

CBSE Class –VII Social Science
NCERT Solutions
History Chapter 8
Devotional Paths To The Divine

Q1: Match the following:

The Buddha	namghar
Shankaradeva	worship of Vishnu
Nizamuddin Auliya	questioned social differences
Nayanars	Sufi saint
Alvars	worship of Shiva

Ans:

The Buddha	questioned social differences
Shankaradeva	namghar
Nizamuddin Auliya	Sufi saint
Nayanars	worship of Shiva
Alvars	worship of Vishnu

Q2: Fill in the blanks:

- (a) Shankara was an advocate of _____.
- (b) Ramanuja was influenced by the _____.
- (c) _____, _____ and _____ were advocates of Virashaivism.
- (d) _____ was an important centre of the Bhakti tradition in Maharashtra.

Ans: (a) Shankara was an advocate of advaita.

(b) Ramanuja was influenced by the Alvars.

(c) Basavanna, Allama Prabhu and Akkamahadevi were advocates of Virashaivism.

(d) _Vitthala temple_ was an important centre of the Bhakti tradition in Maharashtra.

Q3: Describe the beliefs and practices of the Nathpanthis, Siddhas and Yogis.

Ans: The Nathpanthis, Siddhas and Yogis believed in the renunciation of the world.

- They criticised the rituals and other aspects of conventional religion and the social order, using simple, logical arguments.
 - For them, the path of salvation lay in meditating on the formless Ultimate Reality. They stressed on intense training of the mind and body through yogasanas, breathing exercises and meditation.
 - These groups became particularly popular among “low” castes.
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Q4: What were the major ideas expressed by Kabir? How did he express these?

Ans: The major ideas expressed by Kabir were:

- Kabir's teachings were based on a complete, indeed vehement, rejection of the major religious traditions.
- His teachings openly ridiculed all forms of external worship of both Brahmanical Hinduism and Islam, the pre-eminence of the priestly classes and the caste system.
- Kabir believed in a formless Supreme God and preached that the only path to salvation was through bhakti or devotion.

Kabir expressed his ideas using the language of his poetry, which was a form of spoken Hindi widely understood by common people. He also wrote verses called *sakhis* and *dohas* which are still popular among people today.

Q5: What were the major beliefs and practices of the Sufis?

Ans: The major beliefs of the Sufis were:

- The Sufis believed in union with God as a lover seeking his beloved.
 - They also believed that the heart could be trained to look at the world in a different way. They rejected the elaborate rituals and codes of behavior demanded by Muslim religious scholars.
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- The Sufis developed various methods of training using Zikr (chanting of a name or sacred formula), contemplation, sama (singing), raqs (dancing), discussion of parables, breath control, etc. under the guidance of a master or pir. Thus emerged the silsilas, a genealogy of Sufi teachers, each following a slightly different method (tariqa) of instruction and ritual practice.
 - They rejected idol worship and believed in one God.
 - The Sufi masters held their assemblies in their *khanqahs* or hospices where they discussed spiritual matters, sought the blessings of the saints in solving their worldly problems, or simply attended the music and dance sessions.
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Q6: Why do you think many teachers rejected prevalent religious beliefs and practices?

Ans: Many teachers rejected prevalent religious beliefs and practices because:

- these beliefs were cumbersome and difficult to follow.
- these beliefs led to social inequality and created differences between classes.
- the religious teachings favoured the privileged and discriminated against lower classes.
- the teachers felt attracted to the idea of a Supreme God who could deliver humans from bondage if approached with devotion (or bhakti).

Hence, many teachers rejected prevalent religious beliefs and turned to religions like Buddhism and Jainism to overcome social differences.

Q7: What were the major teachings of Baba Guru Nanak?

Ans:

- Baba Guru Nanak emphasised on the worship of one God.
- According to him, caste, creed or gender were irrelevant for attaining liberation. Liberation for him was the pursuit of an active life with social commitment.
- He gave the motto of nam, dan and isnan, which meant right worship, welfare of others and purity of conduct.
- The sacred space thus created by Guru Nanak was known as dharmsal. It is now known as Gurdwara.

- His teachings are now remembered as nam-japna, kirt-karna and vand-chhakna, which also underline the importance of right belief and worship, honest living, and helping others.
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Q8: For either the Virashaivas or the *sants* of Maharashtra, discuss their attitude towards caste.

Ans: Both Virashaivas and the *sants* of Maharashtra rejected social inequality and caste differences.

- The Virashaivas argued strongly for the equality of all human beings and they were against Brahmanical ideas about caste and the treatment of women. They were also against all forms of ritual and idol worship.
 - The *sants* of Maharashtra rejected all forms of ritualism, outward display of piety and social differences based on birth. They preferred to live with their families, earning their livelihood like any other person, while humbly serving fellow human beings in need. They insisted on the idea of sharing others' pain.
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Q9: Why do you think ordinary people preserved the memory of Mirabai?

Ans: Mirabai became a disciple of Ravidas, a saint from a caste considered “untouchable”. She was devoted to Krishna and composed innumerable bhajans expressing her intense devotion. Ordinary people have preserved the memory of Mirabai because her songs openly challenged the norms of the upper castes.