

Chapter -6

Bhakti- Sufi Traditions

- Class-XII
- Subject: History
- Module: ½ Module of Lesson 6
- Topic: A Mosaic of Religious Beliefs and Practices
- Teacher: B R Meshram, AECS No.3 Rawatbhata

Introduction:

- By the mid-first millennium, CE the landscape of the subcontinent was dotted the variety of religious structure , stupas and temple.
- These typical certain religious beliefs and practices other have been reconstructed from textual traditions including Puranas.
- New textual source available include compositions of poet-saint expressed orally in regional languages.

A Mosaic of Religious Beliefs and Practices:

Integration of cults:

- Historians who have tried to understand these development suggested that there were at least two processes at work.
- One was a process of disseminating Bramanical ideas. At the same time there was second process at work that of the Brahmans accepting and reworking the beliefs and practices of these and social categories.

Jagannatha Temple:



Difference and conflict among Cults:

- Often associated with the goddess were forms of worships that were classified as Tantric.
- Tantric practices were widespread in several parts of the subcontinent,
- They were open to all men and women ignored differences of caste and class within the ritual context.
- Many of these ideas influence Shaivism as well Buddhism.
- The divergence is perhaps most stark if we compare Vedic and Puranic traditions.
- The principal deities to the Vedic pantheon, Agni, Indra and Soma.

Sculpture of Buddhist goddess Marichi:



Poems of prayer Early Traditions of Bhakti:

- In the course of these forms of worship, in many instance , poet saint emerged as leader around whom there developed a community of devotee.
- While Brahman remained important intermediates between god and devotees in the several forms.

Early Bhakti Traditions

- The Bhakti movement of Hinduism saw two ways of imaging the nature of divine (Brahman)

They are divided in two groups.

- 1. Nirguna
- 2. Saguna

Saguna Bhakti :

- With attribute of god has form.
- Saguna Bhakti which see God in physical form.
- Believe in Doctrine incarnation.
- They worship specific deities like Vishnu, Shiva and Devi.
- Ex a form of Vishnu-Rama by Tulsidas, Krishna by Meerabai.

Nirguna Bhakti-

- Nirguna Bhakti was the concept of the ultimate reality as formless, without attribute or quality or lack of physical attribute in God.
- Nirguna Bhakti is devotion toward a formless god.
- Bhaktas worshiped on abstract form of God.
- Example- Kabir, Baba GuruNanak

Salient feature of Bhakti Movement:

- Emphasis on the unity of God.
- Stress on without utmost devotion.
- Stress on self surrender.
- Faith in spiritual guide or Guru.
- Salvation without the grace or Guru.
- Renouncing the bands of castisum.

Protest against the Caste system:

- The Alvars and Nayanars initiated a movement of protest against caste system and the dominance of Brahmans.
- The importance of the traditions of the Alvars and Nayanars were sometimes indicated by the claim that their compositions were as important as the Vedas.

The Alvars and Nayanars of Tamilnadu :

- Some of the earliest Bhakti movement were led by the Alvars.
- Alvars those who are immersed in devotion to Vishnu.
- Nayanars literally leaders who were devotees of Lord Shiva.

Women Devotees:

- One of the most striking features of these traditions was the presence of women as devotees.
- The compositions of Andal, a women Alwar were widely sung. Andal saw herself as the beloved of Vishnu.
- Karaikkal Ammaiyar , a devotee of Shiva adopted the path extreme ascertain to attain her goal.

Relations with state:

- There were several important chiefdoms in the Tamil region in the early first millennium CE.
- From the second half of the first millennium there is evidence for state, including those of Pallavas and Pandyas.
- One of the major theme in Tamil Bhakti hymns is that poet's opposition to Buddhism and Jainism.
- This is particularly marked in the compositions of the Nayanars.

Image of Shiva as Nataraja:



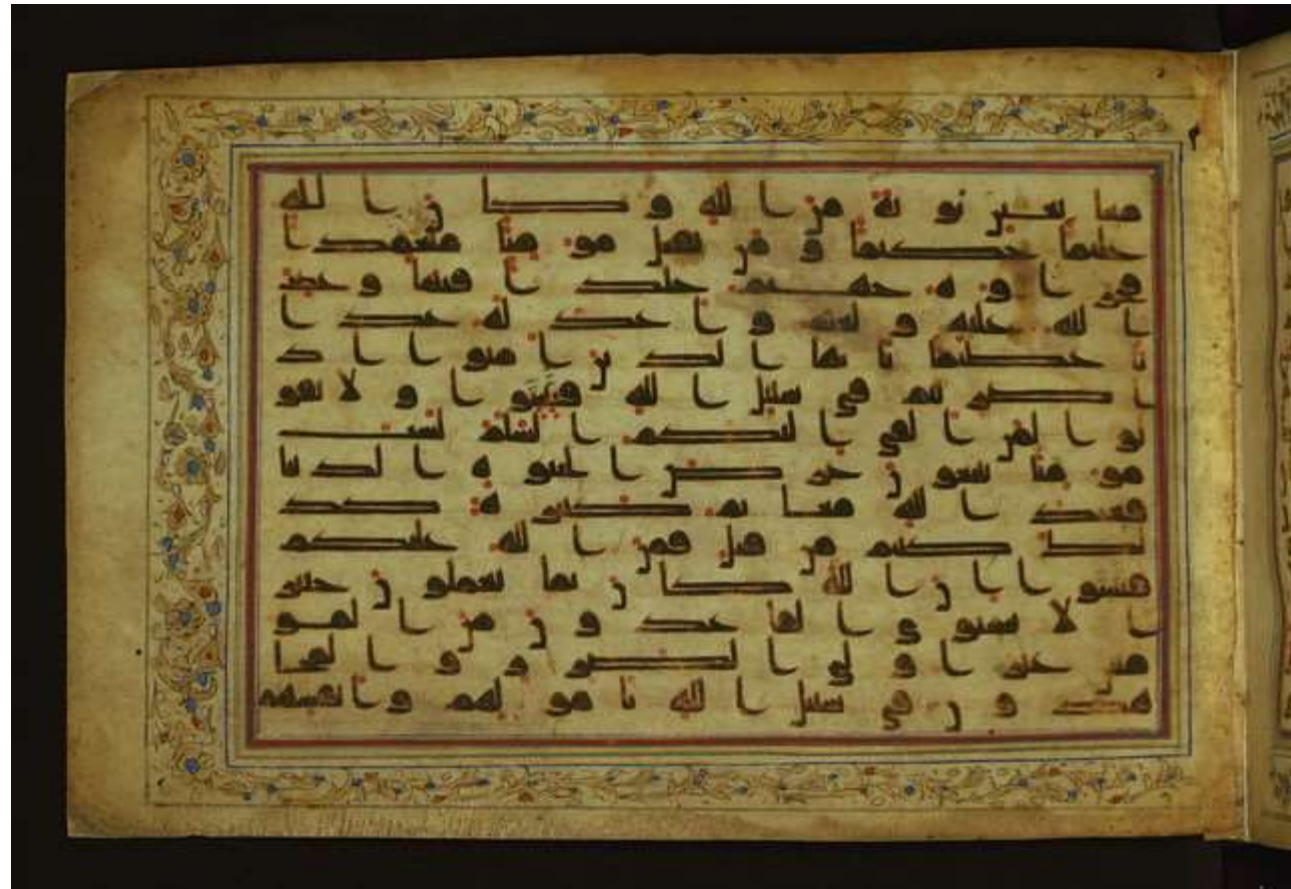
The Virashaivas Tradition in Karnataka:

- The 12th century witnessed the emergence of new movement in Karnataka, led by a Brahman named Basavanna who was initially Jaina.
- His followers were known as Virashaivas (Heroes of Shiva) or Lingayats (Wearers of linga)
- Lingayats is the important community in the region till date.
- They worship Shiva in their manifestation as a linga.
- Lingayats believed that on death the devotee will be united with the Shiva and will not return to this world.
- The Lingayats challenge the idea of caste.
- The Lingayats also encouraged certain practices such as post-puberty marriage and remarriage of widows.

Religious Ferment in North India :

- During the same period , in the north India deities such as Vishnu and Shiva were worshiped in the temples , often build with the supports of rulers.
- Some historians pointed that in North India this was the period when several Rajput states emerged.
- At the same time other religious leaders who did not function within the orthodox Bramanical framework were gaining ground.
- Many of these new religious leaders questioned the authority of Vedas and expressed themselves in the in the languages spoken by ordinary people.

Fragment of page from the Quran:



Assignment:

- What was the most striking features of sculpture as well as the texts of phase of 8th to 18th century?
- What was the practice of Tantric worships ? Explain any two features.
- Who was Basavanna?
- Explain two religious beliefs and behaviors of Lingayats?
- Who were Alvars and Nayanars?
- How women devotion was associated with Bhakti tradition? Give example.



THANK
YOU