrection); the world's realities and their return to a single Reality, the One Essence; and knowledge of the path of

spiritual travail and warfare, waged that the soul might be freed from the bonds of individuality, returned to its origin, and qualified by the attributes of non delimitation and universality." (Sharh al-Ta'yyeh)

30.Shaykh-e Baha'i: "The science of Sufism deals with the One Essence and with Its Names and Attributes in as much as they link the loci of their outward manifestation, together with all related phenomena, to the Divine Essence. Thus, the subject of this science is the One Essence and its beginning less and eternal Attributes.

The questions it investigates include:

(1) the emanation of multiplicity from the One Essence and its return thence,

(2) the loci of manifestation as reflections of the Divine Names and Attributes,

(3) the return of God's people to Him,

(4) their wayfaring, spiritual warfare and ascetic practices, and

(5) the fruits of each work and remembrance and their actual results in both this world and the next.

31.Finally, the principles of this science are the knowledge of its definition and aim, and the technical terminology of the Sufis."It has been said that Sufism is purification of the heart from conformity with the habits of creatures; separation from those moral qualities belonging to 'nature' (the imprints and impressions of the lower world) by transforming them, purging them of deviations, and basing them upon a 'golden mean' without either exaggeration or neglect; wiping out all human attributes through spiritual warfare, ascetic practice, and involvement with spiritual attributes; emulating the angels in constant, obedience and eschewing all rebellion; learning the sciences of Reality, those which do not vanish with the world's passing away (i.e., the science of God and His Words); following the Prophet(saw) in the Shari'at, and' Ali, the saint and heir of the Prophet (saw), in the

Notes

Tariqat, which is for the Sufi the anchor of all welfare." (Tara'eq al-Haqa'eq)

32. "It has been said that Sufism consists of moral qualities approved (by God), such that in every state the Sufi is content with God's good pleasure." (Kashf al-Mahjub)

33. Sohrawardi: "A great sage was asked about Sufism and replied, 'Its beginning is God, but it has no end!'" (Majmu'e-ye Athar-e Farsi)

34. "Sufism in the beginning is knowledge and in the middle, practice of heart and body. Its end is the gift of, gnostic sciences and verities." (Tara'eq al-Haqa'eq)

35. "Sufism is to walk towards God on God's feet."

36. Again, "Sufism is to abandon one's own opinion and submit to God's will."

37. And finally, "Sufism is to know One, desire One, see One, and become One." The gist of them all is beautifully expressed in a definition formulated by shaykh –al-Islam Zakariyah Ansari, which is as follows: "Sufism teaches how to purify one's self, improve one's morals, and build up one's inner and outer life in order to attain perpetual bliss. Its subject matter is the purification of the soul and its end or aim is the attainment of eternal felicity and blessedness." Words of the Masters

Concerning the Term Sufi

1. Abu 'Ali Rudbari: "The Sufi wears wool (suf) upon purity (safa) and forces his ego (nafs) to taste the cruelty (of being ignored); he leaves the world behind and travels the way of Mohammad (saw)." (Sharh-e Ta'arof)"

2. Dhon-Nun Mesri: "The Sufi is one who never tires in striving nor becomes disturbed by being deprived." (Al-Loma')

3. Jonayd was asked, "Who are the Sufis?", and replied, "They are God's chosen creatures; He conceals them or reveals them as He desires." (al-Loma')

4. On another occasion, Jonayd answered the same question by saying, "The Sufis are members of one family into which no one else enters." (Resalat al-Qoshayri)

5. Jonayd: "The Sufi's heart, like Abraham's, is secure from the world, obeying God's commands; his submission is that of Ishmael; his grief that of David; his poverty that of Jesus, his patience that of Job; his yearning (for God) that of Moses when he called upon God; and his sincerity that of Mohammad(saw)." (Tadhkerat al-Awliya')

6. Jonayd: "The word Sufi derives from 'wool' (suf) which has three letters: s, u and f. 'S' stands for sabr(patience), sedq(truthfulness), and safa'(purity); 'V' for vadd(love), werd(litany), and wafa'(faithfulness); 'F' stands for fard (detachment), faqr(poverty) and fana(annihilation in God)." (Tara'eq al-Haqa'eq)

7. Abol-Hasan Hosri: "The Sufi's ecstatic consciousness is his very being; his attributes are but a veil; As the Prophet (saw) said 'Whosoever knows himself knows his Lord.' " (Tadhkerat al-Awliya). Sarraj: "I asked Hosri, 'Who, in your opinion, is the Sufi?' He replied, 'The one whom earth does not carry nor the heavens overshadow.'

8. By this, Hosri meant that although the Sufi may walk upon earth and under heaven, it is neither earth that upholds him nor the sky that shades him, but rather God." (AI-Loma')

9. Kattani: "The Sufi is one who sees his very obedience to God as a sin for which he must beg forgiveness (for his obedience arises from himself, not from God)." (Tadhkerat al-Awliya')

10. Nuri: "The Sufi is at rest with non -existence and generous with existence." (Resalat al-Qoshayri)

11. Nuri: "The tribe of the Sufis has been freed from the darkness of human nature, purified from the ego's poison and delivered from self-will; the Sufis are at rest with God in the front rank and loftiest degree and have fled from all but Him; they neither own nor are owned."

12. Shaykh Abu Sa'id: "The Sufi does what he does for God's pleasure, that everything God does may please him." (Asrar al-Tawhid)

Notes

13.Tostari: "The Sufi is one who will let his blood be shed with impunity and who considers his property up for grabs." (Resalat al-Qoshayri)

14.Abol-Hasan Kharaqani: "Patched cloak and prayer carpet do not make a Sufi, nor practice and custom; the Sufi is he who is not." (Nafahat al-Ons)

15.Shebli was asked, "Why are these folk called 'Sufis'?" He answered, "Because something of themselves remains; if this were not so, it would be impossible to name them!" (al-Loma') 16.Shebli: "The Sufis are children in God's lap." (Resalat al-Qoshayri)

17.Shebli: "Sufis are cut off from creatures, connected to God. In His words to Moses, 'I have chosen thee for Myself (Koran, XX: 41), God cut him off from every 'other' and then said to him;'Thou shalt not see Me!' (Koran, VII: 139)" (Resalat al-Qoshayri)

18.Abu Mohammad Rasebi: "The Sufi is not a Sufi till the earth refuses to carry him, the sky to shade him, and the creatures to accept him, so that in every state his refuge is God." (Nafahiit al-Ons)

19.Morta'esh: "The aspiration of the Sufi does not out reach his stride." In other words, according to the Kashf al-Mahjub, "The Sufi's awareness extends even to his feet; his heart is present with his body, even as his body with his heart. This is a sign of presence without absence. Some say, 'The Sufi is absent from himself but present with God: but no! In truth, he is present both with himself and God alike. This is 'concentration within concentration.' If you still perceive the self, you cannot be truly absent from the self but ", then all perception vanishes, there is presence without absence." (Kashf al-Mahjub)

20.Abu Torab Nakhshabi: "Nothing besmirches the Sufi; rather, all things are purified through him." (Resalat al-Qoshayri)

21.Abu Sa'id Kharraz: "The Sufi has been purified by his Lord and fully illuminated; as a result of his remembrance, he is the very essence of joy." (Tadhkerat al-Awliya')

22. Qoshayri: "The Sufi is like someone suffering from fever. At first he raves deliriously, but at the end he falls silent, for when you reach the station of 'consolidation' you are struck dumb." (Kashf –ul-Majub)

Tasawwuf in the light of Qur'an and Hadith

The thematic aspects of Qur'anic spirituality are:- attentiveness, intention, inner discipline, gratitude, generosity, personal responsibility and the struggle for justice-represent only a small sample of the important issues the scripture offers for consideration. Many similar themes, presented in a different form, lie at the heart of Islam's second documentary well spring, Hadith. The three principal developments in Hadith literature are the massive collection known as prophetic (saw) Hadith, The smaller body of Hadith attributed to the shi'aimams, and the little treasury of gems called sacred Hadith. All Sufis obey the Holy Qur'an implicitly and also follow the prophet's traditions (Hadith) rigidly. According to them, Tasawwuf means "unbounded love of God and selfless service of His creation under Shariat," because there is a clear indication in the Holy Qur'an that "God loveth those who love Him." When a Sufi reaches the pinnacle of his career, he is above all worldly things. He then enters the domain of the "Spiritual World" the existence of which is as certain as this material world, Ma'arifat-Thus when the lover and the 'Beloved' are in divine harmony and unity, there is nothing else but a serene happiness-a rare type of happiness which no pen or human intellect can describe on paper. It is this reciprocal link of divine love between God and man which is called Ma'arifatin Sufi parlance. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, in his Tarjumaan-ul-Qur'an, clarifies this point nicely. He says: "Again and again the Qur'an has revealed the fact that the relation of God with man is nothing but a relation of their 'mutual love'.

In appreciation of man's own wonderful creation, God gracious expects nothing but his love and devotion only". A true devotee of God thus becomes His true lover. And, at this stage, the devotee is very near to God. Having attained the position of God's "beloved", he soars high in the spiritual World or the so-called "other-worldiness". And this

Notes

is the ultimate goal of a Sufi-the true meaning of all his devotion and Mujaheds (strivings).The Qur'an gives a central place to its religious principles in order to guide the conduct of man in his life, and that is why all Sufis follow it scrupulously to develop their love of God and win His pleasure and blessings.God says: "O Mohammed (saw), we have given you the Book as well as the secrets of our Hikmat (Divine knowledge) and we shall tell u those things which you never knew."As promised, the Prophet (saw) did receive this divine wisdom or the secret knowledge and in turn, imparted and passed it on to some of his very near associates, especially to Hazrat Ali, who were indeed "the source of Light" or the guiding stars of Tasawwuf for the succeeding generations of a particular class of Muslim ascetics who played such a glorious role in the service of mankind at various critical junctures of Islamic History.

Sources of Sufism

Sufism is one branch of Muslim Philosophy. Like other branches its main source is the Qur'an and Hadith but the Western Scholars have tried to trace Sufism from other sources. Van Kremer and Dozy have traced Sufism from Indian Vedantism; Merse and Nicholson ascribed it to Neoplatonism and Christianity: Brown regards it as an Aryan reaction against an emotional Semitic religion.that Sufism was one of the religious sciences Muqaddamah:Ibn Khaldun comments in his as a source Qur'an1. which was born in Islam. The way of the living of Sufis has been appreciated by the companions of the Prophet (Pbuh), the Successors and the Successors of the Successors. The fundamental principles of Sufism are found in the companions and the Muslims of old time. The following fundamental Principles of Sufism are found in Islam. i.Kashfis a source of knowledge. ii.God is unique, eternal and all-pervading. iii.The world is transitory. iv.God is near to His creatures.

The following Quotation from the Holy Qur'an substantiates the claim that Sufism is reflected in the Qur'an.

□ When my servants ask thee concerning Me. I am indeed close (to them). I listen to the prayer of every suppliant when he calleth on Me. (Surah al-Baqarah-186)

□His throne doth extend over the heavens and the earth. (Surah al-Baqarah -255)

□Soon will God produce a people whom He will love as they will love Him. (Surah al-Maidah -54) □So, they found one of our servants on whom we had bestowed mercy from ourselves and whom we had taught knowledge from our own presence. (Surah al-Kahf -65)

□God is the light of the heavens and the earth. The parable of His Light is as if there were a Niche and within it a Lamp, the lamp enclosed in Glass. (Surah al-Nur -35)

□There is no God but He Everything (that exists) will perish -except His own Face. (Surah Qasas -88)

□Whatdark suggestions his soul makes to him; for we are nearer to him than his jugular vein. (Surah Qaf -16)

□All that is on earth will perish but will abide (forever) the Face of thy Lord, full of Majesty, Bounty and Honour. Then which of the favours of your Lord will ye deny?

Of Him seeks (its need) every creature in the heavens and on earth. Every day in (new) splendour doth He shine?(Surah Rahman -26 - 29)□He is the First and the Last, the Evident and the Immanent. (Surah al-Hadith -3) are reported from the Prophet (PBUH).

Hadith: The second source of doctrine of Sufism is ourceas a sHadith.

God said: "My servant continues to draw near to me through works of suprogation until I love him. And when I love him I am his ear so that he hears by Me and his eyes so that he sees by me and his hands so that he takes by Me. God said: "My earth and My heaven contain Me not but the heart of My faithful servant containeth Me". oGod said: "I was a hidden treasure and I desired to be known, I created the creation in order that I might be known".

"Consult thy heart and thou will hear the secret ordinances of God proclaimed by the heart's inward knowledge, which is my faith and divinity". Whosoever knows himself knows hi 3. Islam. By the end of the 2nd Century A.H. when Sufism began to develop, the

Notes

internal circumstances of the Muslim world were: political unrest, sceptical tendencies of Islamic Rationalism, unconditional piety of the various orthodox schools of Islam and the gradual softening of religious fervency. All these led to the religious man to seek shelter under emotional piety. : The influence of Christianity cannot be denied. Von Kremer points out the influence of Christianity

Christianity on pre-Islamic culture and thought. Christian monasticism was known to the Arabs in the country bordering the Syrian Desert and in the desert of Sinai. It is seen in the pre-Islamic poetry also. The woollen dress among the early Sufis was also taken from Christian monks. M.Saeed Sheikh reports in his book. Islamic Philosophy that Farqad Sabaki (168 A.H.) who used to dress in woollen garb was reproached by Himad ibn Salam thus: put off this emblem of Christianity (There are instances of Christian monks of giving instructions and advices to the wandering Muslim saints. The great Sufis have quoted the Gospel-texts and saying of Jesus Christ in their biographies. But these similarities are not the proof that Sufism originated from Christian influence. The sources of the Qur'an and Hadith were sufficient enough for its origin. The hermit-life of Christian monks was against the spirit of Islam and Sufis knew about it. Thus the acculturation may be possible but not the origin. : Christianity had great influence upon its monks from Neoplatonists. Thus influence on Sufis Neoplatonism might come through Christian monks.

It also cannot be denied that Plotinus and Porphyry were known to Muslim thinkers because their names are mentioned in the writings of Nadim (385 A.H.) and Shahrestani (469 A.H.). It cannot be denied that some of the Sufis might have borrowed some material from neo-Platonism but it cannot be said that Sufism, in all its speculative and theosophical aspects, borrowed material from Hellenistic Philosophy. :

Browne and others regard that Sufism was introduced by Persians. These were due to the Influence Persian reaction of the Aryans against the Semitic mind. According to them, ascetic tone, political frustration and innate sublimation of the Persian mind helped the development of mystical notion.

But Nicholson disagrees with the view in Mystics of Islam because leading pioneers of Sufism were natives of Syria and Egypt and Arabs by race and there was drop of Persian blood in their veins. : The teachings of Buddha exerted considerable influence in Eastern Persia and Transoxania in Influence Indian 7. the 11th century A.D. There were Buddhist monasteries in Balkh, a famous city for the Sufis. Goldizher writes that Sufi Ibrahim bin Adham who abandoned his throne and became a wandering Dervish was nothing but the story of Gautam Buddha. Nicholson is also of the opinion that the practice of holding the breath was learnt by Sufi's from Buddhist monks. The ethical self-culture, ascetic discipline and mental abstraction of Sufism have something in common with Buddhism. But the major difference in Buddhism and Islam does not justify finding of origin of Sufism in Indian influence. For example, the concept of Nirvana is negative while fana is completely positive and accompanied with Baqa.

Nature and Purpose of Sufism

□ The goal of Sufism is not to acquire an intuitive knowledge of reality, but to be a servant of God. There is no stage higher than the stage of servanthood (abdiyat), and there is no truth beyond the Shari'ah.

□ The object of Sufi Tariqah is nothing but to produce conviction in the beliefs of the Shari'ah and to facilitate the observance of its rules

. □ The experience of fana and baqa is the essence of walayat; its purpose is to produce conviction. □ Visions and auditions are not the end of the Sufism; they are mere shadows, and God transcends them absolutely.

□ Walis are of two kinds: those who remain absorbed in God, and those who are returned to the world. The latter are superior to the former. 24s Lord".

Sufi Philosophy

According to Sufi philosophy, Reality is the universal will, the true knowledge, eternal light and supreme beauty, whose nature is self-manifestation, reflected in the mirror of the universe; The world in comparison with the reality is a mere illusion, or non-reality or not-

Notes

being. Among Sufis, as well as in the Indian schools of philosophy, some believed in the oneness of the existence. To them, multiplicity indicated a mode of unity. The phenomenal world is an outward mania. From the point of view of its attributes, it is a substance with two accidents, one as creator and the other as creature; one visible and the other invisible. In its essence, it is attribute less, nameless, indescribable, incomprehensible, but when covered with Aviator descent from its absoluteness, names and attributes are formed. The sum of these names and attributes is the phenomenal world, which represents reality under the form of externality. The dvaitist Sufi considers that the world is not a mere illusion or ignorance but exists as the self-revelation or the other self of the reality. Man is the microcosm in whom divine attributes are manifested in most imperfect diminutive form. God is eternal beauty and the nature of beauty is self-manifestation and desire to be loved. Thus, the Sufis base their doctrine on the principles of love and prefer the Course of love or the Indian Bhaktito other means of reaching God. They consider love to be the essence of all religions and the cause of creation and its Continuation.

God is unknowable, but may be thought through some concrete comparison. Phenomenal diversity is the reflection of the supreme beauty. The attributes are identical with him in fact, though distinct in our thought. In His absolute beauty, He is called Jamal and in His phenomenal Husn. Man possesses three natures, viz., sensual, which corresponds to the Indian Tamas: intellectual, somewhat like the Indian rajas; and spiritual or the Indian sat. He becomes virtuous or wicked according to the predominance of one of the three said qualities. His mind must receive gradual training for which a guide is absolutely necessary. The selection and following of a spiritual guide is the most important duty of a Sufi. A bad or imperfect guide may lead him to evil or leave him imperfect and bewildered. He must use all his intellectual ability and human endeavor to find out the true guide and once obtained, he must obey his direction. In all brevity, the essence of Sufi thought is that the life is full of miseries and that man can get salvation from the miseries only by renouncing the worldly possessions. Different doctrines were propounded at different times

to achieve renunciation. In the early period, the emphasis was on the views like that man's original abode is with God, that the world is inimical to God and that God hates the world. From the middle of the eighth century AD 'denial of will' to man" became dominant. The practicing was to conform his character to the will of God, and thus to reconcile with the adversaries and misfortunes of life. Man was to merge his will into that of God. In the ninth century began the permeation of foreign philosophies and the movement fell victim to the careerists of the field of religion. Abu Yazid declared the emergence of the essence of self into that of God as the aim of life. Now the love of God became the religious duty of the man in order that he might successfully practice detachment from the world of nuisance. Though the miseries of life did drive some men to the mystic life, the miseries ceased to be the principal motivating factor from the ninth century onward.

The Sufis principally acknowledged that the love of God is the end of man. Ibn Arabi believed that God and his existence are one: According to him, the apparent separation is due to ignorance. Thus there is considerable variety in their conceptions of knowledge, God, self and the world. However, each sect of the Sufis declared their respective system and their doctrines to be the true knowledge and they claimed that the realization of their knowledge leads to the goal

The system has two aspects:

- (1) Knowledge and (2) Practice. 1. According to the Sufis, the object of man's creation is the acquisition of the knowledge of God. Knowledge of God includes the knowledge of the Creator and the creation comprising the universe and the individuals and so on. The knowledge of the soul and the things of the world is an essential step towards the knowledge of God
- (2) .2. The Object of man's creation, according to Sufism, is the acquisition of knowledge of God. The Sufis believe that the true knowledge of God can be gained only in intuition. The
- (3) Sufis believe that the heart of man is a mirror in which he can see the vision of God. But the heart mirror is polluted with the dust of worldly desires. To see the vision of Reality it is essential that it

should be cleansed of completely. The worldly desires are identified with nafs. It is not easy to kill the nafseven for a moment. The theorists of the system have evolved a method of practice to kill it and to lead the novice to the realization of knowledge of God. The practice is twofold: firstly, to practice detachment from the worldliness and secondly to develop love of God through Muraqaba(Meditation) and Muhasaba(Self-examination) etc. The practice is metaphorically called Safr(Journey) to God and the stages of spiritual attainment on it are described as Muqamat(Stations). The Salik(Practicant) realizes spiritual moods called Hal (States) at some of the stations and at the end.estation of the one-real. The Real's essence is above human knowledge .

Theories

The beginnings of Sufism may certainly be placed at the end of the eighth and beginning of the ninth centuries of our era. The views which have been advanced as to the nature, origin, and source of the Sufi doctrine are as divergent as the etymologies by which it is proposed to explain its name.

Briefly, they may be described as follows:-

1)The Theory that it really represents the Esoteric Doctrine of the Prophet (saw) (The “Esoteric Islam” Theory):-This is the prevalent view of the Sufis themselves and of those Muhammadans who are more or less in sympathy with them; and though it can hardly commend itself to European scholars, it is by no means so absurd or untenable a hypothesis as is often assumed in Europe. Without insisting too much on the (probably spurious) traditions constantly cited by the Sufis as the basis of their doctrine, such as God's alleged declaration, "I was a Hidden treasure and I desired to be known, therefore I created Creation that I might be known;" or, "God was, and there was naught beside Him;" or, "Whosoever knoweth himself knoweth his Lord;" there are in the Qur'an itself a few texts which lend themselves to a mystical interpretation, as, for instance, the words addressed to the Prophet (saw) concerning his victory over the heathen at the battle of

Badr(Qur'an, viii, 17): "Thou didst not shoot when thou didst shoot, but God shot," This on the face of it means no more than that God strengthened the arms of the Muslims against their foes; but it involves no great straining of the words to deduce them from that God is the Absolute Agent (fa' al-i-mutlaq) and man but" as the pen between the fingers of the scribe, who turns it as he will." However little a critical examination of the oldest and most authentic records of the Prophet's (saw) life and teachings would warrant us in regarding him as a mystic or ascribing to him an esoteric doctrine, it must be avowed without reserve that such is the view taken by the more moderate Sufis, and even of such philosophically minded theologians as al-GhazzaLi (A.D. 1111-2).

(2) The Theory that it must be regarded as the Reaction of the Aryan mind against a Semitic religion imposed upon it by force (The Aryan Reaction Theory):-This theory has two forms, which may be briefly described as the Indian and the Persian. The former, taking note of certain obvious resemblances which exist between the Sufi doctrines in their more advanced forms and some of the Indian systems, notably the Vedanta Sara, assumes that this similarity (which has been exaggerated, and is rather superficial than fundamental) shows that these systems have a common origin, which must be sought in India. The strongest objection to this view is the historical fact that though in Sasanian times, notably in the sixth century of our era, during the reign of Nushirwan, a certain exchange of ideas took place between Persia and India, no influence can be shown to have been exerted by the latter country on the former (still less on other of the lands of Islam) during Muhammadan times till after the full development of the Sufi system, which was practically completed when al-Biruni, one of the first Musulmans who studied the Sanskrit language and the geography, history, literature, and thoughts of India, wrote his famous Memoir on these subjects. In much later times it is likely enough, as shown by von Kremer,' that considerable influence was exerted by Indian ideas on the development of Sufism. The other, or Persian, form of the "Aryan Reaction theory" would regard Sufism as an essentially Persian product. Our comparative

Notes

ignorance of the undercurrents of thought in Sasanian times makes it very difficult to test this theory by the only safe method, the historical; but, as we have already seen, by no means all the early sufis were of Persian nationality, and some of the most notable and influential mystics of later times, such as Shaykh Muhyiyu'd. Din ibnu'l 'Arabi (A.D. 1240-1), and Ibnu'l Farid (A.D. 1234-5), were men of Arabic speech in whose veins there was not a drop of Persian blood. Yet the first of these exerted an enormous influence over many of the most typical Persian Sufis, such as 'Iraqi (A.D. 1287) whose Lama'atwas wholly inspired by his writings, Awhadu'd-Din Kirmani (A.D. 1297-8), and indirectly on the much later Jami (A.D." 1492-3), while even at the present day his works (especially the Fususu'l Hikam) are widely read and diligently studied by Persian mystics.

(3) The Theory of Neo-Platonist Influence (Theory of Neo-Platonist Origin):-So far as Sufism, was not an independent manifestation of that mysticism which, because it meets the requirements and satisfies the cravings of a certain class of minds existing in all ages and in most civilized communities, must be regarded as a spontaneous phenomenon, recurring in many similar but unconnected forms Wherever the human mind continues to concern itself with the problems of the Wherefore, the Whence, and the Whither of the Spirit, it is probable that it has been more indebted to Neo-Platonism than to any other system.

Check your progress –

1. State the origin of Sufism

2. Write about various theories of Sufism.

5.3 LET'S SUM UP

It is generally believed that Sufism is derived from two Arabic words i.e. 'Saf' and 'Suf. The word 'Saf means a carpet. Since the Sufis meditated upon God on a carpet, Sufism took its birth i.e. pure people who meditated on a carpet.

The word 'Sufi' derives its name from another Arabic word 'Suf which means wool. The Muslim saints who wore garments of coarse wool began to be called Sufi saints. The first epoch of Sufism is said to have begun in the seventh century A.D.

5.4 KEYWORDS

1. Sufi – Mysticism, word came from Arabian word SUF meaning wool.
2. Hadith – Sayings of Prophet Mohd.

5.5 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Describe the philosophy of Sufis.
2. Describe the nature and purpose of Sufism.

5.6 SUGGESTED READINGS

1. ISLAMIC SUFISM BY SIRDAR IQBAL ALI SHAH

5.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Section 5.3
2. Section 5.3

UNIT 6 - SUFI – CONCEPTS AND PRACTICES

STRUCTURE

- 6.0 Objectives
- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 Concepts
- 6.3 Principles And Practices
- 6.4 Let's Sum Up
- 6.5 Keywords
- 6.6 Suggested Reading
- 6.7 Questions For Review
- 6.8 Answers to check your progress

6.0 OBJECTIVES

To learn about the concepts of Sufism

To learn about the practices of Sufism

6.1 INTRODUCTION

A Sufi believing in the Islamic religion must have complete submission to Divine control in the mode and conduct of life, and implicit and unreserved obedience to laws revealed to man by God in preference to all our prepossessions, inclinations, or judgments — and believe that his religion is a religion which embraces all such religions that have been preached by teachers inspired by God in various ages and different countries. Thus the Quran says in this respect : “ Say, we believe in God and in what has been revealed to us, as well as to Abraham, Ishmael,

Isaac, Jacob and their descendants ; we also believe in what was given to Moses, Jesus, and to all the prophets raised by the Creator of the Universe ; we accept all of them, without making any distinction among them.”

He should consider that before the revelation of Al-Quran every nation while claiming Divine origin for its faith denied this privilege to creeds of all other nations. For instance, the Jews and the Christians believe that all the prophets and messengers that have appeared in the world have come only from a single branch of the great human family, viz. the Israelites, and that God has always been so displeased with all the other nations of the world that, even finding them in errors and ignorance, He has never cared for them in the least. This disposition of exclusiveness, which is not peculiar to the Church, or the Israelites, but is shared by the followers of almost all other religions. The God of the Sufi has not made any invidious distinction between different people. His sustenance is not limited to a particular age or a particular country. He is the sustainer of all people, the Lord of all ages, the King of all places and countries, the fountain head of all grace, the source of every power, physical and spiritual, the nourisher of all that is created and the supporter of all that exists. The grace of God encompasses the whole world and encircles all people and ages. The powers and faculties which He granted to the ancient people of India were also granted to the Arabs, the Japanese and the various other members of Adam's family. For all, the Earth of God serves alike as a floor, and for the sake of all, the Sun, the Moon, and the Stars give their light and perform such other functions as God has charged them with. All people alike derive benefit from air, water, fire, earth and other things created by God, and all equally use the produce of the earth, its corn, its herbs, its flowers and its fruit. These are the broad Divine morals which give the Sufi a lesson that if no class or human race has been denied benefits of the water, the earth, the air and all other manifestations of Nature, why this equal and impartial providence has been dis- believed in matters of revelation, which in fact is the most important and essential factor in the development of human faculties. It was a misconception of Divine providence and an error so fatal to the establishment of universal brotherhood of man, under which nations

laboured from centuries to centuries till the last word of God appeared which in the very first falsified this wrong conception of partial dispensation. The Quran, his sacred book, commences with the words of glorification and thanksgiving to Allah, God, who is not only the maker and provider of India and Arabia, of Persia and Syria, of Europe and America, but is the Creator of the whole universe.

6.2 CONCEPT

The words, the Sufi thinks, used here are so general that they include all the different people, different ages, and different countries. The opening of the holy Quran with a verse which is so broad, according to the Sufis, in its significance shows clearly that it refutes the doctrine which sets limits to the vast and unlimited sustenance of God reserving the manifestations of these attributes for a single people to the exclusion of all others, as if the latter were not the creation of God or as if after creating them God has utterly forgotten or thrown them away as useless and futile things. The opening verse of Al-Quran teaches the Sufi to believe that if the Creator and Provider of the whole universe has given means of physical growth equally to all men on the earth, He has also provided them with means of spiritual culture as well. This doctrine inculcated by the Quran, believes the Sufi, infused a spirit of equality and fraternity in mankind, destroying that narrowness of mind which has been disintegrating the whole fabric of human society and separating brother from brother under the universal fatherhood of God. His teachings, he holds, prompts him to cherish feelings of love and reverence for Moses and Jesus. It enjoins upon him also to pay his respect and allegiance to all the good and pious men of the world. Hence, in accordance with the teachings of Al-Quran, Islamic Sufism, is the name of every religion, creed, or faith, which has been preached from time to time in different countries and various tribes by teachers inspired by God. They come from one and the same source and taught one and the same truth. But the hand of Time, combined with want of efficient means in olden days to preserve those teachings intact, afforded occasions and opportunities for human interpolations and wrong interpretations.

On the other hand, languages which were originally the conveyance of these ancient scriptures, being liable to constant changes, became obsolete, and set up unsurmountable hindrances in the way of coming generations to reach the spirit of old letters. Moreover, the development of human faculties and complications of evils — a necessary sequel to earthly civilization— called for new orders for things. This emergency brought forth prophet after prophet, thinks the Sufi, who come and restored truths already revealed and made necessary additions to meet the requirements of the age. As different races of mankind were distantly located and separated from each other by natural barriers, with very limited means of intercourse between them, each nation needed its own prophet and so was it — as Al-Quran says.

Languages come to existence, and being subject to constant change in form and signification of its words, meet with the fate of a dead language. This makes ancient literature unintelligible and difficult to understand. Every language spoken on the surface of the earth has met or will meet with this fate, and if an exception can be made to this general rule it is, in favour of the language of Hedjaz, in which Al-Quran was revealed. The peculiar conservative nature of Arabic, which strikes it liable to change, gives it a special claim to secure the throne of the last word of God. But of the various words in different languages which stand equivalent to sin convey its theological and occult conception ? Does the word sin or any of its synonyms in any language convey the church idea of sin ? Does the Persian word Gunah convey the Zoroastrian conception of evil, or does the Sanskrit word Pap mean what is understood by wickedness in Vedas ? But come to the Arabic language the Sufi invites you and its equivalents for sin in themselves convey what is taught in his creed about sin. Nothing, under the teaching of the Quran, is in itself right or wrong.

Everything created by God has its own particular use ; keep it off that use and it is sin according to the Quran. And this is what the words Junah, Zanb, Ism, Jurm, and others, literally mean. Anything turned away from its proper place is Junah. Any abnormal growth is Zanb, anything cut from the main thing is Jurm. To strengthen or further his position the Sufi cites the word Taubah, which is an Arabic word for repentance. The

Notes

word literally means to return to the point from which one has receded. In sin, according to his conception, means to return to that point. This is what is literally meaning by the words Junah and Taubah. There are various other abstract truths in theology. Conception of God, of revelation, of angels, of prophet-hood, of evil, of virtue, of hell, of heaven, and of many other matters. To know the Sufi conceptions, you have simply to consider the meaning of Arabic words. They are sufficient clue. No other language within my claims this peculiar richness of meaning, and therefore Sufi considers that if the coming together of the different paths of the world into one whole demanded one cosmopolitan ideal if the old obedience to God was to be revealed in its perfect form once for all, it could not but be through the medium of the Arabic language with its symbolic phraseology.

Quran was revealed and it taught the same old Islam which had been preached by others before, considers the Sufi, and brought a book which recapitulated old truths in their unalloyed form with requisite additions as Al-Quran says : Al-Quran is nothing but the old books refined of human alloy, and contains transcendent truths embodied in all sacred scriptures with complete additions, necessary for the development of all human faculties. It repeats truths given in the Holy Vedas, in the Bible, in the words of the Gita, in the sayings of Buddha and all other prophets, and adds what was not in them, and gives new laws to meet the contingencies of the present time when the different members of God's family who lived apart from each other in the days of old revelations had come close to the other. Al-Quran gives the Sufi rules and regulations adapted to the various needs and requirements of life. It is not merely a collection of moral precepts, or a book of rituals. Al-Quran not confined to prayers, fastings, and sacrifices. It is a complete code of life to the Sufi. If a king is ordered to observe certain laws to govern his country the subjects as well have been enjoined upon to pay allegiance to their ruler, foreign or otherwise. Similarly a law-giver, a statesman, a judge, a military officer, a merchant, a craftsman, a son, a father, a brother, a husband, a wife, a neighbour, a friend, the rich as well as the poor, in short, a person in various capacities and walks of life will find in it principles of guidance, to make him a useful member of society and a good citizen, and above

all a true Sufi. This perfect teaching the Sufis could only find in the Quran and therefore they believe that the old occult love of Islam that was preached by generations of teachers saw its perfection in this final revelation in matters of law as the Quran says : “ To-day the law is perfected for you.”

One more aspect must be noted. " And who can -deny the terrible differences which exist in various sects of one of the same religion ? asks the Sufi, one can understand differences of opinion arising from differences of temperament. To may lead to the existence of severed schools of thought. It cannot harm higher thought as far as its cardinal principles are taught in their pure integrity. But what about various sects under various religions . They do differ from each other in their cardinal principles and yet they count upon one book as their final authority. There can be only one true creed. If God is the original source of all religion, if He has been gracious enough to reveal His mind from time to time, if He always chose one man to act as His mouthpiece and if His ways and laws do not admit of change, conditions obtaining in every religion after the advent of Christ demanded final decision in every religion. Decision not between Christian and non-Christian, but between Christian and Christian. Before the appearance of the Prophet of Arabia all these different sects did exist. It was necessary, argues the Sufi, that someone should come and restore the old original form of religion. This was done through Mohamed, the last messenger of God. For this reason the Quran calls itself Hakatn — " judge," to decide between Christian and Christian, between Hindu and Hindu, between Buddhist and Buddhist, and so it did.

Furthermore, a Sufi believes himself to be an atheist in following the ten commandments of God and the law of retribution with its legitimate bound lie is a follower of Christ. He observes the law of mercy promulgated on the Mount of Olive, when it leads to reclamation His object is reformation through mercy or retribution as the case may be. He is an Arya Hindu in Leaking images and a Sanaton Dharmi in paying respects to all the godly men of any nation and creed have been called Avatars — incarnations of God. He is Buddhist in preaching Nirvan, i.e. self-effacement as the key of salvation. He is Unitarian to establish the

unity of God. In short, he embraces — through the Quran — every beauty in every religion and turns his face from what has been added to the religion of God by man.

The entire Sufi world, after accepting the cardinal principles of Islam, accept the Quran as the repository of the law recapitulating all necessary tenets revealed before Mohamed and for the explanation of the law they unanimously look only to Mohamed and to no one else, in whose actions and sayings they read the translation of the Quran.

THE DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTIC OF ISLAMIC SUFISM

The great characteristic of the Sufi thought, then, is that it requires its followers to believe that all the great religions of the world that prevailed before it were revealed by God ; and thus it has indicated by its name as laid down the basis of peace and harmony among the thoughtful of the world. The great mission of Sufism was not, however, to preach this truth only, which on account of the isolations from each other of the inherent nations of the earth had not been preached before, but also to correct the errors which has crept in on account of the length of time, to sift truth from error, to preach the truths which had not been preached before on account of the special circumstances of a society or the early stage of its development, and, most important of all, to gather together in the truths which were contained in any Divine revelation granted to any people for the guidance of man . Thus as a distinctive characteristic of its own it claims to be the final and the most perfect expression of the will of God.

THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF SUFISM

The main principles of Islamic Sufism are given in the very beginning of the Quran, which opens with the words : “ This book, there is no doubt in it, is a guidance for those who are careful in their duties — those who believe in the unseen and keep up prayers and out of what we have given them they spend and those who believe in what has been revealed to you and what was revealed before you and of the life to come they are sure.” This verse points out the essential principles which must be accepted by those who would follow the Sufi Cult. In it there are three main points of belief and two main points of practice, or three theoretical and two

practical ordinances. Before these points are taken up separately, I think it necessary to point out, as is indicated in this verse, that in Islam mere belief counts for nothing if not carried into practice.

“ Those who believe and do good ” is the ever- recurring description of the righteous as given in the Quran. Right belief is the good seed which can only grow into a good tree if it receives nourishment from the soil in which it is placed. That nourishment is given by good deeds. Another point necessary to be borne in mind in connection with the five principles of belief and practice mentioned in the verses quoted above is that they are, in one form or other, universally; accepted by the human race. The five principles as already indicated are a belief in God, the great unseen, in Divine revelation and in the life to come, and, on the practical side, prayer to God, which is the source from which springs the love of God, and charity in its broadest sense, indicating respectively the performance of our duties to God and the performance of our duties to man and other creatures of God. These practices, of course, are obligatory upon every Sufi and are preliminaries to other practices to be mentioned later which particularize each section of Sufi.

FIRST CONCEPTION OF GOD IN ISLAMIC SUFISM

Of the three fundamental principles of belief, the first is a belief in God. The belief in a higher power than man, though not seen by him, explain the Sufi, can be traced back to remotest antiquity, to the earliest times to which history can take us, but different peoples in different ages and different countries have had different conceptions of the Divine Being. Islamic Sufism in the first place preaches a God who is above all tribal deities and national gods. The God of the Sufis is not the God of a particular nation, so that He should look after their needs only, but He is described in the opening words of the Holy Quran to be the “ Lord of the worlds,” and thus, while widening the conception of the Divine being, it also enlarges the circle of the brotherhood of man so as to include all nations of the earth and thus widens the outlook of human sympathy. The unity of God is the great theme on which the Sufis lay great stress. There is absolute unity in Divine nature; it admits of no participation or manifoldness.

Notes

Unity is the keynote to the conception of the Divine Being in Sufism. It denies all plurality of persons in Godhead and any participation of any being in the affairs of the world. His are the sublimes and most perfect attributes, but the attribute of mercy reigns over all. It is with the names Ar Rahman and Ar-Rahim that every chapter of the Sufi literature opens. Beneficent and Merciful convey to the reader of it only a very imperfect idea of the deep and all-encompassing love and mercy of God which enfold all creation as indicated by the words Ar-Rahman and Ar-Rahim — i.e. “ My mercy comprehends all conceivable things,” says the Holy Quran (vii. 155). Hence the Messenger who preached this conception of the Divine Being is rightly called in the Literature, a mercy to all the worlds ” (xxi. 107).

The great apostle of the unity of God could not conceive of a God who was not the author of all that existed. Such detraction from His power and knowledge would have given a death-blow to the very loftiness and sublimity of the conception of the Divine Being. Thus ends one of the shorter chapters of the Quran : “He is Allah beside whom there is none who should be served, the Knower of the unseen and seen ; He is the Beneficent, the Merciful. He is Allah beside whom there is no God, the King, the Holy, the Author of Peace, the Granter of Security, Guardian over all, the Mighty, the Restorer of every loss, the Possessor of every greatness ; High is Allah above what they set up with Him. He is Allah, the maker of all things, the Creator of all existence, the Fashioner of all images — His are the most excellent and beautiful attributes (that man could imagine) ; everything that exists in the heavens or in the earth declares His glory and His perfection, and He is the mighty, the wise ” (lix. 22-24). He is God, the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing, the Deliverer from every affliction, the Generous, the Gracious, the Forgiving, the Near-at-hand, who loves good and hates evil, who will take account of all human actions.

Thus while Islamic Sufism in common with other religions takes the existence of God for its basis, it differs from others in claiming absolute unity for the Divine Person, and in not placing any such limitation upon His power and knowledge as is involved in the idea of His not being the Creator of matter and soul or in His assumption of the form of a mortal

human being. If the idea of the existence of God finds general acceptance among mankind, there is no reason why such a perfect and sublime conception of the Divine Being as is met with in Islamic Sufism should be repugnant to anybody, adds the Sufi.

Unity of God is, as has been said, the one great theme of the Sufi Cult. The laws of nature which we find working in the universe, man's own nature, and the teachings of the messengers and teachers of yore are again and again appealed to as giving clear indications of the Unity of the Maker. Consider the creation of the innumerable heavenly bodies, the Sufi doctrine invites our attention : are they not with their apparent diversities all subject to one and the same law ? Think over what To see in the earth itself, its organic and inorganic worlds, the plant and animal life, the solid earth, the seas and the rivers, the great mountains : is there not unity in all this diversity ? Think over your own nature, how your very colours and tongues differ from each other, yet in spite of all these differences are you not but a single people ? Look at the constant change which everything in this universe is undergoing, the making and un-making, the creation and recreation of all things, the course of which does not stop for a single instant : is there not a uniform law discernible in this ?

If, in fact, you clearly observe uniformity in diversity in nature, do you not see therein a clear sign of the Unity of the Maker ? Then look to the incontestable evidence of human nature, how even when believing in the plurality of gods, it recognizes a unity in the very plurality and thus bears testimony to the oneness of God. Again, turn over the pages of the sacred scriptures of any religion, search out the teachings of the great spiritual guides of all nations, they will all testify to the oneness of the Divine Being. In short, the laws of nature, the nature of man and the testimony of the righteous men of all ages all declare with one voice the Unity of God, and this is the cardinal doctrine of the spiritual teachings of the faith of the Sufi.

The second fundamental principle of faith in the Islamic Sufism is a belief in the Divine revelation, not only a belief in the truth of the revealed Word of God as found in the Quran but a belief in the truth of

Notes

Divine revelation in all ages and to all nations of the earth. Divine revelation is the basis of all revealed religions and occult love, but the principle is accepted subject to various limitations. Some doctrines consider revelation to have been granted to mankind only once ; others look upon it as limited to a particular people ; while others still close the door of revelation after a certain time.

With the advent of his ideals, the Sufi avers, we find the same breadth of view introduced into the conception of Divine revelation as in the conception of the Divine Being. His Literature recognizes no limit of any kind to Divine revelation, neither in respect of time nor in respect of the nationality of the individual to whom it may be granted. It regards all people as having at one time or other received Divine revelation, and it announces the door of it to be open now or in the future in the same manner as it was open in the past.

Without the assistance of revelation from God no people could have ever attained to communion with God, and hence it was necessary that God, who being the Lord of the whole world supplied all men with their physical necessities, should have also brought to them His spiritual blessings. In this case too, Sufism, while sharing with other Cults the belief in the fact of Divine revelation, refuses to acknowledge the existence of any limitation as regards time or place.

There is also another aspect of the Sufi belief in Divine revelation in which it differs from some other religions of the world. It refuses to acknowledge the incarnation of the Divine Being. That the highest aim of a spiritual teaching is communion with God is a fact universally recognized.

According to Sufi this communion is not attained by bringing down God to man in the sense of incarnation, but by man rising gradually towards God by spiritual progress and the purification of his life from all sensual desires and low motives. The perfect one who reveals the face of God to the world is not the Divine Being in human form, but the human being whose person has become a manifestation of the Divine attributes by his own personality having been consumed in the fire of the love of God.

His example serves as an incentive and is a model for others to follow. He shows by his example how a mere mortal can attain to communion with God. Hence the broad principle of Sufism that no one is precluded from attaining communion with God and from being fed from the source of Divine revelation, and that any one can attain it by following the Holy Word of God as revealed in the Literature of His doctrine.

THE LIFE AFTER DEATH

Belief in a future life, in one form or another, is also common to all Cults of the world, and it is the third fundamental article of a Sufi's faith. The idea of a life after death was so obscure as late as the appearance of the Jewish religion that not only is not much of it found in the Old Testament, but an important Jewish sect actually denied any such state of existence. This fact was, however, due to much light not having been thrown upon it in earlier revelations. The belief in trans-migration was also due to the undeveloped mind of man mistaking spiritual realities for physical facts. In Islamic Sufism the idea reached its perfection as did other important fundamental principles of ethics. Belief in a future life implies the account-ability of man in another life for actions done in this life.

I. LIFE AFTER DEATH IS ONLY A CONTINUATION OF THE LIFE BELOW

The gulf that is generally interposed between this life and the life after death is the great obstacle in the solution of the mystery of the hereafter. Sufism makes that gulf disappear altogether : it makes the next life as only a continuation of the present life. On this point the Quran 55 explicit. It says : " We have in this very life bound the consequences of a man's deeds about his neck, and these hidden consequences we will bring to light on the day of resurrection in the form of a book wide open " (xvii. 14). And again it says : " He who is blind in this life shall also be blind in the next life — nay he shall be straying farther off from the path" (xvii. 74). And elsewhere we have: " O soul at rest ! return to your Lord, He being pleased with you and you pleased with Him ; so enter among My servants and enter into My paradise " (lxxix. 27). The first of these three verses makes it dear that the great facts which shall be

brought to light on the day of resurrection shall not be anything new, but only a manifestation of what is hidden from the physical eye here.

The life after death is therefore, according to the Sufi doctrines, not a new life, but only a continuance of this life bringing its hidden realities into light. The two other quotations show that a condemned and heavenly life both begin in this world. The blindness of the next life is hell surely, but according to the verse quoted, only those who are blind here shall be blind hereafter, thus making it clear that the spiritual blindness of this life is the real hell and from here it is taken to the next life. Similarly it is the soul that has found perfect peace and rest that is made to enter into paradise at death, thus showing that the paradise of the next life is only a continuation of the peace and rest which a man enjoys spiritually in this life. Thus it is clear that, according to the Text of the Book, the next life is a continuation of this, and death is not an interruption but a connecting link, a door that opens out the hidden realities of this life.

2. STATE AFTER DEATH IS AN IMAGINE OF THE SPIRITUAL STATE OF THIS LIFE

Nowhere but in Islamic Sufism, say the Sufis, has the most significant truth with regard to the next life been brought to light. No attempt at all has been made in any spiritual teaching to unveil the secrets of the hereafter. No doubt in the Christian teaching the corporeal and the spiritual are melted together, the weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth and the quenchless fire as the punishment of the wicked are spoken of in the same breath with the kingdom of heaven, the treasure in heaven and the life eternal as the reward -of the righteous, but there is no clear indication as to the sources of the one or the other, asserts the Sufi.

The Sufi, on the other hand, makes it clear that the state after death is a complete representation, a full and clear image, of our spiritual state in this life. Here the good or bad conditions of the deeds or beliefs of a man are latent within him, and their poison or panacea casts its influence upon him only secretly, but in the life to come they shall become manifest and clear as daylight. The shape which man's deeds and their consequences assume in this very life is not visible to the eye of man in this life, but in

the next life it will be unrolled and laid open before him in all its clearness.

The pleasures and pains of the next life therefore will not be hidden from the ordinary eye. The blessings of the next life are mentioned by physical names as an evidence of their clear representation to the eye, they are on the other hand spoken of as things which “ the eye has not seen, nor has ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man to conceive of them.” This description of the blessings of the next life is really an explanation given by the Prophet himself of the verse of the Quran which says : “No soul knows the blessings and joys which have been kept secret for it ”

The following verse of the Quran, which may ordinarily be misunderstood, is far from describing the heavenly blessings as being identical with the things of this world. It runs thus : " Bear glad tidings to those who believe and do good that they shall have gardens beneath which rivers flow. So often as they are made to taste in that life of the fruits thereof, they shall say : “ These are the fruits which we were made to taste formerly; and they shall be given fruits resembling the fruits of the former life " (ii. 23). Now the fruits which the righteous are made to speak of as having tasted in this life could not possibly be the fruits of trees or the things of this life, according to the Sufi idea. The verse, in fact, tells us that those who believe and do good works prepare a paradise with their own hands for themselves, with their good deeds for fruits. It is of the fruits of this garden that they are spiritually made to taste here, and of the same, only in a more palpable form, shall they eat in the next life. To the same effect another verse may be quoted from the Quran : “On that day you shall see the faithful men and the faithful women, their light running before them and on their right hands” (lvii. 12). This verse shows that the light of faith by which the righteous men and women were guided in this life, and which could here be seen only with the spiritual eye, shall be clearly seen going before the believers on the day of resurrection.

As in the case of the blessings of paradise, the punishment of hell is also an imagine of the spiritual tortures of this life. Hell is said to be a place where one shall neither live nor die (xx. 76) . It should be remembered in

Notes

this connection that the Word of God has described those who walk in error and wickedness as dead and lifeless, while the good it calls living. The Moslem mystic explain its secret by stating that the means of the life of those who are ignorant of God, being simply eating and drinking and the satisfaction of physical desires, are entirely cut off at their death. Of spiritual food they have no share, and, there- fore, while devoid of the true life, they shall be raised again to taste of the evil consequences of their evil deeds.

The following verse relating to the punishment of hell shows clearly that the spiritual torture of this world has been represented as physical punishment in the next. Says the Quran : “ Lay ye hold on him, then put chains into his neck, then cast him into hell, then into a chain whose length is seventy cubits thrust him ” (lxix. 30). The chain to be put into the neck represents the desires of this world which keep him with his head bent upon the earth, and it is these desires that shall assume the shape of a chain. Similarly, the entanglements of this world shall be seen as chains in the feet. The heartburning of this world shall likewise be clearly seen as flames of burning fire. The wicked one has, in fact, in this very world within himself a hell of the passions and inextinguishable desires of this world and feels the burning of that hell in the failures he meets with. When, therefore, he shall be cast farther off from his temporal desires his heartburning and bitter sighs for his dear desires shall assume the shape of burning fire. The Quran says : “ And a barrier shall be passed between them and that which they desire,” and this shall be the beginning of their torture (xxxiv. 53) . The thrusting into a chain of the length of seventy cubits reveals the same deep secret. The limit of man's life may as a general rule be fixed at seventy, and a wicked person often lives in his wickedness up to that age. He would sometimes even enjoy seventy years excluding the periods of childhood and decrepitude. These seventy years, during which he could work with honesty, wisdom, and zeal, he wastes away only in the entanglements of the world and in following his own desires. He does not try to free himself from the chain of desires, and, therefore, in the next world the chain of the desires which he indulged in for seventy years shall be embodied into a chain seventy

cubits in length, every cubit representing a year, in which the wicked one shall be fettered.

Thus the punishment which shall overtake a man is one prepared by his own hands, and his own evil deeds become the source of his torture

NEXT LIFE IS A LIFE OF UNLIMITED PROGRESS

The third point of importance which throws light on the mystery of the life after death is that man is destined to make infinite progress in that life. Underlying this is the principle that the development of man's faculties as it takes place in this life, however unlimited, is not sealed by finality; but a much wider vista of the realms to be traversed opens out after death. Those who have wasted their opportunity in this life shall under the inevitable law which makes every man taste of what he has done be subjected to a course of treatment of the spiritual diseases which they have brought about with their own hands, and when the effect of the poison which vitiated their system has been nullified, and they are fit to start on the onward journey to the great goal, they shall no more be in hell.

This is the reason that the punishment of hell, according to the Sufi doctrine, is not everlasting. It is meant to clean a man of the dross which is a hindrance in his spiritual progress, and when that object has been effected its need vanishes. Nor is paradise a place to enjoy the blessings only of one's previous good deeds, but it is the starting point of the development of the faculties of man. Those in paradise shall not be idle, but they shall be

BELIEF IN ANGELS AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

The three fundamental principles of that belief in the unseen also includes a belief in those agencies which we call angels. This belief, though common to many Cults, is not as widely accepted as the three principles explained above; and, therefore, a few remarks relating to the truth underlying this belief will not be out of place here. In the physical world we find it is an established law that we stand in need of external agents notwithstanding the faculties and powers within us. The eye has been given to us to see things, and it does see them, but not without the

Notes

help of external light. The ear received the sound, but independently of the agency of air it cannot serve that purpose. Man, therefore, essentially stands in need of something besides what is within him, and as in the physical, so also in the spiritual world.

Just as our physical faculties are not by themselves sufficient to enable us to attain any object in the physical world without the assistance of other agents, so our own spiritual powers cannot by themselves lead us to do good or evil deeds, but here, too, intermediaries which have an existence independent of our eternal spiritual powers are necessary to enable us to do good or evil deeds. In other words, there are two attractions placed in the nature of man: the attraction to good, or to rise up to higher spheres of virtue, and the attraction to evil, or to stoop down to a kind of low, bestial life; but to bring these attractions into operation external agencies are needed, as they are needed in the case of the physical powers of man. The external agency which brings the attraction to good into work is called an angel, and that which assists in the working of the attraction to evil is called the devil. If we respond to the attraction for good we are following the Holy Spirit, and if we respond to the attraction for* evil we are following Satan. The real significance of the belief in angels is, therefore, that we should follow the inviter to good or the attraction for good which is placed within us.

SIGNIFICANCE OF BELIEF

The above remarks explain not only the significance of a Sufi's belief in angels, but also the meaning underlying the very word belief. Belief, according to Sufism, is not only a conviction of the truth of a given proposition, but it is essentially the acceptance of a proposition as a basis for action. As already shown, the proposition of the existence of the devils is as true as that of the existence of the angels; but while belief in angels is again and again mentioned as part of a Moslem mystic's faith, nowhere are we required to believe in the devils. Both facts are equally true, and the Quran speaks on numerous occasions of the mis-leadings and insinuations of the devils, but while it requires a belief in angels it does not require a belief in the devils.

If belief in angels were only an equivalent to an admission of their existence, a belief in devils was an equal necessity. But it is not so. The reason is that whereas we are required to accept and follow the call of the inviter to good, we are not required to follow the call of the inviter to evil ; and, therefore, as the former gives us a basis for action which the latter does not, we believe in the angels but not in the devils. It would thus be seen that the principles of belief enumerated above as given in the Quran are real principles each of which serves as a basis for action, and no other belief is known to Sufism. These mystic beliefs are not formulae for repetition, but formulae for action. The word Allah — Arabic word for God — indicates that Being who possesses all the perfect attributes, and when a Sufi is required to believe in Allah, he is really required to make himself the possessor of all those attributes of perfection. He has to set before himself the highest and purest ideal that the heart of man can conceive, and to make his conduct conform to that ideal. The belief in Divine revelation makes him accept and imitate all the good that is met with in the lives of righteous men, and the belief in the hereafter is equivalent to the recognition of that most important principle of the responsibility of man : his accountability for his actions.

Thus the Islamic Sufi beliefs are really axiomatic truths upon which are based the moral and spiritual aspects of the life of man.

6.3 PRACTICE AND PRINCIPLES OF ACTION

Next we take the practical side of the faith of the Moslem Sufi. As has already been said, Sufism actions are as essentially a component part of Cult as belief. In this respect this philosophy occupies a middle position between religions which have ignored the practical side altogether and those which bind their followers to a very minute ritual. It sees the necessity of developing the faculties of man by giving general directions, and then leaves ample scope for the individual to exercise his judiciousness. Without a strong practical character any philosophical ideal is likely to pass into mere idealism, and it will cease to exercise influence on the practical life of man.

The precepts of Islamic Sufism which inculcate duties towards God and duties towards man are based on that deep knowledge of the human nature which cannot be possessed but by the author of that nature. They cover the whole range of the different grades of the development of men, and are thus adapted to the requirements of different peoples. In the Quran are found guiding rules for the ordinary man of the world, as well as the philosopher, and for communities in the lowest grade of civilization as well as the highly civilized nations of the world. Practicality is the keynote of its precepts, and thus the same universality which marks its principles of faith is met with in its practical ordinances, suiting as they do the requirements of all ages and nations.

FASTING

Fasting is also enjoined by the Highest Book of the Sufis as a means to the purification of the soul. Fasting, however, does not mean abstaining from food only, but from every kind of evil. In fact, abstention from food is only a step to make a man realize that if he can, in obedience to God, abstain from that which is otherwise lawful, how much more necessary is it that he should abstain from the evil ways which are forbidden by God ! That moral elevation is the object of this institution is clearly stated in the Quran, which says : “ Fasting has been enjoined upon you . . . that you may learn to guard yourself against evil ” (ii. 183).

PILGRIMAGE

The pilgrimage to Mecca represents the last stage in spiritual advancement of a Sufi. It represents the stage in which all the lower connections of man are entirely cut off, and, completely surrendering himself to Divine will, he sacrifices all his interests for His sake. The true lover finds his highest satisfaction in sacrificing his very heart and soul for the beloved one's sake, and the circuit round the house of God is an emblem or external manifestation of it. The pilgrim shows by the external act of making a circuit round the Ka'ba that the fire of Divine love has been kindled within his heart, and like the true lover he makes circuits round the house of his beloved one He shows, in fact, that he has given up his own will and completely surrendered it to that of his beloved Master, and that he has sacrificed all his interests for His sake.

In the general assembly at the Mountain Arafat the pilgrims are commanded to remember Allah and ask pardon, for God is gracious and merciful.

It will thus be seen that all these Sufi precepts are only meant for the moral elevation of man. They do not lay down any institution which may be said to be the meaningless worship of God; the aim and object of all the precepts it gives is the purification of the heart, so that thus purified man may enjoy communion with the Holy One who is the fountain-head of all purity man's duties to humanity.

The second branch of the Islamic Sufism relates to man's duties towards man, but it should be borne in mind that both kinds of precepts are very closely inter-related. The moral elevation of man is its theme and the chief object which it has in view throughout, and all its precepts are only meant to raise humanity step by step to the highest moral elevation to which man can attain. "The one who violates his brother's right is not a believer in the Unity of God," is a teaching which deserves to be written in letters of gold.

THE BROTHERHOOD OF SUFISM

In the first place, Sufism abolishes all invidious class distinctions. "Surely the noblest among you in the sight of Allah is he who is the most righteous of you," sounds a death-knell to all superiority or inferiority based on rigid caste and social distinctions. Mankind is but a family, according to the Quran, which says : " O men, we have created you all of a male and female and then made you tribes and families that you may know each other; surely the noblest among you in the sight of Allah is he who is the most careful of his duties "His Cult, so professes a Moslem Sufi, thus lays down the basis of a vast brotherhood in which all men and women, to whatever tribe or nation or caste they may belong and whatever be their profession or rank in society, the wealthy and the poor, have equal rights, and in which no one can trample upon the rights of his brother. In this brotherhood all members should treat each other as members of the same family. The slave is to be clothed with the clothing and fed with the food of his master, and he is not to be treated as a low or vile person. And this great brotherhood did not remain a brotherhood in

theory, but became an actual living force by the noble example of the Prophet and his worthy successors and companions. The strict rule of brotherhood is laid down in the following words in a saying of the Prophet, the first Sufi : “No one of you is a believer in God until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself.”

Check your answers –

1. Write about brotherhood in Sufism?

2. Write about practices in Sufism?

6.4 LET’S SUM UP

The mystics drew their vocabulary largely from the Qur’ān, which for Muslims contains all divine wisdom and has to be interpreted with ever-increasing insight. In the Qur’ān, mystics found the threat of the Last Judgment, but they also found the statement that God “loves them and they love him,” which became the basis for love-mysticism. Strict obedience to the religious law and imitation of the Prophet were basic for the mystics. By rigid introspection and mental struggle, the mystic tried to purify his baser self from even the smallest signs of selfishness, thus attaining *ikhlaṣ*, absolute purity of intention and act. *Tawakkul* (trust in God) was sometimes practiced to such an extent that every thought of tomorrow was considered irreligious. “Little sleep, little talk, little food” were fundamental; fasting became one of the most important preparations for the spiritual life.

The central concern of the Sufis, as of every Muslim, was *tawhīd*, the witness that “there is no deity but God.” This truth had to be realized in the existence of each individual, and so the expressions differ: early

Sufism postulated the approach to God through love and voluntary suffering until a unity of will was reached; Junayd spoke of “recognizing God as He was before creation”; God is seen as the One and only actor; He alone “has the right to say ‘I.’” Later, tawhīd came to mean the knowledge that there is nothing existent but God, or the ability to see God and creation as two aspects of one reality, reflecting each other and depending upon each other (waḥdat al-wujūd).

6.5 KEYWORDS

1. Tawakkul - Tawakkul in the Arabic language, is the word for the Islamic concept of reliance on God or "trusting in God's plan". It is seen as "perfect trust in God and reliance on Him alone." It can also be referred to as God-consciousness.

2. Tawhid - Tawhid is the indivisible oneness concept of monotheism in Islam. Tawhid is the religion's central and single-most important concept, upon which a Muslim's entire faith rests. It unequivocally holds that God is One and Single; Tawhid constitutes the foremost article of the Muslim profession of faith.

6.6 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Describe the concept of Sufism.
2. Describe the Practice of Sufism.

6.7 SUGGESTED READING

Islamic Sufism by Sirdar Iqbal Ali Shah

6.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Section 6.4
2. Section 6.4

UNIT 7 – SUFI – RELATIONS WITH OTHER RELIGIOUS GROUPS

STRUCTURE

- 7.0 Objective
- 7.1 Introduction
- 7.2 Sufi Relationship With Other Religions
- 7.3 Sufism In India
- 7.4 Let's Sum Up
- 7.5 Keywords
- 7.6 Questions For Preview
- 7.7 Suggested Readings
- 7.8 Answers to check your progress

7.0 OBJECTIVE

To learn about the the link of Sufism with other religions

To learn about Sufism in India

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Sufism, at the outset, began as a movement of homogeneous unity. It does not go back to a single founder but most of the Sufis are convinced that this Sufi movement was inaugurated by the Republican Caliphs - Abu Bakr and Ali. Sufism has indeed grown out of a general climate of profound religious awareness and striving which was stimulated by the Islamic principles and later companions of Sufi founders. It is clear that the strong desire of many Muslims of the first generation to maintain an

intimate relationship with God - a God who wanted to be remembered and obeyed-triggered an attitude towards life which developed into the vast stream of Sufi activities and experience. The particular followers of Sufism after it was started could not be identified as the very first representatives of that particular type of Islamic religiousness which finally produced the Sufi movement. But Sufis became more and more conscious of their Islamic identity. As it happened with most of their masters, so it did with the disciples. Some of the early pure Muslim saints were known as zuhhad or more specifically as nussak, which term was mentioned in the ancient religious literature of Islam. Since the status of hermit was not encouraged in the Muslim society, the Sufis remained saints but leading a life of Muslim morality. Some moral and spiritual habits and convictions like embracing God while living in the world, believing that the worship liberates the worshipper and makes room for moral freedom, etc attest a very strong and overwhelming experience of nearness to God. These spiritual items remind one of the visualizing techniques of Christian monks whose aim has been to live concretely through visualization.

7.2 SUFISM AND OTHER RELIGIONS

Since the knowledge of God is present in all human beings and in all religions, words speaking of God kindle love and ecstasy through the scent which is in them, although their mystical inner meaning is to some extent intellectually grasped. Rumi, the Sufi saint, whose tomb is in Turkey arrived at the conclusion that silent communion between Muslims and adherents of other religions is the real communion in God and there is no more perception of other religions as all religions are found to be only ways to God who is none of these ways. So all ways are legitimate, perhaps even necessary, but the target is beyond the ways. There are servants of God in all religions who lead a life of unusual piety and have profound religious experiences. They are referred to as worshippers or "men fearing God". They do not belong to a particular religion. The followers of a religion enjoy divine freedom and the assurance that God provides for all their needs is

Notes

part of this freedom. Total freedom in God places religious men above all problems of sustenance and this is the fruit of faith. In Rumi's language, the religion of Love is apart from all religions and for lovers the only religion and creed is God. The heart of a worshipper can become filled with any self-disclosure of God, be it a non-Islamic one or Islam. Each thing in the universe is at its right place and so is every religion, a manifestation of a Divine name. There is a positive link between God and all religions but solely as announcements of the full Revelation to come.

Stating that God has tied the practice of dhikr meaning remembrance of God by oral recitation, Ibn Sabin, a Sufi of thirteenth century expounded that this practice is applicable to all religions. Hindus, Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians and Buddhists are alluded to in a certain order which is rather typical of this treatise on dhikr. A worshipper of Hinduism remembers a particular God by pronouncing His name in a temple or homes. When the Hindus start to build a temple they must recite the name of God in frequent utterances and place the names on the site of the building to mark a pious duty. The God-world relationship has been well maintained by the worshippers of all religions. Shaikh Abdur Rahman Chishti, the Sufi interpreter of the Bhagvad-Gita believed the crucial point of Krishna's teachings and said that people should hold pleasure and pain, profit and loss, victory and defeat to be the same, they also should brace themselves for the fight and they will bring no evil on themselves. The wisdom of religion is revealed to them if they listen how to practise it and if they are controlled by the soul, they will put away the bondage that is inherent in all works. The philosophy of wahdat l wujud is accepted by all religions but it is accepted in Islam only if God is one but nothing who is Allah and the God-world relationship is believed in terms of the self-manifestation through this philosophy. All religions treat human beings without discrimination from one individual to another. The bounties of God - Sun, rain, earth, and soon do not discriminate the children of God. This is what Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya's relations with non-Muslims were determined. He said that every people had a religion and house of worship and a

separate identity. This remark, inspired by tolerance, reflects the true spirit of medieval Indian culture. It was rooted in the conviction that religions are different paths to the same goal. True tolerance is not a concession but the overflowing of a spiritually vigorous character which can tolerate and appreciate all forms of faith. Love and amity in social relationship, tolerance in religious approach and concern for the welfare of all men irrespective of caste or creed were the ideals that were dear to his heart and his relations with the Hindus were based upon them. He had cordial parleys with the yogis of Hinduism and exchanged his views on reality and discipline of saintly persons. Akbar, the Mughal emperor, visited the most famous Hindu yogi of his times, Gosain in 1601 and his son Jahangir visited him twice and extolled Gosain's virtues and ascetic eminence. Most significant was the gradual change in the pattern of Sufi thinking about Kabir whose way of religious attitudes had become famous throughout northern India in his own lifetime. Abu'l Fazl, the court poet of Akbar, ascribed to him innumerable religious truths and doings. Owing to his own catholicity and lofty vision he considered both Muslims and Hindus his friends and when he died Brahmins wished to cremate him and Muslims to bury him. Both Konark in Orissa as well as Ayodhya claimed that Kabir was buried there. The accounts in both the places call Kabir a muwahhid literally meaning unitarian. A fifteenth century reformer in religious and social principles, Kabir was one of the perfect gnostics of India. He composed a large number of Hindi verses relating to tauhid. Both Muslims and others considered him as belonging to their own respective faith but Kabir himself was far removed from them all. He was sometime a disciple of Makhdum Shaikh Bhikh and Shaikh Taqi bin Shaikh Ramazan Haik, the two Sufi saints of his period. Even after he became a disciple of Ramanand, Kabir was known as pir-i-kabir among the Muslims and Bhagat Kabir among the Hindus.

Dara Shukuh one of the four sons of Mughal emperor Shajahan was a learned and rather advanced Sufi of the Qadiriyya order and carried interest for other religions to its logical conclusions. He upheld the Sufi tradition but tried to penetrate as deeply as possible into

Notes

the secrets of Hindu religious lore. The outcome of his efforts is a most fascinating booklet "Majma al bahrain" which means "confluent of the two rivers" - Islam and Hinduism. Having mastered the tenets of Hinduism he arrives at the conclusion that Hinduism and Islam preach to attain enlightenment towards God. He was happy to follow the tradition of his Hindu friends and he was clearly inclined to receive the Hindu sages into the Sufi fold.

When he met one, Baba Lal, a well informed Vaishnavite mendicant, he held a conversation with him as regards problems associated with asceticism, spirit of life and the creation of human beings. He was satisfied with the answers for which he asked questions to Baba Lal on Hindu mythology and philosophy. He underwent the Persian translations of Sanskrit works on Hindu religion done during the period of Akbar and Jahangir and these quite possibly aroused his interest in Hindu philosophy and mysticism. Determination or self-manifestation which Dara Shukuh believed is either purity or impurity. But self-manifestation with purity is likened to the seed of a tree which produces a plant out of itself, at the same time becoming reabsorbed into its structure. This, he expressed after studying the Hindu revealed works and their translations. He believed that his own translations would open new doors to mystics interested in the wahdat I wujud, Hindus and Muslims alike.

The Sufi way of proselytization is convincing. The fame of their ability to perform miracles and supernatural feats helped them to attract disciples both among Hindus and Muslim adherents to other Sufi orders. Not only many from other faiths became the followers of Islam, but the followers extended from here to eastern islands of Java and Sumatra transforming these regions into Shattariyya and Qadiriyya orders. The khanqahs more specially Qadiriyya and Chishtiyya remained significant centres to receive the new Muslims who came to the Islamic fold.

One Qadiriyya khanqah in Bihar had been more actively engaged to welcome the new converts from the places which were sparsely populated by the Muslims. The Naqshbandiyya khanqah of khwaja

Khawand Mahmud, a Sufi saint in Kashmir, was another centre of new comers to Islam. Of the Hindus who called on Chishtiyya khanqahs for training in dhikr, the most likely to embrace Islam were the educated members of the Kayastha class whose knowledge of Sufism was already extensive and whose previous study of the works of the Sufis like Rumi had filled them with enthusiasm for Sufi ideals. In the towns and villages founded by the Muslim zamindars, the artisans and cultivators were encouraged to settle there because of the influence of the Sufis and the zamindars who had founded such places. As religious leaders of small groups of Islamic town and village communities, the mystics were more exposed to contacts with Hindus who might seek their help both for redress against the high-handedness of local zamindars and government officials. They might not have hesitated to accept and change their proteges to Islam. Instances of voluntary conversion of tribes following the Islamization of their leaders was a common occurrence in medieval Indian history. However it was the blessing from the tombs of famous Sufis which attracted even larger groups of Muslims and Hindus than the khanqahs of mystics during their own lifetime. All the Sufis with the exception of very few tried to perceive and understand other religious ideals. It is true that they were conditioned by the Islamic convictions but they did not talk against the beliefs of other faiths.

SUFISM AND CHRISTIANITY

This simple expression of the Sufi way demonstrates how one can seek Allah while remaining actively engaged in life, allowing for continued spiritual growth and opportunities to practice awareness, generosity, nonattachment, and love. The beginning of Sufism, as with the other mystical approaches, is somewhat shrouded in mystery. Since Islam is a continuation of the monotheistic religion of Judaism and Christianity, the Judaic and Christian mystics might be viewed as early Sufis. Sufism in its proper sense, however, exists within Islam. When the prophet Muhammad died, there was conflict between the primarily Arab and the primarily non-Arab followers of Islam. The primarily Arab Muslims emphasized the teachings of Muhammad's colleagues, and became known as sunni, whereas the primarily non-Arab Muslims followed Ali,

Notes

the son of Muhammad, and became known as shi'ah. These two groups drifted apart, and their disagreements became serious, to say the least. Those socio-political differences continue today, and provide much of the basis for the continuing violence in the Middle East. However, a third group also arose, a group that ignored the sociopolitical arguments of the sunni and shi'ah, and focused instead on inner prayer and devotion to Allah. These were the first Sufis.

Practice and understanding in Sufism goes through four stages, with each one building upon the others: understanding the teachings of Islam, practicing Sufism by making the teachings part of one's everyday life, discovering the Truth (or realizing the inner meaning of the teachings and practices), and finally, having the deep level of inner knowing, or superior wisdom, that transcends the Truth. The great Sheikh Ibn El-Arabi has described these stages as a progression from "yours and mine" through "mine is yours and yours is mine" and then there is "no mine and no yours," and finally there is "no me and no you".

Similar to Christianity, Sufism considers love to be of utmost importance in transforming the self. As we pursue a path of love in our lives, God begins to reach out and draw us in toward the divine presence. If we are willing to surrender to God, we will awaken and be taken in by Him. To assist with this loving pursuit of God, a number of great Sufi teachers have also been poets. Most notable among these Sufi teachers are Jalaluddin Rumi and Omar Khayyam. In addition to his poetry, Rumi is recognized as the founder of the Order of the Whirling Dervishes. The whirling dance that distinguishes this group of Sufis is intended to help the Dervish achieve religious ecstasy, and it is far more ritualized than might be apparent at first sight. As strange as such a practice may seem in the Western world, the practice was apparently used on at least one occasion by the renowned St. Francis of Assisi, who lived at the same time as Rumi (Shah, 1971). Omar Kayyam is most famous for a collection of verses known as The Rubaiyat. This strange and deeply symbolic poem almost defies interpretation, particularly for those raised in the Western world, unfamiliar with Sufi mysticism. The renowned Indian guru Paramahansa Yogananda, who also made an extensive study of the relationship between Christian gospel and Yoga,

has provided a marvellous interpretation of The Rubaiyat. For example, consider verse VII:

Come, fill the Cup, and in the Fire of Spring

The Winter Garment of Repentance fling:

The Bird of Time has but a little way

To fly - and Lo! the Bird is on the Wing.

Translation by Edward Fitzgerald, reprinted in Yogananda, 1994

In this verse, fill the cup refers to filling one's consciousness (as one does during meditation), in the warmth of spiritual enthusiasm (the fire of spring). One should set aside regret caused by unfulfilled desires and disillusioning sensory indulgences (the winter garment of repentance fling). The bird of time represents fleeting, ever-changing human life, and it is flying away, leaving little time to establish purpose in one's life. In other words, don't waste your life worrying about, or punishing yourself for, either the past or your own shortcomings. Life is short, and there is a great spiritual truth to be discovered!

As with the Christian mystics, there have been many well-known Sufi women, including a number of Black women. The following is an amusing story that both teaches a Sufi lesson and demonstrates that a woman can be every bit as faith-filled and wise as any man:

Maymuna was reputed to be her brother's equal in asceticism, piety and reliance on God. Ahmad Ebn Salem recounts the story of a man who went to see Ebrahim Khawass. When he knocked on the door, he was met by Maymanu, Ebrahim's sister, who asked his name and what he wanted. He introduced himself and asked for Ebrahim Khawass.

"He has gone out," she told him.

"When will he return?"

Maymuna replied, "How can someone who has surrendered his life to another know when he is returning?"

GURU WORSHIP IN SUFI SECT

Notes

In Indian tradition the preceptor or the Guru occupies a highly important place in the spiritual life of an individual. The highest goal of education and learning being the attainment of Mokṣa or salvation, the constant guidance and direction of the Guru was absolutely essential. A student seeking higher learning was to choose a proper Guru who would lead him from darkness to light and not from darkness to further darkness. The Guru is a spiritual father of the student and he was responsible not only for imparting knowledge but for building up of the whole character and the development of the full personality of the student and make him fit for the discharge of his personal, family, social and spiritual obligations. Therefore, there is no wonder, that the Guru was God himself for the student.

These ideas have been represented throughout our literature from the Vedic times downwards. As time passed by, the need of the Guru was felt more and more to educate the people, to reform them, to make them conscious of their duties and enable them to equip themselves in a fitting manner. With the growth of Bhakti-marga which was more appealing to the common man the role and responsibility of the Guru increased and in every religious sect we see the importance given to the Guru and he is occupying a prime place. This is true of all the periods including the period of our study and it is true also of all the religious sects including the Muslim religion. We shall try to trace this Guru cult here since it was predominant in the period under study in the Hindu as well as Islamic traditions. In ancient India, Guru was the proper person who could make the disciple understand the purpose of life. For education in those days was imparted not exclusively for finding a career or vocation in life for a boy but also for ensuring his spiritual growth. Thus the Guru in ancient India became very important for one and all. In fact, the Guru had to assume all responsibility of the learner throughout his academic career. He became the inspiration behind the student's life-achievements. The dictionary meaning of a Guru is: "A spiritual teacher; a Brahmin teacher of Vedic lore; one who had reached the highest spiritual knowledge and has the capacity to impart his realization to those who seek his wisdom".

The traditional praise of the Guru often quoted by all Sanskrit writers, especially of Sankara's school reads:

Akhanda-mandalākaram

Vyaptam yena caracaram

Tat-padam darsitam yena

Tasmai śri gurave namah

Ajñāna na-timiandhasya

Jñānanjana-Salākāya

Caksurunmilitam yena

Tasmai śri gurave namah

Swami Sivananda offers the following tribute to the ideal Guru: Guru is the torch-bearer of wisdom. Guru, Iswar, Brahman are one; Salute him first before you salute Hari, Because it is he who has taken you to Hari

In the ancient period there were many grades or types among Gurus. To name some of them – Acharya, Srotriya, Mahasrotriya, Kulaguru, Sraman, Tapasa, Vatsana, etc. Even though there were many types of teachers religious and secular, the general term to denote the teacher, as commonly used, was “Guru”. Guru as a teacher was revered right from the Vedic times, but how the concept of Avatarhood has come to be mixed up with the Guru Cult deserves a closer study. During the Vedic period the Guru acquired the utmost importance. He played a very important role in guiding disciples and in leading them towards the right moral values in life. He was held in high regard as he was the only person perfect in his Vedic chanting and way of life. Hence the student had to live in harmony with the teacher. The Vedic studies pertained to the accurate pronunciation and recitation of the Vedas. Thus the oral method of teaching was the only way to master the recitation of the Vedas. The help of the Guru, therefore, was inevitable. For the explanation of the intricate passages and for giving an insight into the subject of study, the assistance of the Guru was essential. For the attainment of Brahma Vidya, the highest knowledge, the Guru was the only source. Thus the student had to cultivate utmost reverence

Notes

for the Guru. He was to worship him as he would worship the God. It has been said even the gods sought the discipleship of the guru for acquiring knowledge. There is a passage in the Chanogyapanishad which states the Indra and Virochana went to Prajapati to acquire from him the knowledge of Atma.

It is well known fact that the Vedas in those days were not written down. Hence all the Gurus took to oral teaching. "Study was conceived of as discipleship, and the student owed the utmost reverence and obedience to his mentor (Guru)" who, in the ideal case, instructed him without fee in the Vedas and certain ancillary subjects, such as phonetics, etymology, and grammar. Memorization was a major aim, with an emphasis upon the recall of unquestioned knowledge. The tradition of giving utmost importance to the Guru continues in the Epic period and so in the early and later historical periods as well. In the Tantric and Yoga systems also the Guru occupied a prime position. The Guptasadhana Tantra for example states that Guru is the combination of all gods like Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara. Kularnava Tantra also extols Guru as God himself. The Yoga system also holds guru as the God for it is said the Guru may be having a human form physically but the Guru in him is God Ishwara only. Moreover, in the Virasaiva sect, which was quite prominent in the period of our study, also Guru occupied a supreme position as an instrument of salvation for the devotee.

As remarked by Nandimath: "The reverence to the Guru, in the Virasaiva has no limit. He is considered to be worthy of more reverence than is due to Siva, the supreme, because it is he who leads the soul to unity with Siva." In this sect there are three kinds of Gurus: Diksa-Guru, the initiator, Siksa-Guru, the preacher and Moksa-Guru, the liberator. A traditional statement in Kannada goes to say that there is no salvation unless one becomes a slave of the Guru (Guruvina Gulamanaguvatanaka Boreyadanna Mukti).

Similar trend is noticed in the later sects that became popular in the period under study. The Mahanubhavas for example gave utmost importance to Guru. According to their philosophy Mokṣa

can be attained only through the Guru. Similar is the case with the Dattatreya Sampradaya. According to this sampradaya Guru is the incarnation of God and he comes down to earth to uplift the devotees. They wander freely as Avadhutas or Faqirs without any tie of caste or creed. The two incarnations of the Lord Dattatreya which in historical times had formed the main subject of the Gurucharitra are (1) Sripada Srivallabha born in Pithapura on the banks of the river Krishna in eastern India and (2) Narasimha Saraswathi, whose sandals are worshipped even today at Gangapur in Karnataka in the old district of Narasobawadi.

The work is full of stories and legends with instances of hundreds of miracles wrought by these avatars of Lord Dattatreya, wherein sick are cured, barren women get children, dead bodies are revived and so forth. Jayachamaraj Wadaiyar explains in his book, Dattatreya The Way and the Goal that a real preceptor is one who does not show or boast of himself as the knower and preacher of the truth. He portrays Dattatreya as „the preceptor of preceptors“.

The cult of Dattatreya is not Vaishnavite, but a conglomeration of Saiva and Sakta cults. In this cult Guru is the dominant personality. He is known as „Lila Murthi“. It is interesting to note that almost similar or even identical importance is given to the Guru in the Sufi sect as well which was quite predominant in the Muslim kingdoms. Sufism is one of the main sects of Islam. The word Sufi means literally „woolen“ and by extension „wearer of wool“. In order to mould the followers of Sufism as perfect devotees of God, Sufism laid stress mainly on the following principles:

1. Dhikr (Rememberance of God).
2. Murqaraba (absorption in God).
3. Fana (annihilation in God).
4. Khauf (Fear of God).
5. Raza (Hope of God).

Notes

Any Murid (Disciple) who was initiated into Sufism has undergo all these stages of education. And in this process of learning, a Pīr (Master) is indispensably needed. The importance of Pīr is so high in Sufism that without his assistance, one cannot become a real Sufi. It has been observed that Murid needs that guidance of his Pīr at every step. In fact every step in the progress of Murid depends upon his Pīr. Even though Sufis do not have a ceremony as in Hinduism, the initiation of a disciple into the fold is as important as Pīr himself. D. M. Matheson in his translation writes: "Initiation generally takes the form of a pact ((bay'ah) between the candidate and the spiritual master (almurshid) who represents the prophet. This pact implies perfect submission of the disciple to the master in all that concerns spiritual life and it can never be dissolved unilaterally by the will of the disciple. "In Sufism the relation between the Pīr and the disciple is so intimate that, the disciple has to surrender himself completely to his master. In fact it is this surrender of the disciple would enable him to attain salvation. Since the sacred relationship of a Murid to his Pīr, has been exclusively emphasized in Sufism, it implies how one should be very cautious in the selection of a Pīr. Once the master is selected the disciple has to follow him and stick to him at all times. He should not stray away from the Guru in hard times. Come what may, he should follow the master and formulate his path to salvation. He would be committing a great sin if he disobeyed the master. Even if sometimes the master went wrong, the disciple was not expected to point an accusing finger at him. The relationship between them was considered so efficacious that, if a disciple were to leave his master, he would not be accepted by any other Pīr in Sufism.

In the first place, the Pīr in Sufism is to be a very experienced personage. He should have already experienced the divine ecstasy. Since he was the person to lead the disciple till the end of his journey, he had to be aware of the pros and cons of the path, to help the disciple, if necessary, in his times of suffering. Moreover, he had to possess the capacity to explain share the divine experience with the disciple. In Sufism, the high stand of the Pīr made it incumbent on the disciple to follow him in all things, odd or good, what is most conspicuous is that,

the disciple was to meditate on his master's form. The disciple when he was practicing the process of Dhikror Zikror remembrance of God, had to concentrate on the image of his Pīr. In fact, it is said that the disciple would reach the state of visualizing the divine light or listen to the divine sound only when he perfected the process of stabilizing his concentration on the image of his master. In its true sense, at first, Godhood was only attributed to the Guru or Pīr, during the time of Jalaluddin Rumi. His acts were considered to be God's acts.

So much was the implicit adoration that sometimes even when the Pīr had committed a mistake, it was hailed as a miracle. It has been described as Līlā or understandable and thaumaturgic activity of the teacher. An interesting incident can be mentioned here which reveals the degree of the reverence shown to a Pīr in Sufism. In Minoqui Arin, Shams Tabriz met one of his disciples. The disciple, on seeing him, is overwhelmed with ecstasy and greets the Pīr with these words: "La ila illah Shams Uddin Rasul Allah" (There is no God beside Him and Shams is His Vice-Regent). People at that time, hearing this statement rushed towards the disciple to stone him. At that moment Shams intervened and corrected him by saying: "Say, La-illah il Allah Muhammad Rasul Allah" (There is no God but He and Muhammad is His Vice-Regent), for you can also call me by the name Muhammad.

Shi'ahs were the first to start the practice of worshipping the Pīr as God. Later this was adopted by Sufis. In fact this practice acquired a greater prominence in Sufism than Shiaism. For Shi'ahs surrender to God meant supplication to the Pīr Imam, and a visit to the Imam was considered to be as good as a pilgrimage to Mecca (Haj). Even though this practice of showing utmost reverence to the Guru was in existence from the beginning, it came to be more prominent in the medieval times, and developed into a cult. This was because, the devotion towards "a spiritual director who is human yet divine, who is a link in the hierarchical chain of preceptors (Pīr, sheikh, Murshid or Qutb)," had reached the highest point in Sufism. The Guru cult developed independently from very early times in the Hindu religion. But because of the interaction between the followers of that religion and

Notes

the followers of Sufism in the region and the period under study it is quite possible that the Sufi concept of the guru did influence the Hindu concept in the contemporary period. This is strengthened by the fact that Hindus and Muslims have faith in dargahs and offer worship in the dargahs. The cult of worshipping the Gurus in the Sufi sect evidently led to another practice, namely, the attribution of supernatural miracles to the Sufi saints in South India.

From the mere priestly mediator between man and God, the Guru ultimately came to be equated with the supreme God. His human role was almost obliterated; and he came to be looked upon as wholly divine. We have some references to anecdotes of Sufi saints performing supernatural feats or miracles. Supernatural powers like prophecy and endurance were claimed naturally by the Sufis as a result of physical deprivation, to the illiterate man it might have appeared as adequate proof of rapport with God. The main motive behind the performance of miracles by the Sufis was attraction and conversion of people into Islam. The Sufi saints appear to have realized the fact that the Indian masses could easily be attracted only by their faith in such supernatural feats. And so they practiced it, and achieved some success. Indian people must have thought that these Sufi saints had gained some divine powers which could bestow some comfort on them and remove their sorrows in life in a miraculous way. This is substantiated by the findings of R. Soma Reddy who writes: "The saints were generally believed to have influence with God, and the ability to perform miracles like possessing extraordinary powers of blessing, healing and protective effect. Anything touched by them and handed over to the people was considered efficacious. People used to approach them seeking solution for their problems both spiritual and material."

The masses held Sufi saints in high regard as they thought they had access to even the supreme God and could talk to Him on their behalf. Since everything touched by the saint became sacred and purified, people usually brought many material objects which might be kept with them as talismans, after purification by the Sufi master. The adoration of Sufi saints led people only to worship them not only when they were alive,

but also after they were dead, because people of those times believed that the saints, though dead physically, were alive in spirit-form looking after the welfare of the people with all strength and certainty. This shows how people were mostly misled even regarding worship during the period under study. It can be conjectured that, since people were under the Muslim rule and since the Muslim saints were ascribed some miraculous powers, people might have transferred their devotion to tombs in place of temples, whose sanctity was not so fresh in their minds. For instance we might take the Babayya (Baba Fakhruddin) Dargah of Penukonda where Hindus and Muslims used to offer their prayers and this Dargah also received grants under the liberal patronage of the Vijayanagar rulers.

Besides this Soma Reddy also mentions many other Dargahs of different places, such as the Dargah of Baba Sharfuddin at Hyderabad which was credited to be the earliest Dargah in Andhra Pradesh, the Dargah of Kadi Zianuddin Multani and the Dargah of Syed Shah Jamal Bagdat at Warangal, the Dargah of Galib Shaheb at Rajkonda (Nalgonda dt.), the Dargah of Shah Ali Pasha etc. We have epigraphical reference to a Dargah of a Muslim saint, which received grants from the Vijayanagar kings. Even at this Dargah people of different communities got together to offer their obeisance to the venerated saint. An inscription from Penukonda ascribed to the reign of Venkata II records the regaining of some villages originally belonging to the Dargah of a Muslim saint namely Babanath. Actually these villages were granted by Vira Narasimha, Sadasiva and Venkata I. This Dargah received great veneration from the people for its astrological forecasts and prognostications.

Another tomb which attracted the attention of the people was the tomb of Syed Shah Mastan Vali at Guntakal, where both the Muslims and Hindus hold the saint in reverence. The main reason why these Dargahs or tombs became the shrines of common popular worship was, again the attitude of the people who flocked there only for material benefits in exchange for their prayers. The common people hoped to get children, hoped to get rid of incurable diseases, and thought their wishes would be fulfilled by offering their obeisance at these shrines. The popularity of

these Sufi saints gradually increased because, as people got benefits either material or spiritual, either real or imagined, from the worship of saints, their faith became firm and spread to the masses. Eventually this sort of deviation in devotional loyalty resulted in a gradual decrease in the importance attached to worship in Hindu temples. Because people seemingly gained some benefits from worship at tombs and Dargahs, they perhaps began to think that they could not get the same as readily from temple worship. The foregoing material is enough to show how the Muslim impact was of a far-reaching nature, how it percolated down to the teeming millions and affected their daily ways of worship by making them adopt some Islamic practices into their very elastic fabric of traditional Hinduism.

7.3 SUFISM IN INDIA

The advent of Sufism in India is said to be in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. One of the early Sufis of eminence, who settled in India, was Al-Hujwari who died in 1089, popularly known as Data Ganj Baksh (Distributor of Unlimited Treasure). In the beginning, the main centres of the Sufis were Multan and Punjab. By the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the Sufis had spread to Kashmir, Bihar, Bengal and the Deccan. It may be mentioned that Sufism had already taken on a definite form before coming to India. Its fundamental and moral principles, teachings and orders, system of fasting, prayers and practice of living in khanqahs had already been fixed. The Sufis came to India via Afghanistan on their own free will. Their emphasis upon a pure life, devotional love and service to humanity made them popular and earned them a place of honour in Indian society.

Abul Fazl while writing in the *Ain-i-Akbari* speaks of fourteen silsilahs of the Sufis. However, in this lesson we shall outline only some of the important ones. These silsilahs were divided into two types: Ba-shara and Be-shara. Ba-shara were those orders that followed the Islamic Law (Sharia) and its directives such as namaz and roza. Chief amongst these were the Chishti, Suhrawardi, Firdawsi, Qadiri and Naqshbandi silsilahs.

The be-shara silsilahs were not bound by the Sharia. The Qalandars belonged to this group.

The Chishti Silsilah

The Chishti order was founded in a village called Khwaja Chishti (near Herat). In India, the Chishti silsilah was founded by Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti (born c. 1142) who came to India around 1192. He made Ajmer the main centre for his teaching. He believed that serving mankind was the best form of devotion and therefore he worked amongst the downtrodden. He died in Ajmer in 1236. During Mughal times, Ajmer became a leading pilgrim centre because the emperors regularly visited the Sheikh's tomb. The extent of his popularity can be seen by the fact that even today, millions of Muslims and Hindus visit his argah for fulfilment of their wishes. Among his disciples were Sheikh Hamiduddin of Nagaur and Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki. The former lived the life of a poor peasant, cultivated land and refused Iltutmish's offer of a grant of villages. The khanqah of Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki was also visited by people from all walks of life. Sultan Iltutmish dedicated the Qutub Minar to this Saint. Sheikh Fariduddin of Ajodhan (Pattan in Pakistan) popularised the Chishti silsilah in modern Haryana and Punjab. He opened his door of love and generosity to all.

Baba Farid, as he was called, was respected by both Hindus and Muslims. His verses, written in Punjabi, are quoted in the Adi Granth. Baba Farid's most famous disciple Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya (1238-1325) was responsible for making Delhi an important centre of the Chishti silsilah. He came to Delhi in 1259 and during his sixty years in Delhi, he saw the reign of seven sultans. He preferred to shun the company of rulers and nobles and kept aloof from the state. For him renunciation meant distribution of food and clothes to the poor. Amongst his followers was the noted writer Amir Khusrau.

Another famous Chishti saint was Sheikh Nasiruddin Mahmud, popularly known as Nasiruddin Chirag-i-Dilli (The Lamp of Delhi). Following his death in 1356 and the lack of a spiritual successor, the disciples of the Chishti silsilah moved out towards eastern and southern India.

The Suhrawardi Silsilah

This silsilah was founded by Sheikh Shihabuddin Suhrawardi. It was established in India by Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya (1182-1262). He set up a leading khanqah in Multan, which was visited by rulers, high government officials and rich merchants. Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya openly took Iltutmish's side in his struggle against Qabacha and received from him the title Shaikhul Islam (Leader of Islam). It must be noted that unlike the Chishti saints, the Suhrawardis maintained close contacts with the state. They accepted gifts, jagirs and even government posts in the ecclesiastical department. The Suhrawardi silsilah was firmly established in Punjab and Sind. Besides these two silsilahs there were others such as the Firdawsi Silsilah, Shattari Silsilah, Qadiri Silsilah, Naqshbandi Silsilah.

The Sufi movement made a valuable contribution to Indian society. Like the Bhakti saints who were engaged in breaking down the barriers within Hinduism, the Sufis too infused a new liberal outlook within Islam. The interaction between early Bhakti and Sufi ideas laid the foundation for more liberal movements of the fifteenth century. Sant Kabir and Guru Nanak had preached a non-sectarian religion based on universal love.

The Sufis believed in the concept of Wahdat-ul-Wajud (Unity of Being) which was promoted by Ibn-i-Arabi (1165-1240). He opined that all beings are essentially one. Different religions were identical. This doctrine gained popularity in India. There was also much exchange of ideas between the Sufis and Indian yogis. In fact the hatha-yoga treatise Amrita Kundawas translated into Arabic and Persian. A notable contribution of the Sufis was their service to the poorer and downtrodden sections of society. While the Sultan and ulema often remained aloof from the day to day problems of the people, the Sufi saints maintained close contact with the common people. Nizamuddin Auliya was famous for distributing gifts amongst the needy irrespective of religion or caste. It is said that he did not rest till he had heard every visitor at the khanqah. According to the Sufis, the highest form of devotion to God was the service of mankind. They treated Hindus and Muslims alike. Amir

Khusrau said “Though the Hindu is not like me in religion, he believes in the same things that I do”.

The Sufi movement encouraged equality and brotherhood. In fact, the Islamic emphasis upon equality was respected far more by the Sufis than by the ulema. The doctrines of the Sufis were attacked by the orthodoxy. The Sufis also denounced the ulema. They believed that the ulema had succumbed to world by temptations and were moving away from the original democratic and egalitarian principles of the Quran. This battle between the orthodox and liberal elements continued throughout the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The Sufi saints tried to bring about social reforms too. Like the Bhakti saints, the Sufi saints contributed greatly to the growth of a rich regional literature.

Most of the Sufi saints were poets who chose to write in local languages. Baba Farid recommended the use of Punjabi for religious writings. Shaikh Hamiduddin, before him, wrote in Hindawi. His verses are the best examples of early Hindawi translation of Persian mystical poetry. Syed Gesu Daraz was the first writer of Deccani Hindi. He found Hindi more expressive than Persian to explain mysticism. A number of Sufi works were also written in Bengali. The most notable writer of this period was Amir Khusrau (1252-1325) the follower of Nizamuddin Auliya. Khusrau took pride in being an Indian and looked at the history and culture of Hindustan as a part of his own tradition. He wrote verses in Hindi (Hindawi) and employed the Persian metre in Hindi. He created a new style called sabaq-i-hindi. By the fifteenth century Hindi had begun to assume a definite shape and Bhakti saints such as Kabir used it extensively.

Check your progress –

1. Write about the different Sufi orders in India.

2. Write about Sufi movement in India.

7.4 LET'S SUM UP

The background of a popular conception of Sufism as equivalent to 'Islamic esotericism' by tracing two different but sometimes confluent currents: reifications of Sufism within Western romanticist and modern environments, and the approach to it in Islamic reformist movements. A further aim is to nuance and problematize such understandings, making use of examples from both historical and contemporary Sufism. Finally, the article briefly discusses possible pros and cons related to the interbreeding of Islamic Studies and the academic studies of Western and Eastern religions.

7.5 KEYWORDS

Wali - (plural auliya) or friend of God was a sufi who claimed proximity to Allah, acquiring His Grace (barakat) to perform miracles (karamat)

Charkhanama- Song set to the rhythm of spinning wheel.

7.6 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Write about the link of Sufism with Christianity.
2. Describe Sufism in India.

7.7 SUGGESTED READING

Islamist Sufism by Sardar Iqbal Ali Shah

7.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Section 7.4
2. Section 7.4