

Vidya Bhawan Balika Vidyapith, LKR.

Class-7th, sub. – Social Science

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Ch9 Reaching God through Devotion

Medieval period saw the emergence and blending of many cultures. With the arrival of the Turks, Sufi movement influenced both the Hindus & the Muslims. Bhakti movement also exist.

Impact of the spread of Bhakti Movement in South India.

The bhakti movement began in South India in the 7th century by the Alvar saints who worshipped Lord Vishnu and the Nayanar saints who worshipped Lord Shiva. They believed that God can be reached only through true love, devotion & complete self-surrender. The Bhakti movement rejected caste system.

The Alvars & Nayanars, both reached out to people of all castes and classes including artisans, cultivators & even the people who were regarded as untouchables. The Alvars and Nayanars also attracted many female devotees. These women devotees were courageous & against rigid social norms & became a part of these bhakti movements.

Alvars & Nayanars gave no importance to expensive rituals & ceremonies. People from any caste including the untouchables could join the movement.

They sang devotional song in praise of the deity which touched the hearts of one and all.

Other great religious teachers of South India was Shankara, who was born in 9th century in Kerala. He was a devotee of Lord Shiva and is known as great because he helped in the revival of Hinduism. His philosophy came to be known as Advaita Philosophy. Shankara is also known as Shankaracharya. Shankaracharya established four Mathas or centres of learning and worship at Badrinath, Puri, Dwarka and Shringeri in the four direction in India which is important pilgrimage centres.

A famous bhakti Saint of South India was Ramanuja, born in Tamilnadu. He preached the message of intense devotion to Lord Vishnu. He believes the equality of all human beings. Another Bhakti Saint Madhavacharya

Who lived in the 13th century in Karnataka popularised the worship of Lord Krishna.

Another branch of Bhakti saint was Basavanna in Karnataka.

Bhakti Movement in Maharashtra

Bhakti Movement spread here from 13th to 17th century. Bhakti saints like Namdev, Eknath, Tukaram and Janshwar composed simple bhakti songs in Marathi. These saints worshipped a form of Lord Vishnu called Vitthala & believed that God resides in the hearts of all people, of all

Castes & classes & can be reached through selfless devotion.

Some Other categories of bhakti saints like Nathapanthis, Siddhacharis & yogis spoke about renouncing or giving up the world. Through meditation, yogasanas and breathing exercises we can achieve the universal power.

Questions to be solved

- 1. Who were Alvars?**
- 2. Who were Nayanars?**
- 3. How can we reach near God?**
- 4. MHow bhakti saints touched the hearts of one and all?**
- 5. Who was Shankaracharya?**
- 6. Name the bhakti saints of Maharashtra.**
- 7. What are other categories of Bhakti Saints**

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