

# 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

## Answer:

The Buddha	Questioned social differences
Shankaradeva	Namghar
Nizamuddin Auliya	Sufi saint
Nayanars	Worship of Shiva
Alvars	Worship of Vishnu

## Q2. Fill in the blanks:

- Shankara was an advocate of -----.
- Ramanuja was influenced by the -----.
- , ----- and ----- were advocates of Virashaivism.
- was an important centre of the Bhakti tradition in Maharashtra.

## Answer:

- Shankara was an advocate of **Advaita**.
- Ramanuja was influenced by the **Alvars**.
- Basavanna, Allama Prabhu and Akkamahadevi** were advocates of Virashaivism.
- Vitthala temple** was an important centre of the Bhakti tradition in Maharashtra.

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

## Answer:

- Most religious groups that emerged during this period criticized rituals, traditional religion, and social order using simple, logical arguments. Among them were Nathpanthis, Siddharchas and Yogis who advocated renunciation of the world.
- They believed that the path of salvation is in meditation. Therefore, he advocated intensive training of mind and body through practices such as yogasanas, breathing exercises and meditation.
- Nathpanthis, Siddhas and Yogis became popular among the "lower" castes and their criticism of traditional religion formed the basis for devotional religion to become a popular force in northern India.

## Q4. What were the major ideas expressed by Kabir? How did he express these?

**Answer:** Kabir, who probably lived in the fifteenth-sixteenth centuries, was one of the most influential saints.

The major ideas expressed by Kabir were:

- Kabir's teachings were based on a complete, indeed vehement, rejection of the major religious traditions.
- Kabir believed in a formless Supreme God and believed that the only path to salvation was through bhakti or devotion and expelled his followers from both Hindus and Muslims.
- 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.
- The language of his poetry was a form of Hindi widely spoken by the common people. They also sometimes used cryptic language, which is difficult to follow. We get to know his thoughts, which are

composed from a vast collection of verses called sakhi and padas, composed by him and wander bhajan singers. Some of these were later collected and preserved in the Guru Granth Sahib, Panch Vani and Bijak.

**Q5. What were the major beliefs and practices of the Sufis?**

**Answer:** Sufis were Muslim mystics who rejected external religiosity and emphasized love and devotion to God and kindness to all fellow human beings. Sufis rejected elaborate rituals and codes of behavior often sought by Muslim religious scholars. They demand union with God as a lover faces disregard for the world. Sufis composed poems expressing their feelings, and a rich literature in prose, including anecdotes and fables, developed around them. They developed elaborate methods of training using zikr (chanting of the name or holy sutra), chanting, sama (singing), rak (dance), discussion of parables, breathing control etc. under the guidance of the master or pir. This led to the emergence of Silsilas, each following somewhat different methods of instruction and ritual practice.

**Q6. Why do you think many teachers rejected prevalent religious beliefs and practices?**

**Answer:** Many teachers rejected prevailing religious beliefs and practices because such beliefs advocated social differences where lower castes were persecuted by the upper cast. They believed in the power of personal devotion and were attracted to the idea of the Supreme God who believed that the only path to salvation was through bhakti or devotion.

**Q7. What were the major teachings of Baba Guru Nanak?**

**Answer:** Baba Guru Nanak emphasized 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 Naam, Dan and Isan, which meant right worship, welfare of others. And purity of conduct.
- The holy place thus built by Guru Nanak was known as Dharamshala. It is now known as a gurudwara. His teachings are now remembered as nam-japana, kirtan-karma and vand-chhakna, Underline the importance of right faith and worship, honest living and helping others.

**Q8. For either the Virashaivas or the saints of Maharashtra, discuss their attitude towards caste.**

**Answer:** Both Veerashaiva and saints of Maharashtra rejected social inequality and caste difference.

- Veerashaivas argued strongly for equality of all human beings and they were against Brahminical views about the treatment of caste and women. They were also against all forms of ritual and idol worship.
- Saints of Maharashtra reject all forms of ritualism, outward display of piety social differences by birth. He loved being with his family, earning his income livelihood like any other person while humbly serving the needy fellow humans. He emphasized the idea of sharing the pain of others.