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The Contribution of Sufi and Bhakti Movement in the growth of a composite Indian Culture in Pre Medieval India

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The medieval period in India saw the rise and growth of the Sufi and Bhakti movements. These two movements brought a new form of religious expression amongst Muslims and Hindus. The Sufi and Bhakti movements played an important role in bringing together the Muslims and the Hindus. The Sufis are misted for liberalism in Islam. The Sufis emphasized on an egalitarian society based on universal love. The Bhakti saints transformed Hinduism by introducing devotion or Bhakti as the means to attain God. They had not important to caste, color and cured all human beings were equal to them.

Objectives:

- * To understand the reasons for the rise of Sufism and Bhakti movements in medieval India.
- * To explain the philosophy of the Sufi and Bhakti movements.
- * Identify the major Silsilahs of the Sufi.
- * Recognize the contribution of Sufi and Bhakti saint in the growth of a composite Indian Culture.

The Sufi movements:

Islam was founded by Prophet Muhammad. It has the rise of many religious and spiritual movements. Islam has two major sects – the Sunnis and the Shias. Among the Sunnis there are four principal school of Islamic

law, these are based upon the Quran and Hadis. The Hanafi School of the eight country was adopted by the eastern Turkes. Who later came India.

The greatest challenge to orthodox Sunnism came from the rationalist philosophy or Mutazilas, who professed strict monotheism. According to Mutazilas God is just and has nothing to do with man's evil actions. Men are endowed with free will and are responsible for their arm actions.

The Mutazilas were opposed by the Ashari School founded by Abul Hasan Ashari (873-935A.D.), The Ashari School evolved it's an rationalist, argument in defense of the orthodox doctrine (Kalam) This School belives that God knows, Sees and Speaks, The Quran is eternal and uncreated.

The greatest expanded of this school cool Abuttan al Ghazali (1058-1111A.D.) who is credited with has reconciled orthodoxy with mysticism. He was a great theologian who in 1095 began to lead a life of a Sufi He is deeply respected by both orthodoxy Sunnis Schools. According to him positive knowledge cannot be gained by reason but by revelation. Sufi and their allegiance to the Quran as much as Ulenas did. The influence of the ideas of Ghazali was greater because of the new educational system get up by the state. These Schools called madrasas where scholars were familiarized with Asari ideas. They were taught how to run the government in accordance with orthodox Sunni ideas .These scholars were known as Ulema .Ulema played an important role in the politics of medieval India .

The Sufis:

Ulema were the Sufis .the Sufis were mystics. The were pious men how were shocked and the degeneration in a political and religious life .the opposed the wager display of wealth in public life and the readiness of the Ulems to "ungodly" rulers . The Sufi philosophy also differed from the Ulema .the Sufis laid emphasis

upon faro thought and liberal ideas They were against formal worship, rigidity and fanaticism in religion. The Sufis turned to meditation in order to achieve religious satisfaction. Like the Bhakti saints, the Sufis too interpreted religion as 'love of god' and servia of humanity. In course of time, the Sufis were divided into different Silsilahs (orders) with each silsilah having it's an pir (guide) called Khwaja or Sheikh. The pir and his disciples lived in a Khanquah (hospice). A pir nominated a successor or wail from his disciples to carry on his work. The Sufis organized samas (a recital of holy songs) to arouse mystical ecstasy. Basra in Iraa became the center of Sufi activities. The Sufi saints were not setting up a new religion, but were preparing a more liberal movement within the framework of Islam. They weed their allegiance to the Quran as much as the Ulema did.

The Sufism In India:

The advent of Sufism in India is said to be in the eleventh and Twelfth countries. 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 centers of the Sufis were malt an and Punjab. By the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the Sufis had spread to Kashmir, Bihar, Bengal and the Deccan, The Sufism had already taken a definite from before coming to India. Its fundamental and moral principles, teachings and orders, system of fasting, prayers and practices of living the Khangahs had already been fixed. The Sufis came to India is Afghanistan on their aim free will. Their emphasis upon a pure life, devozional love and servia to humanity made them popular and earned them a place of honor in Indian society.

Abul fazl while writing in the ain-i-Akbari speaks of fourteen silsilahs of the Sufis. There silsilahs were divided into two types. Ba-Shara and Be-shara were those orders that followed the Islamic law (Sharia) and its directives such

as Namaz and Roza. Chief amongst these were the Chisti, Suhrawardi, Firdawsi, Quadiri, Naqshbandi silsilahs. The be-Shara Silsilha were not bound by the sharia. The Qalandars belonged this group.

The Chishti Silsilah :

The chishti order was founded in a village called Khwa Chishti (near Heart). In India the Chisti Silsilah was four by Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti (born C.1142) who came India around 1192. He made Ajmer the main center for his teaching. He beloved that serving mankind was the best form of devotion and therefore he worked amongst the down to warded He died in Ajmer in 1236. During Mughal times, Ajmer became a leading pilgrim centre because the emperors regularly visited the Sheikh's tomb. Millions of Muslims and Hindus visit his Darghah for fulfilment of their Wises. Among his disciples were Sheikh Hamiduddin of Nagur and Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki. The former lived the life of a poor peasant, cultivated land and retused Ittutmish,s offer of a grant of villages. The khangah of Qutabuddin Bakhitiyar kaki was also visited by people from all walks of life. Sultan Ittutmish dedicated the Qutub Minar to this saint. Sheikh Fariduddin of Ajodhan (Pattan in Pakistan) popularized the Chisti Silsilah in modern Haryan 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 Adigrandh Baba Farida's most famous disciple Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya (1238-1325) was responsible for making Delhi an important center of the Chishti Silsilah. He came to Delhi in 1259 and during his dixty year in Delhi. He saw the reign of seven Suttans. He performed to Shum. The company of rulers and nobles and kept aloof from the state. For him renunciation meant distribution of food and clothes to the Door. Amongst his followers was the noted writer Amir Khusrau.

Another farmers Chisti saint was sheikh

Nasiruddin Mahmad, Popularly known as Nasiruddin Chirag-i-Dilli (the lamp of Delhi) following his in 1356 and the lack of a spiritual successor, the disciples of the Chisti Silsilah moved out towards each and southern India.

The Suhrawardi Silsilah :

Sheikh Shihabuddin Suhrawardi founded this Silsilah it was established in India by Shaikh Bahauddin Zaka (1182-1262). He set up a leading Khanga in multi which was visited by rulers, high government officials and rich merchants, Sheikh Bahguddin zakariya openly took Ilfutmist 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 state. They accepted gifts, jagirs and even governments posts in the ecclesiastical department.

The Suhrawardi Silsilah was firmly established in Punjab and Sindh. Beside those two Silsilahs there were others such as the Firdawsī Silsilah Shattari Silsilah, Qadiri Silsilah, Naashabandi Silsilah.

The Importance of the Sufi movement:

The Sufi movement made a valuable contribution to Indian society. Sufi ideas laid the foundation for more liberal movements of the fifteenth century. The Sufi infused a new liberal outlook within Islam. And broken down the barriers between Muslim and Hindus saint kabir and Guru Nanak had prepared a nonsectarian religion based on universal love. The Sufis believed in the concept of Waholat-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 the Hindu saints. In fact the Hatha-yoga treatise amrita kunola was translated into Arabic and Persian. The Sufi saints maintained close contact with the common peoples. Their service was to the poorer

and daintradden section of the society. According to the Sufis the weight from 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 quality and brotherhood. The Islamic emphasis upon equality was respected for 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. The controversy between the Orthodoxy and liberal elements continued throughout the 16th, 17th, & 18th centuries. The Sufi saints tried to bring about social reforms too. Like the Bhakti saints, the Sufis 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 fared 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 passion mystical poetry. Syed Gesu Daraz was the first writer of Deccani Hindi. 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 our tradition. He wrote versed in Hindi (Hindawi) and emplaced the Persian meter in Hindi. He created a new style called sabaq-i-hindi by the 15th century Hindi had begun to assume a definite shape and Bhakti saints such as kabir used it extensively.

The Bhakti movement:

The Bhakti movement was a socio-religious movement that opposed religious bigotry and social rigidities. It emphasized good character and pure thinking when society had

become stagnant the Bhakti saints infused new like and strength. They awakened a new sense of confidence and attempted to redefine social and religious values. Saints like Kabir and Nanak Stressed upon the recording of society and egalitarian likes. Their call to social equality attracted many down trodden. The importance of the Bhakti saints like in the new atmosphere created by them. Which continued to affect Social, religious and political life of India even in later countries.

The development of Bhakti movement took place in Tamilnadu between the seventh and Twelfth centuries. It was reflected in the emotional poems of nayanars (devotees of Shiva) and Alvars (devotees of Vishnu These sairts looked upon religion not as a cold formal worship but as a loving bond based upon love between the worshipped and worshipper. They work in local languages. Tamil and Telgu and were therefore able to reach out to many people.

In course of time the ideas of the south moved up to the north but it was a very slow process. Sanskrit, which was still the vehicle of thought, was given a new form. The Bhagavatā purana of ninth century was not written in the old puranic form. Centered around krishna's childhood and youth this work uses krishna's expbits to explain deep philosophy in simple terms. This work became a turning point in the history of the Vaishnavite movement which was an impcrtant component of the Bhakti movement.

A more effective method for spreading of the Bhakti ideology was the use of local languages. The Bhakti saints composed their verses in local languages. They also translated Sanskrit works to make them understandable to a audience. This we find Jnanadeva's writing in Marathi, Kabir surdas and Tulsidas in Hindi, Shankaradeva popularising assamese, chaitanya and chandidas spreiding their massage in Bengali Mirabai in Hindi and rajasthani In addition, devotional poerty was compsed in Kashmiri,

Telgu, Kannad, Oriya, Malayalam, Maithili, and Gujrati.

The Bhakti saints believed that salvation can be achieved by all. They made no destination of caste, creed or religion before God. They themselves come from Olivares backgrounds. Ramananda, whose disciples included Hindus and Muslims. Come from a conservative Brahmin family. His disciple Kabir was a weaver, Guru Nanak was a village acetate son . Namdev was a Tailor.

All these saint in Bhakti movements stressed equality. Disregarded the caste system and attacked institutionalized religion. These saints did not confine themselves to parley religious ideas. They advocated social reforms too. They opposed sati and female infanticide. Women were encouraged to join Bhakti movements. Saints Mirabai and Lalla (of Kashmir) composed versed that are popular even today.

Kabir and Guru Nanak non- sectarian Bhakti saints made outstanding contribution to bridge the gaif between the Hindus and the Muslims.

i) Saint Kabir :

(1440-1518) is said to have been the son of a Brahman widas, who abandane him. He was brought up in the house of a Muslim weaver. Kabir believed that the way to god was through personally experienced Bhakti or devotion. He believed that the creator is one. His God was called by many names- Rama, Hari, Govinda, Allaah, Rahim, Khuda etc. The muslims claim him as sufi the Hindus call him Rama-Bhakti and the Sikhs incorporate his songs in the Adi-Granth. His beliefs and ideas were reflected in the dohas (Sakhi) composed by him Kabir emphasized. Simplicity in religion and said that Bhakti was the easiest way to attain God. He refused to accept any prevalent religious belief without prior reasoning. He advocated performance of action rather than communication of duty. His ideas were not restricted to religion. He

attempted to change the narrow thinking of society. His poetry was forceful and direct and easy to understand.

ii) **Guru Nanak :-** (1469-1539) Guru Nanak was born at Talwandi towards a spiritual life. He was helpful to the poor and needy. His disciples called the selves Sikhs (Derived from Sanskrit Sisyā, dissent or Sikkha, Instruction) There was combination of implicating peacefulness. He was against the existing computing and degrading practices in society. Guru Nanak was as a social reformer as he was a religious teacher. He wants improvements in the status of women. He said that women who gives birth to kings should not to spoken ill of. His Vani (words) along with those of other Sikh Gurus have been brought together in the Guru Granth Sahib, the holy book of the Sikhs.

iii) The Vaishnavite movement:-

The Vaishavite movement centered around the worship of Rama and Krishna who were seen as incarnations (avatars) of lord Vishnu. Its main exponents were Surdas, Mirabai, Tulsidas and Chaitanya. Their path to salvation was expressed through the medium of poetry, song, dance and Kirtans.

a) Surdas (1483-1563) :-

Surdas was a disciple of the famous teacher, Vallabhacharya. He was a wind poet, whose songs are centered around Krishna. His Sursagar recounts the exploits of Krishna during his childhood and youth with gentle affection and delightfulness.

b) Mirabai (1503-73):

Widowed at an early age, she believed in a spiritual marriage with her lord. The love for Krishna was also expressed through the sings of Mirabai. Her poems have a quality of their arm and are popular even today.

c) Ramananda (1400-1470) :-

The worship of Rama was popularized by saints like Ramananda. He considered Rama as the supreme God, women and outcastes were welcomed.

d) Chaitanya (1489-1533):-

The vaishnavite movement spread in the east through the efforts of Chaitanya. Considered Krishna not as a mere incarnation of Vishnu but as the highest form of God. The devotion for Krishna was expressed through sankirtans (Hymn session by devotees) which took place in homes. Temples and even street processions.

e) Tulsidas (1532-1623):-

The most famous of the Rama Bhaktas was Tulsidas, who wrote the Ramachairtmanas.

Thus, the vaishnavite saints developed their philosophy the broad framework of Hindūsīm. Reforms in religion and love ammongs fellow beings.

Conclusion:

The Bhakti and Sufi movements were liberal movements within Hinduism and Islam emphasizing a new and more personalized relationship between the human being and God. The message of the Sufi movement was universal love and brotherhood of man. Because of their belies in the concept of unity of being. Sufis were able to establish an ideological relationship with Hindu thought. The Bhakti movement grew amongst nayanars and Alvars of the south and stressed a new method of worship of God gazed upon devotional love. The Bhakti saints were divided into the Nirgam and Sagum believers.

Thus the Bhakti and the Sufi saints made valuable contributions to medieval Indian society in terms of laying a liberal foundation and promoting a tremandes growth of regional literature and local languages.

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