



Bhakti Movement: Amalgamation of Nirguna and Saguna

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Abstract

Indian tradition takes a leap of transformation with the inclusion of spiritual movements when regional spiritual leaders preach their teachings and started a new movement. This movement started with the emergence of many spiritual leaders tried to bring out the good from the people's inner self. The researchers believe that this movement originated from the southern part of India. Later it spread to the different parts of the country. Some statesmen and researchers say that Sikh gurus like Guru Nanak developed this movement through his thoughts like serving the needy and poor people. The word Bhakti itself means to serve and love people equally. Sikh Guru, Guru Nanak inculcated the feeling of equality. He was strictly against the caste and class system. He believed that the God is one and we all are children of one god. Likewise Hindus, Muslims and other religious teachers or gurus take the spiritual path and tried to establish peace between the two religions. At that time in Muslim faith people this Bhakti movement is known as Sufism and among followers of Hindu faith, it is known as Vaishnav Bhakti. Actually the main doctrine of this Bhakti movement was to completely devote one's self to the almighty god who takes care of every bit in the world. We hear bhajan recitation in Hindu temples, gurubani singing in Sikh Gurudwaras and recitation of Quran verses in mosque is the result of Bhakti movement as researchers believe. These spiritual gurus taught that to overcome from the loop or rebirths, one should adopt the path of devotion, serving poor and needy people, reciting devotional songs in praise of god. It is actually the introspection of one's inner self to get rid of sins. There is no other way of achieving transcendent state or Moksha except devoting oneself in the god.

Introduction

Though the path of Bhakti movement was adopted by Hindus and Sikhs but their way of devotion and praising god is different. According to Hinduism, the three supreme gods, Brahma, Vishnu, and Mahesh take birth as humans to eradicate the spread evils in the society and kill demons. So Hindus worship the Lord

Krishna and Lord Rama who is the reincarnation of the Supreme Lord Vishnu. Lord Vishnu takes rebirth and come to earth to save humanity when sins and exploitation of humanity increases. Whereas the Sikhism doctrine states that god is one and he has no shape and appearance. The god is invisible who is watching all our deeds and sins. That god is neither Vishnu or Shiva, neither any of any Sikh incarnation. Sikhism says that

once who takes birth cannot god because body is full of sins and no one is perfect in human body. There will be greed, anger, and selfishness while living as a human being but god is above all these sins. These major differences in belief make two religions dissimilar.

There are also two beliefs of Bhakti Movement. One is known as Saguna Bhakti and the other one is Nirguna. The Saguna bhakti insists on worshipping as a personal god. The worshipers believe in the reincarnation of their loving god and they worship them in the form of human being like Lord Krishna and Lord Rama. Devotee Mirabai is the example of Sagun form of Bhakti who worshiped lord Krishna and sings devotional songs in the praise of his lord. Poets like Tulsidas and Surdas who wrote and sang song in the praise of Lord Rama. These devotees believed in devoting everything for their god whom they love the most.

Nirguna Bhakti is believed to be a search of the inner self. It's more philosophical rather than doing rituals and ceremonies. In this concept, god is regarded as an abstract thing. The followers believe that god is present in every bit of thing or humans. So one should not find god in temples or religious places made by human being. That god is present in our heart and we just need to look into the good part of it. So humans must do good services and help others, arrange food for poor people who could not buy it. However, whatever path we humans choose, we must follow the god's steps and follow its preaching.

Professor Shubhra Tripathi states in her research in the IJELLH paper that "Likewise, Guru Nanak propagated a monotheistic doctrine of nama (name) and bhakti. His simple bhakti philosophy maintained that taking the name of lord is an adequate criteria for being bestowed with the grace of God. A popular saying attributed to seer poet Ravi Das, a disciple of saint Ramananda, reflects the idea that if the heart of a devotee is pure then there is no requisite of a purgative ritual of taking a holy bath in the sacred river Ganga, known for its purgative quality, is eliminated. Sankaradeva's Ek-Sarana -Nama -Dharma instilled the belief in a formless God among the people of Assam. Dadu, a Brahman from Rajasthan, worshipped Rama and Sita, in a formless state and abstained from idol-worship. He followed the path of chanting the name of the lord Rama as the means of attaining spiritual liberation."

Nirguna doctrine helped people introspecting one's own good or bad deeds. It motivated common people to serve and help people selflessly. It also imparted the thought of living an honest and simple life. Saguna doctrine brought people together at the same platform and sing songs in the worship of god. Many rituals and ceremonial activities also brought people of different communities together.

Conclusion

The Bhakti movement in the medieval period played a significant role in establishing peace in the different communities and caste. It also paved a way for the people to come together and work for humanity. The Bhakti movement especially Nirguna thought helped people understanding each other's pain, poverty and hunger and find a way to provide shelter and food to the needy people. This was the movement when people started loving each other keeping aside the caste differences. Earlier high caste people did not allow people belonging to the lower caste people sit next to them, but this movement exposed many social evils and helped eradicating many social inequalities. Bhakti movement reflects our country's spiritual side. It taught us all that only worshipping god and performing ritual activities in front of idols is not enough if we want to achieve Moksha. Helping poor, providing food and shelter to the marginalized people, and selfless service is the actual way to get the love of god.

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