

Block 3

Religious Movements

UNIT 10 RELIGION AND SOLITUDE: BHAKTI AND SUFISM*

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10.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you should be able to understand:

- two religious movements that were found-to prevail in India during the medieval period;
- the bhakti and Sufi traditions and what they evoked; and
- the interaction and interchange between Sufism and the Bhakti tradition.

10.1 INTRODUCTION

We begin by introducing the structure of the Unit and describing the background of the development of Bhakti and Sufism. We then go on to examine the Bhakti Tradition, including the three paths of Bhakti and the two pillars of Bhakti. We then turn to the bhakti tradition in the South and then examine the bhakti tradition in the North. Section 10.4 compares Sufism and Bhakti.

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Let us now also introduce the necessary background of these medieval religious movements. Thus Bhakti emphasizes a personal devotion for one god. It may be pointed out that the Alvar bhakti saints of South India composed their devotional poetry between 5th and 9th century AD. They were worshippers of Krishna. They approached him with a love based on parental, filial, friendly and devotional attitudes. The acharyas who followed the Alvars had an intellectual approach treated dependence on god as logical rather than emotional.

Vallabha formed a sect based on Sri Krishna-Radha in the 16th century AD. Krishna-Bhakti was also given much attention by Sri Chaitanya (AD 1485-1533) who was a contemporary of Vallabha. However Sri Chaitanya's worship was of the ecstatic kind and popularization of the chanting of Hari (Sri Krishna), as a way to spiritual liberation. Namdeva (end of 14th century AD) and Ramananda were further important Bhakti Saints. The North Indian school was popularized by the disciples of Ramananda such as Kabir who used local language for preaching. Mirabai herself was initiated by Ravidas as disciple of Ramananda.

Let us now turn to Sufism, which is a discipline aiming at the personal experience of the unity of God. Sufism began around the 8th century with Saints such as Hadrat Habib Ajami (AD 738). Some scholars feel that Sufism is not against the Islami law. In fact the process of Sufism is closely interwoven in the Islami law. Sufism can be explained from the viewpoint of three basic religious attitudes found in the Quran. These are the attitudes of Islam, Iman and Ihsan.

The attitude of Islam is that of submission to the will of Allah and the teachings of the Quran. Iman designates a further penetration into the religion and strong faith in its teachings. Ihsan is the highest stage of spiritual ascent. These are the three stages of religiosity in Islam.

We may point out in our introduction that the Sufi and the Bhakti movements coalesce in various areas. Let us now turn first to the Bhakti tradition.

10.2 THE BHAKTI TRADITION

In medieval India it was caste structures that governed the lives of men and the networks of relations that they could enter into. The structure of social divisions that arose thus was, as mentioned, a rigid, inflexible and unequal one that created extremes of inequality, privileges and disadvantages between men and social groups. Although this was an extremely unfair system, little could be done or said against it as it was supported by Hindu religious ideology, particularly the notions of high and pure birth and occupation as against the low and impure. In other words, Hinduism was as much a social system as it was a religion, and provided an ideological framework on the basis of which Hindu society arose:

In other words Hinduism was both religion and social framework and governed the lives of Hindus. To be a Hindu meant that one's life was governed by factors such as being born in a caste, being subject to one's actions or karma, to be a part of Brahman and aim at achieving moksha or Liberation of one's soul or salvation. Further, it must be remembered that Hinduism was not a revealed religion that had just a single text. With every phase in the development of Hinduism came new scriptures and texts. Thus we have the Veda, the Upanishad, the Purana and the Bhagavad Gita. Even though we have stressed that the caste system was a system that formed the basis of life in Hindu India and was rigid and unchangeable, there nevertheless occurred many anti-caste movements in the course of the development of the religion. Buddhism and Jainism in the 6th-century B.C. that spoke up against caste divisions and social inequality. This struggle was carried forward and saw its culmination in the rise of the medieval movement of bhakti or 'selfless' devotion to a single God, with which this unit is primarily concerned.

Hinduism was greatly criticised and faced many movements against it. Even though the bhakti movement was against some of the tenets of Hinduism, much of what is a part of Hinduism in later ages developed as an outcome of the bhakti tradition. This tradition was widespread, in fact from North-to South India. We will outline its development in the South and North separately.

10.2.1 Paths and Pillars of Bhakti

From a modern historical standpoint the development of bhakti is the coming together of considerably earlier theistic tendencies in three major religious traditions of ancient India:

- i) the sacrificial cult of the invading Aryans and the recitation of the Brahmana priests that become the foundation of the Vedas;
- ii) the practice of bodily mortification and groups known as Sramanas probably continuing traditions of earlier inhabitants of India but soon adapted by some of the Aryans; and
- iii) the pre-Aryan cults of spirits and village goddesses inhabiting trees and rocks and protecting special people or special groups.

Those who worship Vishnu as the Supreme deity are known as Vaishnavas; likewise those who accord the Supreme place to Shiva are known as Saivas; and those who are devotees of the Goddess of Power are known as Shaktas. Each sect is subdivided into lineages of teachers and teachings. The major forms of bhakti are divided according to the various moods of the devotees. Raw emotion or bhava is transformed in drama to a refined mood or rasa. Each combination of bhava or rasa uses a particular human relationship,

or devotional stances such as servant to master or child to parent or friend to friend, parent to child and beloved to lover, while bhakti stresses passionate attachment it is in striking contrast with Yoga which stresses detachment. Yet many forms of bhakti do talk of detachment such as that taught in, the Bhagavad Gita. The bhakti movements, stand religiously between the extreme ascetic paths and popular Hindu religiosity. Bhakti generally shares the ascetic concern for moksha - release from finite existence and realization of transcendent beatitude. What is primary is communion with the lord.

A few bhaktas make the total commitment of time and style of life characteristic of Hindu 'renouncers' spending whole days in chanting and singing the praise of their Lord. Bhakti shares with popular Hinduism the basic ritual of puja, worship of the deity in image form with fruit, flower and vegetables which are returned after worship as prasada that is material substance filled with the Lord's grace. Such puja may take place in the home shrine or local temple. The worship could be for any spiritual or mundane purpose. There are so distinctive bhakti rituals - communal singing of hymns and chants, performance of dramas, dances and chants and recital of heroic deeds of Vishnu.

These three paths of Bhakti that Lord Krishna offered to Arjuna were:

- i) the path of knowledge or jnana;
- ii) the path of action or karma and
- iii) the path of devotion or bhakti

The Sanskrit-term bhakti is most often translated as "devotion" and bhakti marg as "path of devotion". Bhakti is the divine-human relationship as experienced from the human side. There are at least three major forms of bhakti that is Vaisnavas, Saivas, and worshippers of the great power (Sakti). Each sect is divided into many subjects. Bhakti is between popular religion and asceticism. Bhakti shares the concern for moksha that is release from the bondages of life on earth. The ritual of puja is very important. There are other rituals too - communal singing of hymns and chants; recitations of epics; recounting of sacred lore.

It is this last path of devotion that forms the basis of a religious tradition that survives and proliferates today even across international boundaries. The basic teaching of this tradition was the idea of 'loving devotion' by concentrating upon the image of a single God and without any thought for oneself, as being the way of liberation of one's soul. Any God could be the focus of one's devotion. This God was then seen as one's personal God or ishta deva. Ishta deva is a deity that the worshipper chooses as a personal deity and accords it personal devotion. The most often chosen God for one's devotion we find has been Krishna and most of the bhakti tradition has evolved around him. It is particularly his character as the incarnation of Vishnu and his relationship to the

Gopis and Radha in particular, which are of central importance here. Gopis is the name given to the ladies who were worshippers of Krishna and with whom he played many of his divine games (lila). In fact, the love that the Gopis had for Krishna has been regarded as the best example of the devotion of the individual for God. The idea of 'self-abandonment' or the forgetting of everything in the presence of one's God, is also seen as an important part of the bhakta or devotee's devotion to God.

This particular form of relationship between the' God and devotee has been called viraha bhakti. Viraha bhakti is the name given to exclusive personal devotion to Sri Krishna where feeling of separation or longing is felt for the deity by the devotee. The devotion to Krishna and the bhakti cult that arose around him became prominent in South India around the 8th century. We now turn to the pillars of bhakti.

The two main pillars of the bhakti tradition are 'love' and 'meditation'. The 'love' is for God, and it is ecstatic in nature as well as symbolising a feeling of bliss or happiness that is unparalleled; and an intimacy or closeness with God like that with ones beloved. The idea that is being conveyed here is to be lost in the love of God as though He were a beloved. At the same time the relationship that arises here may be one of dependence upon the God. On the other hand, as far as the aspect of meditation is concerned. There are two kinds of meditation in bhakti. These are:

- i) saguna bhakti, where one meditates on God as a separate being, through disciplined practice;
- ii) nirguna bhakti, where God and self are merged into one and little distinction is made between self and God.

10.2.2 The Bhakti Tradition: South

The Krishna cult arose in South India around the 8th century. We now trace here, the development of the bhakti tradition in the South. The 8th century saw the rise, in the Tamil country, of persons who called themselves the Alvars i.e. men who have intimate and intuitive knowledge of God. They claimed to have an intensely personal relationship with God. They rejected the caste system by recruiting saints to their movement, from all divisions of society and refusing to use Sanskrit as a language, as it was Brahmanic in nature. An important saint here was Nam'alvar who spoke of the oneness of God and the individual soul. He also stressed that unleashed passionate spirituality among people was the only way to show one's devotion to the ishtadeva. There were also other followers such as Yamunacharya and Natbamuni, through whose efforts, the bhakti movement spread and developed. Besides the Alvars, the Southern bhakti movement also found expression in the work of Ramanuja in the 13th century. He primarily made the contribution of stressing, devotion to

a personal deity and saw the Bhagvad Gita as a major work in the bhakti of Krishna. He represented the saguna tradition.

Other than the rise of the Krishna bhakti in South India, we also find a major tradition arising around the worship of Siva as the main deity or ishta deva. It was in the 12th century that we find the rise of this tradition in the form of a left handed sect of Vira Saivas or Lingayats. The founder of this sect was Basava, a Brahmin prime minister of the principality of Kalyan. This tradition denounced both the caste system and image worship. Very interestingly, even though the founder was a Brahmin, this movement was anti-Brahmin. The Lingayats were identified by the wearing of an image of the lingam, enclosed in either silver or brass, around the neck; "This lingam was worn by all Lingayats irrespective of sex, age or caste. The wearing of the lingam was symbolic of the oneness of all who worshipped Siva as the ishta deva. This was a tradition that clearly rejected the idea of inequality that Hinduism professed between men. It was open to all castes and social divisions and recognised all as equal in the worship of the Siva lingam. Once again, like the Alvars, much of this bhakti tradition was in the form of lyrics and hymns and 'sayings' or vachan, in the Kannada language. These were essentially bhakti poems of personal devotion to a God and clearly rejected the great tradition of Vedic religion. These mocked orthodox beliefs and recitations and questioned the classical belief systems, social customs, and Vedic rituals and so on.

To put it simply then, Veerashaivism or Lingayatism was a protest movement that through the method of bhakti and selfless abandonment, lashed out against the orthodox and polytheistic nature of Hinduism. It stressed the oneness not just of God and devotee, as in the Krishna cult but also of oneness of the devotee with the people. Thus we have the famous legend about a Saiva saint called Ghantakarna, who realising the supremacy of Siva as the sublime God, offered his body to Siva. This is the supreme sacrifice, to offer oneself in to a deity. That is to lay down one's life at his feet. Thus, the legend goes Ghantakama's body became the threshold of a temple to Siva; his limbs became the frames of the door, and his head, the bell of the temple. Such was the extent of a devout bhakta's bhakti. The main reason for the popularity of this tradition of bhakti in the South was the social change it signified in terms of social upliftment of the low and poorer divisions of society in all spheres of life. Further, since central to the bhakti tradition in South India was the use of devotional songs in the language of the people, it reached out to a larger population and contributed to the unity of the people on various social and cultural levels.

10.2.3 The Bhakti Tradition: North

From the South of India we find that the bhakti tradition spread to Central and North India. Each added its own local traditional beliefs and devotional forms to both the Vaishnava and Saiva bhakti traditions. Thus we find in

Central India, particularly in the Marathi belt, Krishna bhakti finding a stronghold. Its most famous saint here was Tukaram (1598-1649). He and his followers worshipped Krishna in the form of 'Vithoba' or 'Vithala'. The main theme here was that of seeking liberation within oneself, by becoming one or merging with the Lord. It was around the 15th century that a spiritual descendent of Alvars, Vallabhacharya (1479-1531) went further north and gave life to the Krishna cult in the Mathura region. This survives even today as probably the most vital centre of Krishna bhakti. The three major figures associated with bhakti in this period are Surdas (1485-1563) who spoke of losing oneself in Krishna; Mirabai (1500-1550) who abandoned her position as Queen of Mewar for her bhakti to Krishna as 'Girdhar Gopal'.

All of us are familiar with the bhakti of Mirabai. It is believed that such was the intensity of her devotion that Krishna absorbed her soul into his own. Finally we have the significant role played in this period by Chaitanya (1485-1533). Chaitanya played a major role in the establishment of Mathura as a bhakti centre. he professed that the highest knowledge of all was the knowledge of devotion to Krishna and the greatest of sorrows was separation or viraba from Krishna. Further, he taught that the longing that Radha and the Gopis had for Krishna should be duplicated in the soul of every devotee in his search for oneness with Krishna. Although the movement now was open to all social groups and castes it could not totally do away with the caste system.

Box 10.1 Chaitanya Mahaprabhu

Chaitanya was born in 1485 in a Brahmin family in Bengal. When Bengal had been under Muslim control for almost 300 years. Hindu religion under Muslim retreated into an orthodox pattern of living and worship. Chaitanya learned Sanskrit as a matter of course in his childhood. When he grew up he became a schoolmaster and disapproved of bhakti. He was not interested in religion. However he could not ignore the fact that all his eight elder brothers and sisters had died before him. His meeting with the ascetic Isvara Puri also changed his life at the shrine in Gaya. He began having mystic visions that he could not fully describe in words. Isvara Puri initiated Chaitanya into a mantra and Chaitanya became a worshipper of Krishna.

Even so we find today in Mathura and specifically Virndaban, how the lives of the people are totally tided up to their worship of Krishna (at home and in the temple), as a child or as the young lover of the Gopis, In this small town near Mathura, the people wake when Krishna awakes in the temple, they eat when he eats, they sleep when he sleeps, and their every moment is devoted to thoughts of Krishna to the extent that they even greet each other with a "Radhe-Radhe". So totally enwrapped are their lives with that of God. It is this form of Northern bhakti that represents the best example of Saguna bhakti.

The bhakti movement reached further North-east from here and was carried to Assam in the 16th century where the Meiteis-a local local tribe, are Vaishnavites.

Besides the' Vaishnava tradition coming North we also find that the Shiva bhakti tradition also found a foothold in North India particularly in Kashmir. Its greatest follower and proponent was Abhinava gupta and later one of the Kashmiri women saints, Lalla, Although Siva bhakti found many followers here, they found the renderings of the tradition difficult to follow, even so their numbers did not diminish and 'Shivaratri' is one of the most celebrated occasions in Kashmir. It may once again be noted, why the bhakti tradition became so popular in North India. Against the strict and orthodox character of Hinduism that stressed the inequality of men before God and thus did not allow all men and women equal access to the divine and to religion, the bhakti tradition offered an alternative. It was an alternative path of worship through devotion, open to all sections of society and offering all of them equality before God and in the access to the divine. Since it used local idioms, language and songs, it reached out to a' far larger population and appealed to all sections of society. It celebrated the relationship of the individual to God, as a very personal relationship and rejected the Vedic form of worship through intermediaries. Moreover, its rejection of the caste system and the inequalities subscribed by it, were openings that a large section of society were looking for. Bhakti thus offered a way of relating to the divine that was personalised, unique and fulfilling

Check Your Progress 1

1) What' is bhakti? How was it an alternative to the prevalent religious trend?

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2) Briefly describe the three types of bhakti: viraha, saguna and nirguna.

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10.3 SUFISM

Having examined the basic teachings of bhakti and how it created a new path for devotion or religious worship, we now proceed to consider the influence of Islam on the Indian subcontinent, and the consequence that it had for the bhakti tradition in particular. As an offshoot of this influence we have the role of the Sufi movement in India.

Historically, we find that the beginning of the 10th century there were Muslim invasions. This is the time when Mahmud of Ghazni invaded the Indian subcontinent 17 times. In early 16th century, the Moghuls invaded India. It was in the latter half of the 17th century that the Hindus launched a counter offensive. It was particularly in the struggle by the Maratha King Shivaji, that the moral power of Hinduism received impetus and the bhakti tradition resurged as a response to the impact of Islam. The Indian tradition tried to find a response within its own spiritual condition since the Muslim ruler discriminated against the Hindu who were their subjects. Further, with its contact between the two different social and cultural traditions, interaction and synthesis began particularly on the level of social custom, tradition and practice of the Hindus and the Muslims. At the same time we find that the Islamic, mystic and ecstatic, tradition of Sufism greatly influenced the bhakti saints. To understand the nature of this influence let us briefly consider what Sufism was about.

10.3.1 What is Sufism?

In the beginning Sufism developed in Mesopotamia, Arabia, Iran and modern Afghanistan. It was formalized by the end of the 8th century. Right from the beginning there was a hiatus between the ulemas and the mystics. The latter claimed to be delving into the interior of religion, which depended on the heart. The Sufi and bhakti traditions are characterised by adherence to religious text, governmental authority and opposed to external ritualism of prayer. The Sufis aim for a direct relationship with God and thus their basic features incorporate strands from various sources including Hinduism.

Ritu Dewan has pointed out that as a consequence of the 12th century Mongol invasion many Sufis took shelter in India, especially in Multan, Punjab, and Sindh. One of the greatest Sufi mystics Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi (1207-1273) was very influenced by Indian folklore and even wrote a poem dedicated to the flute of Krishna. He founded the Maulavi Sufi order in which music and dance were spiritual methods. Soami ji Maharaj founder of the Radha 'Soami sect was much influenced by Rumi who he often quoted in his discourses. Guru Nanak too was inspired by Rumi. Rumi and Baba Farid's compositions (1173-1265) have been included in the Granth Sahib together with those of Kabir,

Guru Nanak was called guru of the Hindus and pir of the Mussalmans. By the end of the 16th century the Bhakti movement had covered the entire north India resulting in an intermingling of Hindu mysticism with Sufism. Kabir's following verse illustrates this:

The Mussalmans accept the Tarifat
The Hindus, the Vedas and Puranas
but for me the books of both religions are useless
(Kabir, 1440-1518).

Sufis were also against external ritualism in religion. Prayers and fasting were held to be inferior to works of charity. And Jihad not external war but a fight against the lower self of man. Some Sufis like Shah Abdul Latif and Sachal Sarmast called upon people to "strike the Mullahs".

In Bengal the influence of Chaitanya was felt on a popular level, specially on the Baul movement. Muslim Bauls followed the Sufi tradition and Hindu Bauls the Vaishnavite. Both of these traditions expressed themselves saying:

You have been to
GayaBcnares and
Vrindavan, and have
travelled through
many rivers and forests and
other places of pilgrimage
But away have
you seen in all
these anything of
Him of Whom you
have heard?

Sufi literature of Rumi and Hafiz (d. 1389) influenced Raja Rarnlvlohan Roy and Devendranath Tagore, and Rabindranath Tagore. Sufi literature remains fresh today though long years have passed since it was first penned:

Is there one God in the peepul tree and
another in the babool?
If Islam was created by Allah
then who created Kufir
If Ka'ba be the
House of God
Why find fault with the temple?
The same light bums bright
within the temple and the mosque.
(Sufi Bhai Dalpatram 1768-1842)

Thus we see that there was a commingling of the Bhakti and Sufi movements. Sufism specialises in the spiritual dimension of Islam. It believes in revelation as a source of contact with the sacred and attempts to get a personal experience of the unity of God. This leads to a realization that God alone is to be adored. This is basic to Sufism. While orthodox priests of Islam feel that this desire to merge in the unity of God is anti-Islam the Sufis do not feel this is so. In fact they feel it is closely related to Islamic doctrine. The two are interdependent. An analogy given to clarify the relationship is that of the kernel of the walnut and the shell. Neither can possibly do without the other.

Another example is that Islamic doctrine is like the circumference of a circle at the centre of which lies the ultimate Reality (Haquqat). Sufism is a mediator between Islamic doctrine and Ultimate Reality.

Sufism can be explained through three basic religious attitudes of: i) Islam; ii) Iman and iii) Ihsan.

Islam is the attitude of submission to the will of Allah.

Iman designates a firm faith in the teachings of the Islam.

Ihsan is to adore Allah though one may not see him. Sufism is the spiritual progress of a devotee from the initial stage of Islam to the ultimate stage of Ihsan.

As Islam in India, it came to enfold in its cloak, the system of monasticism and a defined way of community life. The Sufi mystic however was in no way forced to live a defined and organised life. By the 9th century, these Sufis who had come to form a brotherhood and a definite way of community life, also began wearing a particular kind of coarse woollen garment known as *sufi* and thus came to be called *sufis*. *Sufis*, though Muslim, are considered to be pantheistic mystics. This was a basic difference with orthodox Islam but in common with the *bhakti* school of the Hindus.

The *Sufis* followed the Quran, and sought to reveal their purpose in life through their sayings, actions and the path that they followed. This path was often shared by different mystics and came to be called *tariqah* or *sufism*. The path of 'unselfishness' through either renouncing the world and one's possessions and desires or by adopting an attitude of patience, humility and charity, towards God, were essential to being a *sufi*. The *sufis* also had a special method of their own for producing the state of mind in which they would have revelations. They called this *dhikr*.

Its simplest form is the continual repetition of the name of Allah with intense concentration on the thought of God, and losing one's individuality in this. If

we examine these teachings closely we can see how the idea of dhikr which was central to Sufi thought is similar to the idea in bhakti tradition of concentrating on the ishta deva, in one's quest for liberation particularly in the saguna traditiori. Thus, Sufism mainly professed mysticism and upon this the Sufis built the basic theological doctrines of their religious movement. A major practice devised by the Sufis for stimulating religious emotion was listening to music and song or sama. These songs are capable .of sending one into a trance. The subject of the songs was love, which was often erotic. One could not clearly distinguish whether the love" being talked about here was human love or the love for the deity. Once again this 'is similar to the love in the bhakti tradition between the bhakta and the God as was expressed for Krishna by the Gopis.

We find, many attempts were made to define the Sufi in different ways. In general it was however agreed that the Sufi had metaphysical, social and philanthropic characteristics. Further, the Sufi doctrine we find was moulded by different influences such as the developments in Muhammadan monotheistic ideas or the influence of Greek and Indian philosophies. Moreover, we can also include here, political, social and intellectual conditions that favoured the growth of mysticism. The Sufis were very strict about accepting disciples or murid. Slowly however, followers flocked to them, many Sufis became recognised as teachers of Shaikhs and Pirs and 'orders' arose within Sufism. The four major orders that arose were the. (a) Qudiri (b) Suhrawardi (c) Chisti and (d)Naqshbandi. By the 13th century, Sufism had become a movement in its own right in India.

10.3.2 Spread of Sufism in India

Sufism mainly flowed into Indian from Arabia, Mesopotamia; and Iran. We have accounts of the various saints of different orders spreading Sufi teachings in different parts of India: To name a few, we have the well-known Shaikh Muinuddin Chisti who had established himself in Ajmer and Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya whose teachings and followers spread all over India.

As far as the spread of Sufism in India is concerned, its character changed to adapt to the Hindu environment. Thus, the metaphysical aspect was avoided and personal instruction of disciples was undertaken. Not all Sufis however took disciples. Those who did were called Shaikhs. The Shaikh besides being a teacher was regarded as a protector, friend, companion and benefactor or WaiL The teacher was also believed to possess supernatural powers or Karamah. The Shaikh or pir was regarded as the spiritual guide of the disciple or murid. We find that most of the people who came to the Sufi saints, desired to use their spiritual powers to cure an illness or fulfil a wish. Even today we find that of the many devout who may visit the resting place of a pir, i.e. his dargah, come there to seek the fulfilment of a wish or a blessing.

There were as mentioned earlier four main orders among the Sufis. Each of these we find different from the other in the emphasis of its teachings and the extent to which it spread in India. All four orders however regarded the Sharlah as the spiritual guide. All four believed that a Sufi should have no worldly possessions. Each order had over time found devout disciples who in turn had reached the stature of being capable; of having their own disciples and were known as Khalifahs. These Khalifahs played important roles in the spread of their order's teachings.

Of the four orders, the Suhrawardis, were the most orthodox and played a leading role in the spread of Sufism in the North-West of India. They believed that to be able to perform their functions better, they had to maintain good relations with the political authority of the time.

Of these orders, it is however the Chisti Sufis who are best known. They spread all over the country and their principal Shaikh Nizamuddin, settled in Delhi and gave the order its expansive character. The Chistis consistently maintained that the political authority was an influence to be avoided. By the time Nizamuddin died in 1325 and his successor Nasiruddin took over, in 1356, a spiritual empire had begun to form. It reached its peak in the personality of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya. By this time the Chisti order had spread to Bihar and Bengal and had an even older order in Rajasthan that began with Khwaja Muinuddin Chisti in Ajmer in the 1190s. The expansion of this order into the Deccan was carried out by Shaikh Gesu-daraz.

Box 10.2 Sufi Saints

Sufism is one of the creative manifestations of Islam. It is a mystic sect which developed out of Islam. Sufism seeks mystical union. Many Sufi saints who were responsible for developing sufism include Hasan al-Basvi, Ibrahim Ibn Adham Rabiati Adawiyah, Dhu al nun al Misri. Each of these saints developed Sufism in their own way. For example Al-Hallaj was initiated into sufism while still a teenager. He lived in relative seclusion (for twenty years) and was trained by many masters. His basic teaching was moral reforms and intense Union with the Beloved. In mystical ecstasy he cried out loud: "Ana-al-Haggi" ("I am the Divine Truth"). Al-Hallaj was decapitated and burnt by his detractors but he died with dignity and grace believing it to be the will of God (*Encyclopaedia of Religion*).

It is important to note that because of the presence of differences between the order and individualistic approach of many of the Shaikhs, a single Muslim unified community of disciples could not be formed.

Instead, each order had its devout disciples who together formed a united brotherhood. Overtime, Sufism lost its spiritual intensity and became missionary in character. By the end of the 14th century, Hinduism had evoked a response in the Sufis. The devotional character of Hindi songs and the language had brought the Sufis and Hindu closer. An intermixing of the two people on a cultural level had begun to take place. In fact we find that a common ground had opened up in which the mutual acceptance of the aesthetic values of the Hindus and Muslims had come to be accepted by each other. This inter-change of cultures will be discussed in the following section that specifically deals with the meeting of Sufism and the bhakti tradition.

10.4 SUFISM AND BHAKTI: A COMPARISON

Having outlined what the tradition of Sufism entailed let us now consider the role of Sufism in the bhakti tradition. You may have already noticed that much of what the Sufis taught was very similar to the bhakti teaching of concentrating upon a God and the significance of sacred music and song. This interaction between the two it is believed to have led to the creation of a medieval mysticism which was independent of sectarian or orthodox practices and disclaimed particularly caste practices and atrocities. The first Sufi teacher who came to India was, as mentioned earlier, Khwaja Muinuddin Chisti, who arrived in Delhi in 1193 and settled in Pushkar in Ajmer. He had both Hindu and Muslim followers. We are all familiar with the 'Urs' at his dargah in Ajmer, to which flocks of followers come, treating it as a major pilgrimage centre even today. As mentioned, these Sufis, were Islamic mystics who sought the path of salvation through an ardent and passionate love for God. The teachings of the Sufis greatly influenced not only followers but many saints of the bhakti tradition who came to combine in themselves, sufi and bhakti teachings. The two most significant figures here from the 15th 16th century, were Kabir and Guru Nanak. We will briefly consider their role in the development of medieval mysticism.

10.4.1 Growth of Medieval Mysticism

An important role in the growth of medieval mysticism was played by Ramananda (1370-1440) who himself was a follower of Ramanuja. Ramananda challenged caste divisions, questioned traditional ceremonies and accepted the Hindu philosophy of divisions, questioned traditional ceremonies and accepted the Hindu philosophy of jnana or knowledge, meditation or yoga and devotion or bhakti. He had many disciples of which twelve were the more important and came from low castes. The most famous of these disciples was Kabir, the son of a Muslim weaver. It is believed that though, he early in his life abandoned the Muslim faith, he retained the strict monotheism of Islam and an aversion to the caste system. He saw religion as a personal concern and stressed relationship between man, God and his teacher or guru. He combined in him, elements of both the Sufi and bhakti traditions, claiming that both Allah and Rama were the same thing.

Since he was trying to reach out to the common people he used the dialect or its variant as the language of communication. He stressed the importance of both material and spiritual things in one's life. He had both Hindu and Muslim followers and was non-sectarian. It is possible however that his Hindu followers are greater in number. Much of Kabir's life and work is derived from reconstructing its course from the *dohas* or *sakhis* rendered by him. These were essentially rhymed poems; set to music. There is much debate however about how many of these dohas were written by Kabir himself and how many of his followers or the Kabir panthis. Thus, there is doubt about the legitimacy of some of the sayings that are attributed to Kabir. Many it is believed are those of his devotees. These dohas, it is believed were very often included by the Sufi saints into their sarna.

Important among Kabir's followers was Dadu (1544-1608) who also belonged to a Muslim family, He made the important contribution of seeking a unification of faiths, and founded the Brahma-Sampradaya where God would be worshipped without ritual or orthodoxy. As a mystic he contributed to the idea of the beauty of the world to be discovered not by becoming a recluse or an ascetic but by living a full, life and enjoying what it had to offer.

At the same time as Kabir we have, the contribution of Guru Nanak of Punjab (1469-1538). There is greater certainty about his dates and origins than those of Kabir. Like Kabir, he too was a monotheist and was greatly opposed to the caste system. His disciples, the Sikhs, were organised into a close knit community. His teachings and writings and those of the subsequent Gurus were compiled together by the fifth Guru, Arjun, into the sacred book of the Sikhs, the Adi-Grantha. The Sikhs represented a bhakti sect, where their bhakti was sung in the form of the Gurbani. Guru Nanak's religious renderings we find, also incorporated the best of sufi influence and much of his teachings reflect the union of bhakti and sufi practices.

10.4.2 Sufi-Bhakti Interaction

This interaction of the Sufi and bhakti traditions occurred to give to the lives of Kabir and Nanak a peculiar flavour. Kabir was linked to the Sufis, not just in terms of the mystical nature of his renderings but also on the level or organization of thought. In the *Khazinat al-asfiya*, by Ghulam Sarvar Lahori, we find that Kabir is identified, rightly or wrongly as a Sufi and related to the Chistis. Scholars have argued in recent times that this, however, presents a chronological error. In these writings, he is believed to have visited many Sufi centres and is even believed to have debated with Sufi saints. None however denies the significant position that his dohas had come to occupy. Guru Nanak too it is believed had encounters with Sufi teachers or Shaikhs of which a single encounter, with a Shaikh Ibrahim, of Pakpattan near Multan is considered authentic by scholars.

On most fronts, however, the available documentation on contact between Sufi mystics and the Hindu sants or saints, are contradicted. The most convincing field for the consideration of an inter-change between the Sufis and the sants can be found in the themes of their poetry and devotional songs particularly the attitude of the two traditions towards the "love relationship" between disciple, God and teacher which is central to both traditions. Thus, both traditions shared the nature of the pain and suffering of the devotees in their relationship to the divine. This suffering, which we earlier called viraha, in ones love for the God as beloved, is found in Kabir's writings too. Scholars compare this bhakti notion of viraha to the Sufi notion of isht which is expressed not through viraha but dard. It leads to an experience that is called atish which is similar to the experience of agni or burning of one's soul in viraha. The ideas in Kabir's dohas about love, separation and suffering are found revealed in the lyrics of Sufi poetry as well as we can see. Both, Kabir's nirguna bhakti and the Sufi tradition, also speak of the idea of how without Lord and devotee, there can be no devotion. There is in fact another sphere of the bhakti tradition where the Sufi influence is seen. This is in the context of hagiographic writing about the bhakti saints. Here the influence of the Sufi tradition is revealed in the style of writing, This tradition of biographic writing about the lives of saints had existed in the Sufi tradition from the 15th century and before.

10.4.3 Bhakti-Sufi Teachings

It is important to remember that the relationship' between the Sufi and bhakti saints was reciprocal and the Sufis too were influenced by the bhakti tradition. Thus, besides this major similarity in terms of the method of devotion and its expression, we find that the Sufi tradition also produced its saints such as the Shah Karim and. Shah Inayet from the 17th century in whose teachings little distinction was made between the divine as Allah 'or Rama or Hari, similar to what Kabir sought to say, and revealing the influence of the bhakti tradition.

In the section above, we have tried to point out how medieval mysticism revealed a certain syncretism between the Hindu and Muslim traditions of bhakti and Sufism. The two reveal a major similarity in the nature of devotion and openness to all sections of society which made both, relatively more egalitarian. The influence of Sufi thought on the lives of Kabir and Nanak is seen very clearly. Guru Nanak on many of his journeys is believed to have been wearing Sufi robes. In fact so significant was his attempt at bringing the bhakti of gurbani and sufi teachings together, that when he died, his last rites were performed according to the customs of both the movements Sufi and Bhakti; and two different religious structures mark his resting place. Kabir's life was also devoted to teachings about salvation, liberation, true love and suffering in ones devotion to the Lord. We also saw how there were major similarities between Kabir's or the bhakti traditions notions of viraha and agni and the Sufi ideas

of ishq, dard and atish, Further both Kabir and Nanak though mystical, were also concerned with the inequities represented by caste society and Hindu orthodoxy in general and spoke up against it.

Check Your Progress 2

1) What are the main teachings of Sufism?

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2) Point out the similarities between the Bhakti and Sufi traditions, which would reveal interaction having taken place between them .

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10.5 LET US SUM UP

In this Unit we discussed Bhakti and Sufism. We began by examining the Bhakti tradition, both in the South (from where it began) and the North (to where it spread). We then focused on the Sufi tradition and explained what Sufism is, and described its spread in India. Finally we made a comparison between Sufism and bhakti, covering the growth of medieval mysticism, sufi-bhakti interaction and Bhakti-Sufi teaching. In this way we have clarified Bhakti and Sufism.

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10.7 SPECIMEN ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Bhakti is a reference to the act of devotion or worship of a particular deity without consideration for oneself or any other deity. One is believed to become totally involved in one's worship to a chosen deity. It developed as a movement in the medieval period in India. Lord Krishna and Shiva have been the main deities around whom the bhakti tradition arose. The movement offered an alternative to the orthodox nature of Hinduism. It particularly stressed the idea of the equality of all men in the eyes of God and rejected the unfair nature of the caste system.

- 2) The three types of bhakti can be described as follows:
 - i) Viraha: The word viraha means separation. The main aspect therefore of viraha bhakti is the devotion of the devotee to the God, in the absence of the deity or, the feeling of loss that arises when the God goes away and the devotion that arises out of this. It is called viraha bhakti as it is a particular form of deep devotion that arises in the absence of someone.

 - ii) Saguna: This is bhakti where through disciplined practice the devotee comes to worship God as an entity separate from the devotee and above him. This is possible through the worshipping of a personal deity or ishta deva. This form is mostly found in the South of India.

 - iii) Nirguna: This is bhakti where the aim is to seek union or fusion with the deity whom one is worshipping. This is once again possible only through worship and years of devotion. It is believed that the deity through such devotion becomes so pleased that he absorbs his devotee into his own body. As for example, the texts tell us that Mirabai was absorbed by Lord Krishna into his body. This form of bhakti is found mostly in North India.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Sufism is a mystic movement. The Sufis are mystic teachers and for centuries have had disciples. Sufis follow the Quran and believe in a life of unselfishness and renunciation of worldly possessions. They also believe in

an attitude of patience, humility and charity. The basic teachings include the devotion to God or Allah through a concentration on his being and by repeating his name. This is known as *dhikr*. It encourages the listening of music and song to create religious emotion. This is called *sama*.

- 2) If we closely look at the nature of bhakti and Sufi traditions we find many similarities between them. To begin with in both traditions there is an emphasis on concentrating attention upon a single deity. In Sufism, this is called *dhikr* and *ishq* in bhakti, it is the idea of the *ishta deva*. Secondly, the notion of viraha in bhakti can be compared to what the Sufis call *dard*. Just as *viraha* leads to experiencing *agni* (fire in the soul) *dard* leads to *atish*. Finally, both-the traditions as we see talk about a love between the devotee and the deity and in both cases this lover for the deity resembles the love that one feels for one's beloved and the nature of pain and suffering of the devotee in his relationship to the divine, are found in both traditions. Thus, we can say that these similarities do point to the two traditions having interacted with each other.

UNIT 11 RELIGIOUS REFORM MOVEMENTS*

Structure

- 11.0 Objectives
- 11.1 Introduction
- 11.2 Need for Reform
- 11.3 Foundations of the Arya Samaj
 - 11.3.1 Organisation of Arya Samaj
 - 11.3.2 Rules of the Arya Samaj
 - 11.3.3 Members of the Arya Samaj
 - 11.3.4 Publications of Vedabhashya
- 11.4 Arya Samaj Movement and Reform
 - 11.4.1 Three Challenges to Hinduism
 - 11.4.2 Arya Samaj and Emancipation of Women
 - 11.4.3 Politics and the Arya Samaj
- 11.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 11.6 References
- 11.7 Specimen Answers to Check Your Progress

11.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to:

- socio-economic conditions that needed reforms;
- foundation, organisation and rules of Arya Samaj;
- teaching of Arya Samaj;
- major contributions of Arya Samaj; and
- Arya Samaj Movement and Modern India.

11.1 INTRODUCTION

In this Unit we point out the need for reform in Indian society that was noticed and acted upon by the Arya Samaj. We start with the founding of the Arya Samaj, the rules of the Arya Samaj, and who were the first members. We then go on to the Arya Samaj movement with respect to reform. This is with reference to the challenges to Hinduism, the emancipation of women, and the role of Arya Samaj in politics.

11.2 NEED FOR REFORM

Swami Dayanand the founder of the Arya Samaj was born in 1824, when India was ruled by the British. Dayanand was the son of a Brahmin father and mother. His education started at the age of five and in his 8th year he was invested 'with the sacred thread. Dayanand's religious transformation occurred when at the age of 14 he was asked to observe the fast of Shivaratri. Dayanand and his father went to a temple for the prayer and chanting mantras. As Dayanand watched a mosque climbed the statue of Shiva and then began eating the offerings. This set Dayanand off on his religious' quest. He realized that the idol itself could not be the god himself. It was an age when means of transportation and communication were relatively' primitive. There were few printing press or good newspapers. The initial fear of the British government was that press and modern education would create an atmosphere ripe for sedition.

During that period the Britishers adopted the policy of producing economically cheap English educated clerks on a mass scale to run the British administration in India. The basic motive behind this policy was to de-culturise and de-humanise English educated persons.

The important problems of those days was the problems created by British rule, anti a host of other evils that branched out from colonial oppression of India. These included the threat of mass level conversion of the Indians to Christianity, the custom of untouchability that condemns Shudras to a sub-human existence, the low status of women, the purdah system, child marriage, illiteracy and also the most unfortunate Sati-system. These problems made Dayanand restless and uneasy. Further there was the problem of the growing pauperisation of masses as a result of the policy to reduce India to an agricultural colony of industrialised England.

Box 11.1 Dayanand's Life

Dayanand's education was Vedic and his father was one of his teachers. His education began with the Yajur Veda (one of the four Vedas) and continued in Sanskrit learning the rules of grammar and their application. Logic, philosophy, law, and ethics etc. were also taught. But Dayanand was more than a student. He was a seeker after enlightenment. He brooded over the problem of life and death.

To help him get over his brooding a marriage was fixed for him, but a week before his marriage he ran away from home at the age of 21. He became a sadhu and never regretted it. For 15 years (1845-1860 A.D.), Dayanand wandered all over India, quenching his thirst for knowledge, by meeting scores of other sadhus and pandits, Dayanand completed his education when he met Swami Virjanand Saraswati. Swami Virjanand charged Swami Dayanand to purge Hinduism of all the evils that existed in it. He told Dayanand that he must

enter the world as an independent teacher. He took a pledge from Swami Dayanand that he would devote 'his life to the dissemination of truth. Thereafter Dayanand spent his life honouring the pledge he had given to his guru.

The idea was that India would only produce raw materials for British factories, and serve as the captive market for their machine made goods. This was made possible due to India's backwardness, superstitions, multiplicity of sects, gurus and sub-faiths, each running down the other. Finally there was the predominance of the Brahmin priests who made other movements like Bhakti initially difficult to follow by their reprobation. This plethora of problems started Dayanand straight in the face, and he felt that he must do something about it,

For a proper understanding of the emergence of Arya Samaj we have to transport ourselves mentally to the period when colonisation was at its zenith.

India was governed by foreigners for more than ten centuries. Such a prolonged spell of domination demanded the spirit of India and weakened her. This whole period was of decadence and anaemic activity with an exception of bright patches such as the rise of Marathas, Peshwas and Rajputs, in the south, and the rise of Chalukyas, Cholas and Maharaja Ranjeet Singh in the Punjab. Foreign rule led to a great degree of dependence among Indians. The Brahmin priests were the final authority for all matters, including rituals and customs. The householder could not do anything without consulting them. The Brahmin was often very educated, but he carried his "patra" or "pauchaug", and nobody could question either his book or his authority. The Brahmin priest pontificated in all ceremonies from birth to death. He had to be well fed, paid handsome and kept in good humour. Ignorance, superstition and blind faith in all rituals of the past held supreme sway. However it must be pointed out that not all Indians were under the blind rule of Brahmins and also that movements such as Bhakti, Sufism and Veerashaivism had grown and flourished during the period.

Untouchability held sway among the Hindus who did not touch millions of their own brothers - the Shudras for fear of pollution. If they did, they had to take a cleansing bath. There was a question of inter-dining with them. The Hindu world was divided into a large number of sects and subsects, each with their own Guru and their main scripture. Questioning and enquiry was not their method; whatever was written in their sacred books and interpreted by their Guru became their creed. The scriptures were graded as sacrosanct, however any clever pandit could add his own invention to promote his own group-vested interests or special privileges in the name of the "Rishi" who was the original author. Such interpolations, though few in number, distorted the meanings of the original text and created total confusion in the interpretation of such texts. Swami Dayanand sought to unite all Hindus under the banner of the Vedas. He felt that so far as the

Vedas were concerned interpolations were impossible.

Box 11.2 Dayanand's Vision

Dayanand preached his own vision of Hinduism. He entered into many debates with learned Pandits. He travelled far and wide in Northern India. In 1872 a meeting with Brahmo Samaj leaders made him change his mode of address from Sanskrit to Hindi and was thus able to get a better response from the middle classes of the Hindu community. He founded schools and periodicals with the help of the Hindi speaking middle classes. Numerous books and pamphlets were also published.

11.3 FOUNDATIONS OF ARYA SAMAJ

Swami Dayanand took an important and far reaching decision during his tour to Bombay in 1875. This decision was regarding the foundation of "Arya Samaj". This organisation was founded to plant his message and bring reform firmly to the soil of north India. It went on to have an enormous impact on the development of Hinduism and of Indian nationalism.

The idea of an organisation had been in Dayanand's mind for some time. He had tried several times earlier to form a society. Once in Arrah in 1872 and again at Banaras in 1874, but both attempts had been short lived. On January 16, 1875 he set up the Arya Samaj at Rajkot but it did not flourish. Again in January 1875 he set up another Arya Samaj at Ahmedabad, but this attempt too failed. But on April 10, 1875 he set up the Arya Samaj at Bombay. It proved very successful. In Bombay a combination of factors created the right atmosphere for his renewed attempts to spread the influence of Arya Samaj. It may also be considered that by now Dayanand had a better preparation for setting up an organisation than earlier times. His ideas on reform had by now fully matured. There was his book the Satyarth Prakash in which he starts with his philosophy of education. He stresses that it is parental duty to make their children educated and of high moral character. He proposed that from the age of five children should learn Sanskrit and Hindi and foreign languages as well. His was thus a three language formula. He was also for parents disciplining their children and socializing them properly. Dayanand was for rigorous education from the age 8 years for both girls and boys, but was not for co-educational institutions. All students are required to observe Brahmacharya. Dayanand was however for equality of men and women through education. He vehemently opposed child marriage and said that marriage should not be before the age 16 for girls and before the age 25 for boys.

One of the most important and unconventional steps that Dayanand took was to Offer to "reclaim" Hindus who had changed their religion to Islam, Christianity and so on. This was often done en masse in what was known as the "Suddhi" ceremony or ceremony of purification.

The establishment of Arya Samaj raises a number of important questions. How did Dayanand conceive the role of the Samaj in society, and how did he see his own function in the Samaj? Who were the people interested in joining this organisation, and what were the reasons behind it? What kind of institution emerged (Arya Samaj) and what were its models? We will turn to these questions now.

It may be considered that Dayanand wanted to bring together all Hindus who agreed on a couple of very broad issues: (i) a dedication to religious and social reforms and (ii) a conviction in Hinduism that reform was to come through a revival of Vedic religion. Being organised as a body, these people would be more effective in helping one another in influencing the whole society. Swami Dayanand was not interested in creating a body of followers to propagate his ideas. He held the opinion that reform had to come from the people themselves. It is the task of the people to work for their personal improvement and for the upliftment of society. Dayanand would always be available to the people for advice-either in person or through his publications, but he would not be their leader. He had recognised the limitations of his own knowledge and refused to become 'the Guru of a group of devotees not even of a single individual.

On the basis of several statements of his we can conclude that from the very beginning Dayanand conceived his own role in the Samaj as anything but a dominant one. It was not his idea that the Samaj should become the esoteric heaven of a selected few, but rather that it should be a broad based and open association that could unite all Hindus of goodwill, around the unifying centre of their religion namely the Vedas. These fundamental attitudes of Dayanand towards the Samaj gradually became stronger as the organisation itself grew in later years.

The meeting and discussions that led to the establishment of the Samaj did not take much of Dayanand's time, which was mostly devoted to his usual work that is preaching, teaching, writing books and establishing Arya Samajis all over India. The public lecture had become the main instruments of his teaching. He had mainly concentrated on the positive side of his message-the history of Aryan people, Vedic revelation, the doctrines of God and soul, ethics and the upliftment of the nation. He had always been reluctant to let the flow of his lectures be interrupted or to have long question and answer sessions after the lectures.

11.3.1 Organisation of Arya Samaj

The Arya Samaj had an effective organisational structure. Every branch of the Arya Samaj is a unit in itself, and these are located in villages, towns and cities.

- i) Membership involved acceptance of the ten principles or rules (see Section 11.3.2 for a description of these), the payment of one per cent of monthly or yearly income to help the cause and general cooperation and participation in meetings etc. Such weekly meetings comprised of the boma ritual, bhajans and prayers. A lay person regardless of caste conducts these meetings.

- ii) The Executive Committee governed the affairs of the Arya Samaj. The office bearers were five in number and additional members all elected by the members themselves. The officers are (a) President, (b) Vice-President, (c) Secretary, (d) Accountant, (e) Librarian. These members are supposed to actively participate in the activities of the Samaj. These members as said are elected annually by ballot, and re-election is permissible.
- iii) Next there is the Provincial Assembly where representatives of the Samaj play an important part. Each Arya Samaj is to give 10 per cent of its gross income to the assembly. The assembly could raise funds of its own.
- iv) The apex body however is the All-India assembly. This is formed by representations from all provinces and links them together.
- v) There are young men's Arya Samajis which are liberal in admitting members who believe in god and pay a nominal monthly subscription for membership.
- vi) It may be pointed out that the Samaj has its meeting places anywhere it can organise them, whether they are their own building or any other place which will suffice and is available.

11.3.2 Rules of the Arya Samaj

The Bombay Arya Samaj started with 28 rules which touch religious, social, educational and organisational matters. Some of these rules are as follows: The Arya Samaj is necessary for the good of all the people. Each province shall have a principal Samaj with branches at as many places as possible. Once a week there shall be a meeting of the Samaj where Sam Veda Mantra shall be sung. There may be lectures and songs in praise of god with the accompaniment of instrumental music. The Samaj shall maintain a library of Sanskrit and Hindi books; shall maintain accounts (member to pay 1 per cent of their earnings), publish a paper, run Arya schools separately for boys and girls (at the girl's school only women staff shall be appointed), Learned men would be sent about to preach truth at other places. Members should love other members as they love themselves.

All ceremonies (including marriages and funerals) shall be performed according to the Vedas. Any dishonest and wicked member could be expelled, but not through prejudice or partisanship. Apart from the President and the Secretary, there would be an executive. There would be recognition and reward for outstanding work. The Samaj would work for the reformation of the country-both spiritual and material. For a job in Arya Samaj-institutions, an Arya Samajist would be given preference. When a donation is to be made at the time of marriage, it should go to the Arya Samaj. The prime religious rule was that Vedas are supreme and have self-evident authority; other books from the teachings of the Rishis have secondary authority.

Formless God is to be worshipped.

The 28 rules are exhaustive and detailed; also these were numerous and could not be remembered. Hence their number was cut down to ten at Lahore. June 24, 1877 was an important day in the history of Arya Samaj since it was on this day that the foundation of Arya Samaj was laid down in Lahore.

This was not an affiliate of the Bombay Arya Samaj. The Lahore Samaj was a new chapter in its history - it meant almost a transformation of the old Samaj. For instance the 28 (niyamas) rules accepted at Bombay were carefully revised, reworded and educated to a manageable "Ten Principles". It was as if the Arya Samaj had got a New Constitution. The number of founding members of Lahore Arya Samaj] was about a hundred. This number went up to about 500 by the end of July.

The ten rules were adopted on July 24, 1877. These are the fundamental tenets of Arya Samaj and all Aryas are expected to conform to them. The first two are related to God and the third to the Vedas. God and the Vedas are the bases of Arya Samaj. The rest are a guide to the conduct of a moral man. These ten rules are as under:

- i) God is the primordial root (source) of all true knowledge and of all things that can be known through knowledge.
- ii) God is all Truth, All knowledge, All Bliss. He is Bodyless (Formless), Almighty, Just, Merciful, Unborn, Infinite, Unchangeable, Beginningless, Incomparable, Support and Lord of all, All-pervading, knower and controller of all form within, Imperishable, Immortal, Fearless, Eternal, Holy and the creator of the whole universe. He alone is worthy of worship.
- iii) Vedas are the books of all true knowledge. It is the prime duty of all Aryas to study and propagate the Veda, to hear and preach it. After God, the Veda is the most important constituent of Dayanand's ideology. His call "Back to the Vedas" means that we are to reject all changes that may be found in the scriptures, that may be at variance with the teachings of the Vedas. The Veda is God's own word, revealed to mankind through the Rishis (sages). They are thus of non-human authorship.
- iv) We should always be ready to accept Truth and reject untruth. This is an important dictum. We should not stick to any opinion, merely because it has the sanction of time. If it is untrue we should have no hesitation in abandoning it.
- v) All actions should be performed according to Dharma and after considering the right and wrong of each. Do the right; shun the wrong-that is the formula.

vi) The principal of this Samaj is to do good to the world -physical, social and spiritual. This means that Arya Samaj is no sectarian or parochial institution working for the good of only its own members, as some of the closed societies claim it to be. The Samaj is created for the good of the whole world.

This is a far cry from the old Hindu approach of extreme individualism where each aspirant sought only his own "Mukti" or salvation. In fact it was the early goal of young Dayanand too, before Swamy Virjananda widened his horizon and commanded him to work for the good of the country and the whole world.

vii) We should deal with people with love, righteousness and consideration of their merit.

The basis of our behaviour with all fellow beings should be of love, and goodwill, not snobbery, hate, ill will or jealousy. A society based on universal love will bring the kingdom of heaven on earth. Also a person of superior merit would receive superior regards.

This is the character of human dignity, but it does not preach blind equality, irrespective of a person's virtues or vice, genius or mediocrity, worth or otherwise. This is Vedic socialism.

viii) We should work for the liquidation of ignorance and promotion of knowledge.

ix) No one should be content with his own upliftment but should feel his own good in the good of all.

This means that all human beings, being the image of God are one entity. The whole emphasis is from selfish to altruistic good. No man or group can be happy if all round people are starving or miserable, as they would only bring down the whole social structure. To do good to others is no favour but enlightened self-interest.

x) All men are obliged (unfree) in having to obey the social laws that have been framed for the good of all; but everyone is free to work for his own welfare.

For instance, one is not free to break the traffic laws or commit theft or murder, for all such laws are there, for the good of all. But in all personal matters, concerning one's individual good, one has freedom. That means one has freedom of action" but not at the cost of the wellbeing of others.

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) What kind of role did Dayanand conceive for himself in the Arya Samaj?
.....
.....
.....
.....
- 2) How many rules did the Lahore Arya Samaj conceive for its members ?
Enumerate any five of them.
 - a)
 - b)
 - c)
 - d)
 - e)

To conclude we can say these ten rules are the principles for a noble and happy society as conceived of by Swami Dayanand. These rules would apply to people in all countries and all ages. Except for rule 3 which gives primacy to Vedas.

Activity 1

Make a list of the ten principles of the Arya Samaj in Lahore (1877). Ask an Arya Samaji you know what he/she can summarize about them. Write down their comments in your notebook and discuss with other students in the study centre, if possible.

11.3.3 Members of the Arya Samaj

Accordingly a committee of 22 was elected and the list is very impressive one. Half of the members have a university degree: five M.As; three doctors, one lawyer and two B.As. By 1877 not more than a dozen Punjabis could have gained that degree. It means that nearly half of that number were on the Samaj Committee. If half of the committee could boast of a university degree, the presumption is that many other Aryas had matriculation and higher degrees. Thus we can conclude that Lahore Arya Samaj Committee was indeed representative of the cream of educated Punjabis.

Of the twenty-two committee members, only one was a Brahmin, whereas probably over eighty per cent were Khatris. That was in sharp contrast to the educational qualification of Bombay Arya Samaj membership. Swami Dayanand was lucky in bringing in such intellectual stalwarts as had the capacity to greatly elevate the Samaj and its programmes to a very high standard. Lahore proved to be a take off stage for the Samaj in every way.

Box 11.3 Social Ideals of the Arya Samaj

The social ideals of the Arya Samaj were meant to reflect the ideals of the Vedas and these were:

- i) Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of Man
- ii) The equality of the sexes
- iii) Justice and fair play between peoples and between nations
- iv) Equal opportunity to all according to their merit
- v) Love and charity towards all.

11.3.4 Publication of Vedabhashya

Swami Dayanand always swore by the Vedas, but whenever someone quoted any mantra from the Vedas giving traditional meaning to it, Dayanand always put his own interpretation on it. On persuasion of some of his friends Dayanand started working on his "Vedabhashya" (commentary on Vedas) with enthusiasm. He said that most of the Vedic mantras had a triple meaning:

- i) one relating to sacrifices and rituals (traditional interpretation of Sayana etc.);
- ii) spiritual and philosophical meaning (Dayanand's contribution); and
- iii) scientific meaning (again his innovation).

Swami Dayanand devoted some of the last years of his life to the activities that involved him and his Samaj with the wider world of Hinduism. His public notice at Hardwar has clearly stated the policy; consensus not controversy was to be the guiding motto. The Arya Samaj which was already showing some leanings towards sectarianism, had to become the rallying point of all Hindus of goodwill and had to be accepted by Hindus as such. The collaboration with the theosophists was promoted by these intentions and so was the composition of the board of trustees of the "Paropkarini" sabha. But the most significant move in that direction was the involvement of the Aryas in the following three successive agitations i.e. for

- i) Indramani case (for violating Samaj's conduct);
- ii) Cow protection; and
- iii) popularization of Hindi.

Each of these causes brought many Hindus together across the barriers of caste, sect and provincialism. By its enthusiastic participation the Arya Samaj could project the image of being the protagonist of broad Hindu nationalism. In fact these movements or agitations were not originally launched by Dayanand, but he came to the assistance of these movements that were well launched and to which

a large number of Hindus were deeply committed. Thus Dayanand steered his Samaj towards closer cooperation with orthodox and sectarian Hindus, and anticipated the movement of "Sangathan" consolidation and integration of the whole Hindu community.

Activity 1

Visit an Arya Samaj Centre in your town and ask the members to explain you the contemporary role of Arya Samaj.

Another important indication of the widening of Dayanand's outlook is that in the last year of his life, for the first time he paid attention to South India. To him "Aryavarta" has always meant the region-north of the Vindhya range. But with the passage of time his concern broadened and acquired national and political dimensions and he turned towards the south of India. But this all-India dream was shattered 'by Dayanand's untimely death.

11.4 ARYA SAMAJ MOVEMENT AND REFORM

The Arya Samaj opened a vast number of educational institutions for boys and girls all over north India. Orphanages were opened and thus Christian missionaries were prevented from converting people to Christianity. Arya Samaj's worked on earthquake relief. In 1923 when the Moplas of Malabar forcibly converted Hindus to Islam it was the Arya Samaj's who reconverted them to Hinduism. Before Mahatma Gandhi took up the cause of untouchables it was the Arya Samaj's who had tried to get them recognised as equal members of Hindu Society. They also carried on a ceaseless effort to remove their superstitions and teach them the fundamental doctrines of religion.

Dayanand formed many Gurukuls as part of the Arya Samaj educational programme. The first D.A.V. (Dayanand Anglo-Vedic) College was founded in Lahore to commensurate Dayanand's memory after his death in Ajmer in 1883. This institution became a focal point of national education in the country.

The idea of the Founders of Lahore College was to induce the scientific temperament in the students without uprooting them from their spiritual, cultural, religious moorings. Till then only the British Government or foreign Christian missionaries had established such English medium colleges. However, some followers of Dayanand e.g, Swami Shardhanand did not agree with the medium of instruction and set up a parallel institution called Gurukul in Kangri, near Hardwar in U.P. which also flourished. It was based on the ancient ideal of a residential school where teachers and students lived as a family. Today Gurukuls in India number over 50, most of them in Haryana. There was a dispute between both parties (DAV and Gurukul) as each claimed to be the genuine followers of Dayanand. The educational centres were completely free of Government control and considered to be anti-British. Again it was the politically moderate wing of the Arya Samaj represented by the D.A.V. College. movement which made a

greater impact on the educated middle class. This middle class was at the vanguard of the Indian Renaissance in the 19th century. The Arya Samaj's educational policy was thus totally at variance with that of Lord William Bentinck (policy of 1834) and that of the Christian missionaries which was to make either clerks for administration or converts into Christianity.

11.4.1 Three Challenges to Hinduism

The Hindu religion grew and flourished and had the capacity to absorb any new religious force and its perpetuity was taken for granted. But thrice in recorded history, it had faced decisive challenges - once from Buddhism and Jainism, later from Islam and lastly from Christianity.

Arya Samaj has performed an important social mission during the third and latest crisis in Hinduism which came with the British rule. Arya Samaj successfully stopped the tide of mass conversions to Christianity. In defending Hinduism Arya Samaj had played a significant role.

11.4.2 Arya Samaj and Emancipation of Women

Women, like Harijans have been called 'Slaves of the slaves'. In the British era men were the slaves of the British and women were the slaves of these enslaved men. Women had few rights, little freedom and were rarely considered as equals to men.

Dayanand, the founder of Arya Samaj was among the pioneers of women's rights and equality in modern times. He advocated the equality of sexes. Dayanand encouraged women to study the Vedas - a revolutionary step at that time. They were allowed to recite "Gayatri" mantra while tradition did not permit them this privilege. Dayanand forcefully put forward the argument that women "rishis" account for 200 mantras in the Rig-Veda alone.

He also carried on a crusade against child marriage. Dayanand ordained that no girl should be married till she was 16 and boys should marry at 25 or above. Thus he confronted the so called 'Shastric' injunction that, if a girl had her menses in her father's house, the father and brother would go to hell. This idea was ridiculed by Dayanand. His argument was why anyone should go to hell because of a natural function.

Dayanand's stand was that men or women should marry only once. For a young widow, his prescription' was for 'Niyoga', rather than widow marriage. To him "Niyoga" meant temporary union with the dead husband's brother or other kin to get a child or two but not more than two. But his concept of Niyoga was not accepted by the Aryas; Dayanand in a true democratic spirit did not press his point. In fact, Arya Samaj in the Punjab advertised for and arranged some widow remarriages and Dayanand acquiesced.

Arya Samaj took up the cause of and improved education in general and women's education in an impressive way. As mentioned earlier it has 'organised

a network of schools and colleges in the country both for boys and girls where education was imparted in the mother-tongue. Dayanand Anglo-Vedic (D.A.V.) colleges were founded. Some of the Conservative Arya Samajis were of the opinion that education imported in these colleges were not sufficiently Vedic in character, therefore in the leadership of Munshi Ram they started Gurukul at Hardwar, where education in its method and content was given in the ancient Vedic manner. Being the pioneer in opening women's schools, colleges and Gurukuls, Arya Samaj founded the first Kanya Mahavidyalaya in Jallunder in 1896.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Write a note on the educational qualifications of the members of the Lahore Arya Samaj.

.....
.....
.....
.....

- 2) Elaborate the role of Arya Samaj for the emancipation of women.

.....
.....
.....
.....

11.4.3 Politics and the Arya Samaj

Dayanand was not just a social and religious reformer. He was also a forerunner in the national and political awakening of India. The Arya Samaj was founded in 1875 a decade before the Indian National Congress. Dayanand had prepared the ground and declared that foreign government is no substitute for self-rule. Lala Lajpat Rai has mentioned that the British had always viewed the Arya Samaj with suspicion. This often took the form of deportations prosecutions etc. of its members. The Arya Samaj was considered a seditious body. Members were dismissed from civil and military service solely on the grounds that they were members of the Arya Samaj. The open declaration of the desire for political freedom at a time when jailing was common for such utterances showed a great deal of moral courage from its members. The Arya Samaj however always mentioned it was a religious, social and cultural organisation.

In bringing about the transition of the loyalist character of the Indian National Congress to a mass political movement (moderate to radical approach) by Mahatma Gandhi, Arya Samaj Movement played a significant role as admitted by Dr. Rajendra Prasad the first President of India. The Congress also took over most of the social reforms as advocated by the Arya Samaj as part of the National Movement.

The Arya Samaj stand on political freedom and socio-cultural changes was indicated when the Congress adopted the removal of untouchability, the emancipation of women, and other reforms. A large number of the members of Arya Samaj became active supporters of Mahatma Gandhi. However the Arya Samaj remains away from power politics and is a social reform movement. It is a non-political organisation.

According to D. Vable, the post independence scenario saw the inroads of power politics into the Arya Samaj. While in 1915 it was on the rise subsequently from 1920 onwards, as the Congress became popular under Gandhi, and it began to decline. The political resurgence of the pre-independence days much reduced its influence. Further the influence of Hinduism also threatened its very identity. At present 65 years or so after the warning given by Lala Lajpat Rai the Arya Samaj faces its own erasure by Hinduism, which it once purported to defend. The Arya Samaj in fact would do well to think of its own identity, rather than defend the Hindus.

Swami Dayanand and Arya Samaj movement have contributed in the National movement in the following ways:

- 1) support of the Hindi language
- 2) Swadeshi and Khadi were supported
- 3) opposition to salt taxes, was agreed upon and supported.

Some critics have dubbed Swami Dayanand as a reactionary, looking back towards the dead past because he gave the call "Back to Vedas". Yet Dayanand ushered in modern action in India just as Gandhiji did half a century later.

11.5 LET US SUM UP

In this Unit we described the Arya Samaj as a social movement. We began with the need for reform in the 19th Century and went on to the founding of the Arya Samaj, its organisation, principles/rules, early members and the publication of Vedabyasa. In the next section we discussed the Arya Samaj movement and reform. This includes the Samaj's response to the challenges to Hinduism, emancipation of women and its role in politics. We have therefore provided a clear picture of Arya Samaj as a modern religious movement.

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11.7 SPECIMEN ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Dayanand conceived of himself as a guiding light of the Arya Samaj. He did not think of himself as a leader or a guru to be followed.
- 2) The Lahore Arya Samaj simplified the original 28 rules to simply ten. Five of these rules for members were:
 - i) God is the source of all true knowledge.
 - ii) God is Truth, Knowledge, and Bliss.
 - iii) Vedas are the books of all true knowledge.
 - iv) Accept Truth, reject untruth.
 - v) Each man should follow his Dharma.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) The members of the original Lahore Arya Samaj were highly educated and had among them lawyers, doctors, B.As and M.As. Thus the members of the Samaj were highly educated.
- 2) Women in Colonial India were 'Slaves of slaves'. Dayanand fought against this slavery. He fought against child marriage and reintroduced Niyoga, and countered many deep entrenched superstitions. He arranged widow remarriages. For women's education Dayanand's followers started women's educational institutions called "Gurukuls".

UNIT 12 NEW AGE MOVEMENTS *

Structure

- 12.0 Objectives
- 12.1 Introduction
- 12.2 Founding of Ramakrishna Mission
- 12.3 Ideology of the Ramakrishna Mission
 - 12.3.1 Ideology and Objects
 - 12.3.2 Activities of the Mission
- 12.4 Organisational Structure of Ramakrishna Mission
 - 12.4.1 Math and Mission
 - 12.4.2 Ramakrishna Vivekananda Mission
 - 12.4.3 The Governing Body
- 12.5 Financial Support and Activities
 - 12.5.1 Financing the Activities
 - 12.5.2 Social Welfare Activities
 - 12.5.3 Participation of People
 - 12.5.4 Cultural Activities
- 12.6 Birthday Celebrations
 - 12.6.1 Concept of Trinity
 - 12.6.2 Birthday Celebration of Sri Ramakrishna
 - 12.6.3 Birthday Celebration of Sri Sarada Devi
 - 12.6.4 Birthday Celebration of Swami Vivekananda
 - 12.6.5 How are the Birthdays Celebrated?
- 12.7 Other Activities of Ramakrishna Mission
 - 12.7.1 Other Celebrations
 - 12.7.2 Bhak' a Sammelan
 - 12.7.3 Challeuges that Confront the Mission
- 12.8 Ramakrishna Mission as a Modern Movement
 - 12.8.1 History of the Mission
 - 12.8.2 The Present Position
- 12.9 Let Us Sum Up
- 12.10 Specimen Answers to Check Your Progress
- 12.11 References

*Adopted from IGNOU Course Material: Unit 24 of *Society and Religion* (ESO 15) written by Vandana Sinha with modifications by Nita Mathur

12.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you should be able to understand:

- get a clear idea of how the Ramakrishna Mission began;
- identify the prominent personalities who contributed to the development of the Ramakrishna Mission;
- form a general idea of The Ramakrishna Mission's various socio-religious-cultural activities;
- know clearly about the organisational structure of the Ramakrishna Mission - its headquarters organisation and sub-organisations;
- see the utility of such organisations for the betterment of the living conditions of our people and the suffering humanity of the world; and
- get an awareness of the challenges that confront this religious organisation; and its problems and prospects as a religious movement of the modern times in our strife-torn world.

12.1 INTRODUCTION

The New Age is characterized by sacralized understanding of, among others, widely held values (e.g., freedom, self-responsibility, self-determination, self-reliance) and associated assumptions and ideas (e.g., it is possible to change for the better, being true to oneself, importance of taking responsibility for one's life, distrust of traditions, importance of liberating oneself from the restrictions imposed by the past). New Age religious Movements equip an individual to deal with the insecurity especially with respect to his/her identity. Having lost faith in traditions and mainstream solutions to problems, especially concerning their sense of the self, individuals are drawn to New Age religious movements with the expectation that participation in these movements would provide an effective resolution of their crisis (Heelas 1996). In this Unit we will focus attention on the Ramakrishna Mission as representative of a New Age Movement.

In this Unit we will deal with the Ramakrishna Mission: the founding of the Mission: its ideology and organisational structure; and the various activities of Ramakrishna Mission. We also deal with the symbolic significance of birthday celebrations of Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda. Finally we touch upon Bhakti Sammelan and other sundry activities. It is pointed out here that the unit is based on the further reading listed at the end.

12.2 FOUNDING OF RAMAKRISHNA MISSION

You will be interested to know how and when the Ramakrishna Mission was founded; by whom it was founded, and how it gradually spread.

Sri Ramakrishna, a householder saint of Bengal was born at Kamarpukur in 1836. He died in the early hours of August 16, 1886.

He himself, initially the priest of Dakshineswar Temple, went far beyond the priestly role and indicated the attributes of a yogi and sanyasi. Although married to Sarada Devi, the marriage was never consummated. For Ramakrishna, the God of every religion was the same, but could be worshipped in different ways, as prescribed by the religions themselves.

Sri Ramakrishna's message was that God can be realized only by renunciation of "women and God". Ramakrishna monism reduced all other views and paths into the experience of the unity of truth. Sri Ramakrishna converted Swami Vivekananda to his views by giving him many experiences of truth,

Shortly after he had left his mortal frame, a monastic order bearing the name of Sri Ramakrishna was organised in 1886, at the Math, Baranagore, about three kilometers North of Calcutta. This monastic order was organised by his Sannyasin disciples headed by Swami Vivekananda; In fact, no one really "founded" this order. It was the master Ramakrishna himself who brought it into being during his illness. He instructed Swami Vivekananda as to how this order was to be organised and conducted.

The spiritual inspiration of Holy Mother, Sri Sarada Devi, the consort of Sri Ramakrishna was a great inspiration behind the Math -and the Mission.

In 1899, the Math was transferred to its present home at Belur across the Ganga, about six kilometers north of Calcutta.

However, the year 1897, the month of May, will go down in the history of modern religious movements in India as the year when the Ramakrishna Mission was started by Swami Vivekananda and his handful of associates. It was registered on the 4th of May in 1909 under Act XXI of 1860, with registration no. Sf 1917 of 1909-10 in the name of Ramakrishna Mission. For the link between Swami Vivekananda and Sri Ramakrishna, see Box 27.01.

12.3 IDEOLOGY OF THE, RAMAKRISHNA MISSION

The Ramakrishna Mission was established with some basic ideas which are now discussed.

12.3.1 Ideology and Objects

The ideology and objectives of the Ramakrishna Mission were:

- i) to impart and promote the study of the Vedanta and its principles as propounded by Ramakrishna and practically illustrated by his own life, and of comparative ideology in its widest form. Vedanta is a Hindu philosophy

which teaches that there is Oneness of all Truth. That all evolves from Truth and returns to Truth. Thus all appearances are deceptive, unless apprehended through the Truth.

- ii) to impart and promote the study of the arts, science and industries;
- iii) to train teachers in all the branches of knowledge mentioned above and enable them to reach the masses;
- iv) to carry on educational work among the masses;
- v) to establish, maintain, carry on and assist schools, colleges, universities, orphanages, workshops, laboratories, hospitals, dispensaries. houses for the infirm, the invalid, and the afflicted, famine relief works, and other educational and/or charitable works and institutions of a like nature;
- vi) to print and publish and to sell or distribute, gratuitously or otherwise, journals, periodicals, books or leaflets that the Association may think desirable for the promotion of its objects;
- vii) to carry on any other work which may seem to the Association capable of being conveniently carried on, in connection with the calculated and directly or indirectly to promote any of the before mentioned objects.

You may put these ideas of the Ramakrishna Mission under the following heads.

- i) Ideal: Freedom of the self and service of mankind.
- ii) Aim: Preaching and practice of Sanatana Dharma, the eternal religion, as embodied in the lives and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda,
- iii) Motto: Renunciation and Service; Harmony of all religion. iv) Method: Work and worship.

12.3.2 Activities of the Mission

By providing an idea of the practices which the Mission is engaged in we hope to indicate its wide range' of activities.

- i) Worship: This includes specialized training of monastic aspirants and religious preachings.
- ii) General and technical education with an ethical and spiritual background; other general services include:
- iii) medical service;
- iv) famine and distress relief work;
- v) rural upliftment;

- vi) work among the toiling and emerging people of all classes; and
vii) other cultural activities.

Now that we have listed the various activities of the Ramakrishna Mission, you would be curious to know how these various activities of the Mission are being organised. This list makes it clear that the Mission has a comprehensive plan of activities ranging from the transcendental to the practical.

Box 12.2

This box indicates that it was a holy man (Sri Ramakrishna) and his followers who were responsible for creating the Mission. Ramakrishna inspired the movement for a Mission and Vivekananda and his fellow disciples founded / it and spread its teachings.

Sri Ramakrishna died in 1886 after appointing Vivekananda as his successor. Bhakti had been the main ritual during the lifetime of Ramakrishna. Ramakrishna puja was added to Kalipuja. The bhaktas were therefore dedicated to guru and Kali. Vivekananda did not approve of this and a split developed between him and most of the disciples. The principles upon which Vivekananda rested his faith were monism, monasticism, universalism, toleration, liberalism, humanitarianism, progressive-ness, and the scientific world view. Vivekananda believed Vedanta was the only scientific religion and that it was completely compatible with science.

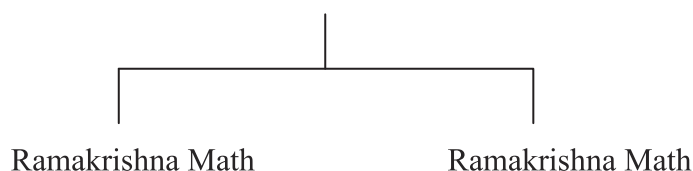
12.4 ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF RAMAKRISHNA MISSION

There is an elaborate organisational structure to organise and regulate the various activities of the Ramakrishna Mission.

12.4.1 Math and Mission

Let us now turn to a description of this. The following diagram will illustrate the organizational structure:

Diagram 1



It should be understood that the Ramakrishna Mission and Ramakrishna Math are closely connected in the following ways:

- i) both have their headquarters at Belur Math in Calcutta.
- ii) the Governing Body of the Mission is made up of the Trustees of the Math.
- iii) the administrative work of the Mission is carried on by the monks of the Ramakrishna Math.

Yet, Ramakrishna Mission and Ramakrishna Math are distinct legal entities having their own branches.

You may like to know how the Mission and the Math are distinct entities. As a matter of fact, the Math and Mission are distinct entities in the following manner:

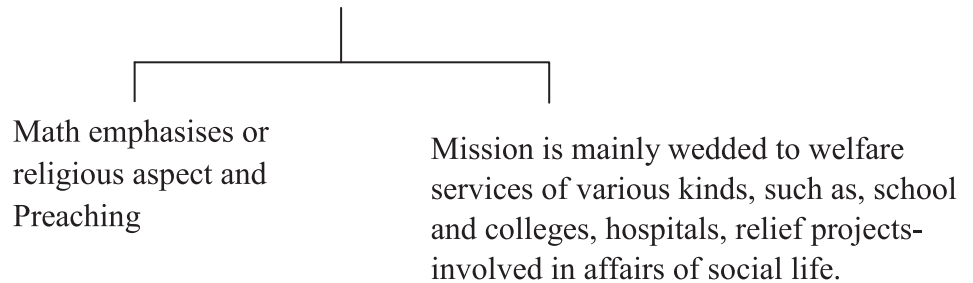
- i) The Math organisation is Constituted under a Trust with well-defined rules of procedure.

The Mission on the other hand is a registered society.

- ii) While both the Math and the Mission take up charitable and philanthropic activities, the Math lays emphasis on religious aspect and preaching, while the Mission is wedded mainly to the welfare services of numerous types.

Diagram 2

Activities of Math and Mission
(Charitable and Philanthropic)



To distinguish the Math from the Mission, Christopher Isherwood very aptly used the terms 'Contemplative Math', and 'Socially Active Mission'. The Math is oriented to religion and preaching through contemplation, while the Mission is oriented to various types of social welfare activities.

We hope you will bear this point of distinction in mind although people often loosely associate Ramakrishna Mission with Math activities also.

It is equally necessary for you to bear in mind that the appropriation of the name of Sri RamWishna or Swami Vivekananda by any institution does not imply that it is affiliated to either Ramakrishna Math or Ramakrishna Mission which have their headquarters at the Belur Math.

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Name the three main inspirations for the founding of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission.
 - a).....
 - b).....
 - c).....

- 2) Mention the objects of the Ramakrishna Mission.
 - a).....
 - b).....
 - c).....
 - d).....

12.4.2 Ramakrishna Vivekananda Mission

As in the case of other religious organisations, there is a new tendency of divisiveness in the Ramakrishna Mission. Owing to some ideological differences in the main Ramakrishna Mission, a breakaway group known as Ramakrishna Vivekananda Mission emerged, laying its main emphasis on ideals as contained in the following words of Swami Vivekananda:

"Ye, I be born again and again and suffer a thousand miseries, if I can worship the only God I dream of; my God the afflicted and my God, the poor of all. Races, of all Nations".

Ramakrishna Vivekananda Mission inspired by the ideals of 'Serve God in Man' and '-Work and Worship' came to emerge as a separate organisation and was registered, under the West Bengal Societies Registration Act, 1961, with registration No. 5/18606 of 1976-1977, with its headquarters at 7, Riverside Road, Barrackpore, District 24-Parganas in West Bengal, about 25 kms North from Calcutta city, and 24 kms North-West of Calcutta Airport. Its Governing Body was made up of 14 members with Swami Nityananda as its founder-Secretary. There are several such institutions in India and abroad appropriating the names of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda.

These Missions are not to be confused with Ramakrishna Mission having its headquarters at Belur Math. Even these organisations; particularly the Ramakrishna Vivekananda Mission of Barrackpore, having its own branches in various places, are dedicated to numerous types of Welfare services, \particularly in areas of general education, non-formal education, vocational training, rural development work, medical services etc. for the poor, underprivileged, destitute children and women in distress irrespective of their caste or religion.

Like Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, they have established Vivekananda Math and Ramakrishna Vivekananda Mission which are inseparably connected. While the Vivekananda Math provided the field for spiritual preparation, the Ramakrishna Vivekananda Mission created the venue for "liberation from bondage through selfless service to the suffering humanity irrespective of any distinction in their caste, creed, religion and region".

The Ramakrishna Vivekananda Mission is a philanthropic public charitable organisation registered on 1st November, 1976 under the West Bengal Societies Registration Act, 1961. It is both legally and constitutionally different from the main organisation, Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission at Belur on the one hand, and Sarada Math and Ramakrishna Sarada Mission at Dakshineswar on the other.

12.4.3 The Governing Body

The Ramakrishna Mission which was registered as an Association on the 4th of May 1909, under the Societies Registration Act XXI of 1909 had its headquarters at Belur. Apart from the headquarters organisation at Belur, Ramakrishna Mission has now more than 127 branches in all, spread over the whole world, in countries like, India, Argentina (South America), Bangladesh, Canada, England, Fiji, France, Japan, Mauritius, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, United States of America, 'etc.

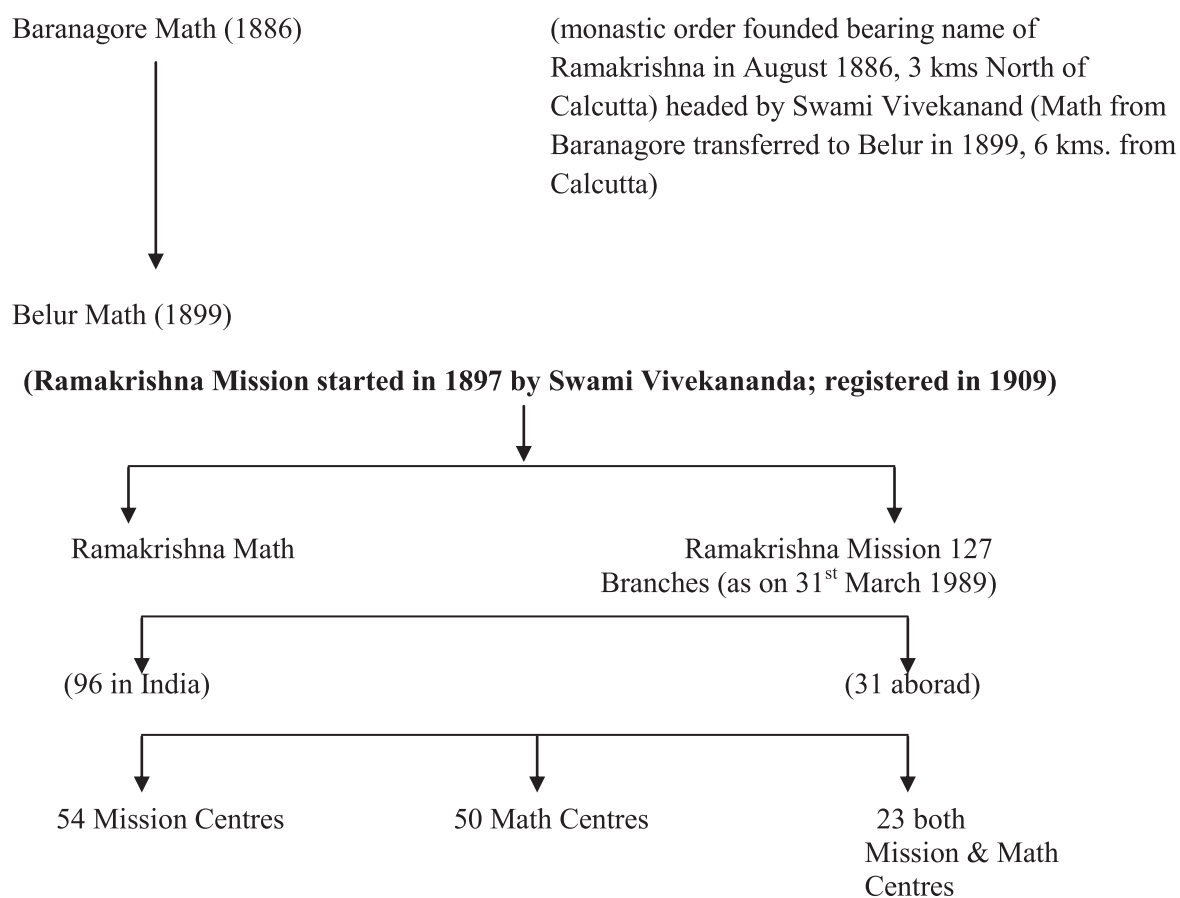
It is an international organisation having 127 branches (as on 31 March, 1989), with 96 centres in India and 31 centres outside India. Out of these 127 Branches, 54 are Ramakrishna Mission Centres, 50 are Ramakrishna Math Centres, and 23 are both Mission and Math centres.

In India, these centres are spread far and wide over the various regions of Andhra Pradesh; Arunachal Pradesh; Assam; Bihar; Delhi; Gujarat; Haryana and Punjab; Karnataka; Kerala; Madhya Pradesh; Maharashtra; Meghalaya; Orissa; Rajasthan; Tamil Nadu; Tripura; Uttar Pradesh; and West Bengal.

West Bengal alone has over two and a half dozen centres. Almost all important metropolitan cities in India, like Hyderabad, Bangalore, Bombay/Madras, Kanpur, Lucknow, Calcutta, Jaipur, Chandigarh etc. have been covered by the branches of Ramakrishna Mission:

An illustrative organisational chart may help you to understand the elaborate organisational structure of the Ramakrishna Mission. It will also help to give you a precise view of the impact of the Ramakrishna Mission as a religious movement of modern times.

Diagram 3
Organisational Structure of Ramakrishna Mission



Note: As diagram 3 shows that initially the Baranagore Math was founded in 1886 bearing the name of Sri Ramakrishna by his disciples including Swami Vivekananda.

About 12 years later this was moved to Belur Math about 6 kms from Calcutta. On the other hand Ramakrishna Mission started in 1897 by Swami Vivekananda and registered in 1909.

As of 1989 Ramakrishna Mission and Math had 127 branches of which 96 were in India and 31 abroad of these there were 54 mission centres, 50 math centres and 23 both Mission and math centres. This information can be seen at a glance from diagram 3.

12.5 FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND ACTIVITIES

After discussing the organisational structure, we now show how the various social welfare activities of Ramakrishna Mission and Ramakrishna Math are financed.

12.5.1 Financing the Activities

Ramakrishna Mission and Ramakrishna Math have their own separate funds and keep their separate accounts. Their accounts are audited by qualified auditors.

To organise their various social welfare activities both Ramakrishna Mission and Math receive grants-in-aid from three sources, viz.,

- i) Central Government,
- ii) State Governments, and
- iii) Public Bodies

The other activities of the Math are financed from:

- iv) offerings, and
- v) sale of publications etc.

The Mission is also supported by

- vi) fees from the students, and
- vii) public donations etc.

As can be seen the Mission and Math do not depend totally on Central government, State government and public bodies for their finance. They are also financed by individuals who offer donations, fees from students sale of publications etc.

12.5.2 Social Welfare Activities

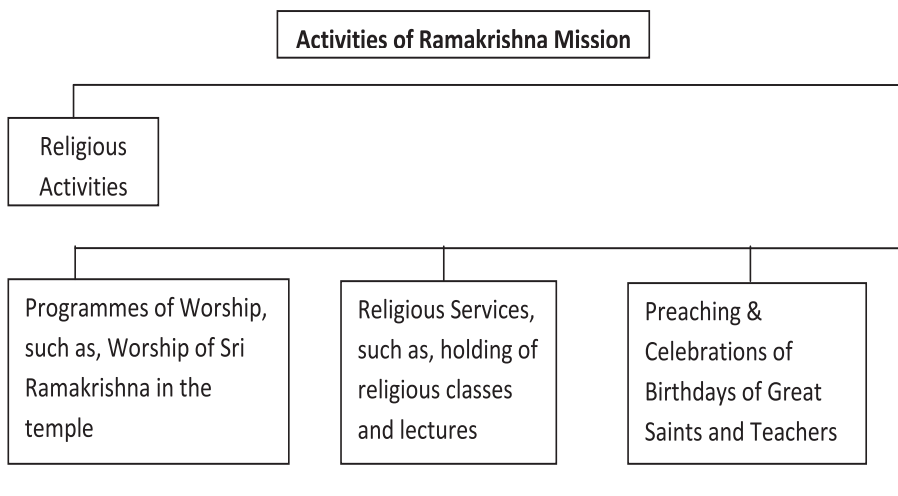
We hope you are aware of the various activities of the Ramakrishna Mission related to the social welfare services. Many of you may also be associated with some of them. The Ramakrishna Math and the Ramakrishna Mission maintain a number of Ashrams and temples with their programmes of worship, religious services, and preachings. They are also running several schools, colleges, libraries, students' homes, sevashrams (Hospitals) with indoor facilities, clinics, dispensaries, invalid homes etc.

Apart from creating a religious revival based on the principles of Vedanta as preached by Swami Vivekananda, the Ramakrishna movement has contributed a great deal for the upliftment of the downtrodden. Many of you we hope, are quite familiar with its services particularly in the field of education, running of hospitals, and undertaking relief work in the hour of need. If you take an over-all view, you will find that the various activities of the Ramakrishna Mission may be classified into two broad categories, viz.,

- i) those related to the various types of religious services, such as, regular worship, preachings etc., and
- ii) those related to the various types of social welfare activities, particularly in the fields of education, health etc.

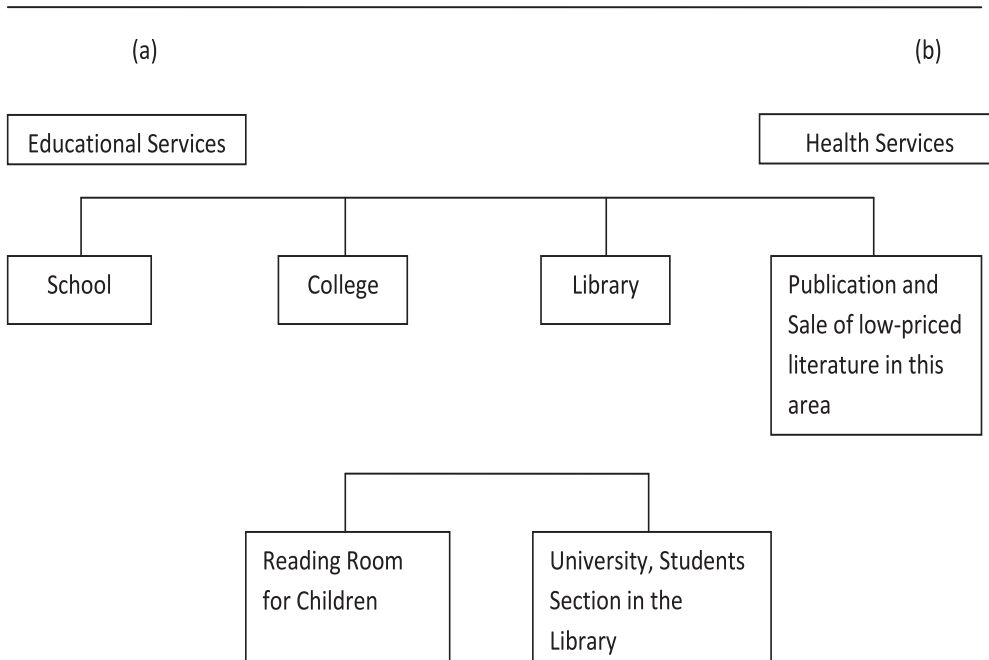
For a quick grasp and understanding you may also illustrate these various types of activities through the following diagram:

(I)

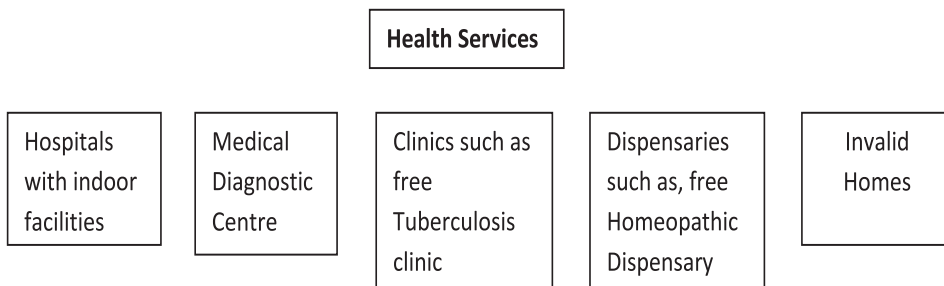


(II)

Social Welfare Services



(III)



Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Explain the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Mission.
.....
.....
- 2) Mention some of the Activities of the Ramakrishna Mission.
 - a).....
 - b).....
 - c).....
 - d).....
 - e).....

12.5.3 Participation of People

Any movement can sustain itself only through the participation of the people. The Ramakrishna Mission is spreading their life-giving ideas of vedanta, and the inspiring messages of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda through regular discourses and occasional lectures which stimulate the spiritual aspirations of the people through their participation in the celebrations of Birthdays of the Great Teachers, bhajans, worship, Ramanama Sankritanam or Ekadasi days, and weekly discourses on Ramcharit Manas in Hindi, and on Yivekachudamani in Bengali and occasionally on Vedanta in English.

In all religious programmes, people of various walks of life, students, teachers, government servants, businessmen, politicians, doctors, professionals and common people, rich and poor all participate.

Of educational and health services, people of all types are the beneficiaries. Let us enumerate a few of these services.

- a) To fight the scourge of tuberculosis in an organised way, the Ramakrishna Mission has provided some free tuberculosis centres in some areas. These clinics have the following functions:
 - i) to diagnose individual cases;
 - ii) to treat cases fit for treatment at the clinic;
 - iii) to get admitted in other hospitals, cases which require prolonged hospitalisation or special surgical treatment;
 - iv) to treat patients at home under the Domiciliary- Service Scheme, prior to admission after discharge from hospitals; and
 - v) to examine contacts of patients with a view to detecting early cases as a preventive measure.

The Tuberculosis clinic run by the Ramakrishna Mission in Delhi is a clinic fully equipped with, facilities for diagnosis and treatment of tuberculosis. Various medicines like anti- T.B. drugs, antibiotics, vitamins are supplied free to all patients except those covered by, the Central Government Health Scheme.

The clinic is well equipped with physician, medical officer, paramedical staff, nursing staff dispenser, laboratory assistants etc.

- b) The Domiciliary Service Scheme has the Domiciliary Service Unit having staff members deputed from the Delhi Municipal Corporation in pursuance of their tuberculosis control programme. Under-this scheme, a close liaison between the Patient and the institution is maintained whereby the patients and their contacts are advised on matters, of isolation and disinfection at home; and they are also brought to the clinic for necessary examination, advice and treatment if necessary.
- c) The Medical Diagnostic Centre renders service to the Community particularly the poor and needy, in pursuance of the spirit and ideal of the Mission.
- d) The clinical wing is in the shape of a Polyclinic providing facilities and health services of numerous types.
- e) The free Homeopathic dispensary is run by the Ramakrishna Mission to serve the people, particularly the poorer section, in the neighbourhood.
- f) Special Educational Services

Free library and reading room facilities, provided by the Ramakrishna Mission in its premises in Delhi are utilized by hundreds and thousands of people every year. Facilities of reading room and separate lending section, and a separate section for the children exist in the library for use by the people.

University Students Section Library maintained with the financial assistance from the University of Delhi which only the students of Delhi University are eligible to use, on becoming its member, is also run by the Ramakrishna Mission in its premises in Delhi.

12.5.4 Cultural Activities

The Ramakrishna Mission also organises regular discourses and exposition of scriptures and deliberations on various other allied topics. The monks of the Math and Mission are important men of the public conduct them.

Discourses are conducted in Hindi on Sri Ramakrishna Kathamrita, on Sri Ramcharit Manas. Classes are held in Bengali on Sri Ramakrishna Kathamrita, and Sri Ramakrishna Lila Prasang; in English on Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, on Srimad Bhagavad Gita; on Vivek Chudamani; and on the Patanjala Yoga Sutras.

12.6 BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

| | | | |
|------|---------------------|--|---|
| I. | Sri Ramakrishna | The teacher The Preceptor The Guide | Who as father leads and illuminates the path |
| II. | Sri Sarada Devi | Holy Mother | Symbol of Motherhood Divine purity Virtue, ethereal Love and source of divine energy |
| III. | Swami Vivekanand | The Disciple The Soul inspired and awakened | Symbol of Messenger of Love & Service Divine through the message of universal brotherhood. |

The trinity is at once symbolic of the Divine and the Human, The three Great personalities' inspired the spirit and ideal of this modern religious movement called the Ramakrishna Mission. Sri Ramakrishna as the Preceptor; Sri Sarada Devi as the inspirer (Holy mother); and Swami Vivekananda as the founder and messenger - lit a beacon light of Divinity, Humanity and Service through the currents of a modern religious movement led by the Ramakrishna Mission with its dedicated bands of disciples and followers - the leaders and the led.

The Birthday celebrations of the three great personalities are important occasions in the religious order of the Ramakrishna Mission. This is a tradition which is handed down from generation to generation inspiring the ideals of Divinity, Humanity and Service.

12.6.2 Birthday Celebration of Sri Ramakrishna

The 156th Birthday Celebration of Sri Ramakrishna was held on the 27th of February 1991. He was born before the day-break of February 18, 1836 in a remote village named Kamarpukur in the District of Hooghly in Bengal. On this day there is much worship, prayer and celebration. He was named Sri Gadadhar Chattopadhyaya.

Since childhood, on several occasions, he gave clear evidence of Divine inspiration in his thoughts and activities. These come strongly to worshippers as also his blessings. He had an inner urge to know if the Divine Power really exists and manifests itself through everything of this creation. He practised penance and ultimately realized that God exists. Birthday worship is especially auspicious. He followed instructions of different religious faith at different stages of his life and realised that all religions are but different paths leading to the same goal, the God. Ramakrishna's birthday creates purity and auspiciousness for worshippers.

12.6.3 Birthday Celebration of Sri Sarada Devi

The 139th Birthday of Sri Sarada Devi, the Holy Mother was to be celebrated in December 1991. Her birthday celebrations give strength to worshippers. She was born on December 22, 1853 at Jayrambati - a remote village of Bankura District in West Bengal. Sri Sarada Devi is an ideal of womankind who served her husband with her very life and renounced the world rather than renounce her husband. There is much joy and happiness among worshippers on her birthday. She was married to Sri Ramakrishna at the young age of six years, and ultimately became the source of strength and inspiration to Swami Vivekananda and other young disciples of Sri Ramakrishna in establishing and running the Great organisation - Ramakrishna Mission. The essence of her teachings is contained in these lines:

"If you like to be happy in life do not find fault with others".

"Remember, whatever you do and wherever you go you are always protected by God - Father in Heaven".

12.6.4 Birthday Celebration of Swami Vivekananda

You are perhaps aware that the 128th Birthday celebrations of Swami Vivekananda was observed as the National Youth Day. Swami Vivekananda, the most prominent disciple and messenger of Sri Ramakrishna, the carrier of the message of Vedanta, the harbinger of the links between the East and the West, was the founder of a new monastic order.

He was the towering leader of the modern religious movement - the Ramakrishna Mission. It was on January 12, 1863, that he was born in Calcutta. At the very first sight (1881) Sri Ramakrishna discovered in him a spiritual giant. It was after his historic speech at Chicago in the Assembly of World Religions in the year 1893 that he became highly famous. **He dedicated himself to the service of the suffering humanity, and for all his life tried to raise the dignity of man.** He reconciled beautifully the ideal of Bhakti with the knowledge of Vedanta. Worshipers during Vivekananda's birthday celebrations experience the power of devotion and love just as Vivekananda felt towards Sri Ramakrishna.

His ideals of service are contained in these words:

"You can please God more by taking care of His Children than by offering thousand tonnes of flowers and fruits at His Holy Feet".

.."Who loves all beings –

He indeed has worshipped best his God", (Complete Works, Vol. IV, p. 496).

He was a harbinger of a new chapter of relationship between the East and the West. It could be a relationship based on fair exchange and mutuality. The West should come out with its scientific and technological development, and affluence, and material prosperity to help and support the poor, depressed and suffering humanity of the East, so that they could come out of this condition of stark poverty; and in exchange, the East should provide spiritual sustenance and guide through their ancient. Vedantic wisdom and knowledge to the West. **The miseries of the East arise from poverty; the miseries of the West arise from affluence. Both need each other.** The West can provide material support to the East; and the East can provide spiritual sustenance to the West. Thus, they need to move together and help each other to help the suffering humanity. For one the cause of suffering is poverty, for the other the cause of suffering is affluence.

12.6.5 How are the Birthdays Celebrated?

You all know there are many ways of celebrating birthdays in India. The birthdays of Great Personalities bring their own flavour.

These Birthday celebrations take place in the premises of the Ramakrishna Mission and also outside, in numerous public places and institutions.

These celebrations involve two aspects viz., (i) the socio-religious and (ii) social services.

The religious component of celebration is usually marked by

- i) Janmatithi Puja,
- ii) mangalarati,
- iii) meditation,
- iv) vedic chanting,
- v) reading from the lives of these great men
- vi) bhajan
- vii) special puja and haven.

The monks, the disciples, the followers and also other people participate in these.

The social component of these celebrations is marked by

- i) public meetings,
- ii) programme of service to the lepers called Narayan Seva,

- iii) service of the poor and the destitutes by distributing food, cloth etc.
- iv) various types of competitions in schools and colleges, particularly on the eve of Swami Vivekananda's birthday celebrations as National Youth Day.

The Ministry of Human Resource Development of the Government of India often provides funds as grant-in-aid to cover the expenditure in these celebrations by the Ramakrishna Mission.

For example, you may like to know that during 1989-90, the Ministry of Human Resource Development of the Government of India, paid a sum of Rs. 48,000/- as grant-in-aid to cover the expenditure incurred in connection with the 125th Birth Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda.

12.7 OTHER ACTIVITIES OF RAMAKRISHNA MISSION

We now turn to some other activities and celebrations.

12.7.1 Other Celebrations

The Ramakrishna Mission observes a number of other celebrations as well. These include:

- i) Guru Purnuima,
- ii) Shri Krishna Janmashtami,
- iii) Shri Durga Ashtami,
- iv) Shri Kali Puja,
- v) Maha Sivaratri, and
- vi) Christmas Eve, etc.

with due solemnity, special puja, bhajan, and reading from the scriptures.

12.7.2 Bhakta Sammelan

While studying the Ramakrishna Mission as a modern religious movement it is of interest to you to know that sometimes the Mission organises religious conferences known as **Bhakta Sammelan**. For example, one such Sammelan was organised on 31st December 1989 in the premise of Ramakrishna Mission in Delhi in which 336 delegates participated.

Apart from being a spiritual retreat, this sort of **Sammelan** provides an opportunity to the monks and the householder devotees to come together and practise spiritual discipline to reflect on the Ramakrishna movement, and give sustenance and strength to it to keep the movement going in the right direction. The role of the householder devotees is particularly important to keep the movement going as a source of spiritual strength to this strife torn age, and as a means of service to the suffering humanity, the downtrodden, the destitute, the leper, the women and children in need of care, the victims of riots, and natural calamities. If it could help the values to prevail in wider social, professional and organisational life in India our problems would be greatly lessened.

As a religious movement of the modern age, the Ramakrishna Mission is faced with challenges of poverty, illiteracy, ill-health, disease, ignorance, and corruption suffered by the teeming millions at the national level; challenges of war clouds degradation of environment, over-powering greed of materialism, loss of peace to the suffering humanity at the global level.

12.7.3 Challenges that Confront the Mission

The real challenge lies in how the modern religious movement (started through the Ramakrishna Mission by its founder Swami Vivekananda) will be able to meet the crisis to the suffering humanity. This will mean a reawakening and revival of the values of Divinity. Humanity and Service through the wisdom and knowledge of Vedanta.

The Katopanishad says,

"Uttishthat, Jagat, Prapya; Varannibodhat". That is to say: Arise, Awake, Achieve, that wisdom at the holy feet of the Great man by which material and spiritual sufferings of the humanity of the East and the West might go; revive the Divinity in man through service of the suffering humanity.

It is a question more of practice and not merely preaching. The Ramakrishna Mission as a religious movement brings much of preaching and practice together. Various religions are but different paths to the same Divinity, and the Divinity becomes glorified through service to humanity.

12.8 RAMAKRISHNA MISSION AS, A MODERN MOVEMENT

We will now finally turn to an important aspect of our analysis - i.e. why should the Ramakrishna movement aspire to be called a modern religious movement? Let us see why this happens to be a fact.

12.8.1 History of the Mission

While examining this question you should bear the following points in mind:

- i) First, the history of the Ramakrishna Mission runs into the span of this century and the last quarter of the last century which is not even a hundred years old now.
- ii) In such a short span; the Mission has spread its branches globally, far and wide, and covered a large part of the materially and spiritually suffering humanity of the world.
- iii) In the religious sphere it has brought about a revival in worship and faith through the approach that all religions lead to the same Divine Force, the same God. God exists in man, man must try to realise God through service to the suffering humanity. These sufferings are physical-material; and non-physical-emotional-mental-spiritual. These sufferings afflict humanity irrespective of their narrow framework of caste, colour, creed, religion, region and ethnicity. The Ramakrishna Mission as movement is advancing to provide a succour of hope.
- iv) The Ramakrishna Mission adopted a number of activities related to social services for the poor, the downtrodden, the destitute, the women and children in need of care, and those afflicted by natural calamities.
- v) At the national level, through service oriented programmes of activities in the fields of education and health etc., the Ramakrishna Mission is trying to integrate the various people and groups through its spiritual force and faith in Divinity, service and humanity.
- vi) At the international level, the Mission is trying to bring together the multi-national, multi-religious communities through spiritual force, through service to the suffering mankind, through message of peace and service to all sections irrespective of their caste, creed, religion and region.
- vii) The Ramakrishna Mission has the strength of a well-knit organisational structure fed by both the Math and the Mission from the headquarters level to the regional and local levels. It is fed by such ideal, ideology, objective, motto which are inspired by Divinity and service to humanity. It is supported by activities which take care of the physical-material, and religious-spiritual. The force of the Trinity consists of

Sri Ramakrishna - the preceptor

Sri Sarada Devi - The Holy Mother, inspirer

Swami Vivekananda - The founder, humanist inspired by Vedantic wisdom.

12.8.2 The Present Position

The Ramakrishna movement continues to the movement through the leadership of its bands of monks, and the following of its householder disciples and devotees of all religions and regions.

The method of work and worship continues to fill it with inspiration and life- giving force.

Shri Ramakrishna was inspired by 'Bhakti' and 'renunciation'. No great thing can be done without sacrifice. The spirit of sacrifice that sustained the fiery young souls of Swami Vivekananda, Swami Brahmananda (Rakhal), Balaram, Surendera, Mahendra and Chuni etc. (who all became monks of the order) in those early days of desolation, must continue to sustain the monks, devotees and followers of the Ramakrishna Mission in the present hours of material and spiritual crisis facing the suffering humanity today.

The spirit of renunciation that illumined the heart of Sri Ramakrishna, the spirit of sacrifice that welled up into the minds of Swami Vivekananda and his associate young monks in the beginning, the divine virtue that awakened Sri Sarada Devi; the same spirit must continue to stir the minds and hearts of the men and women who have joined this religious movement under the Ramakrishna Mission. It is to be hoped that the spiritual lamp that was lit by Paramhans Sri Ramakrishna a century ago will always illumine and show the path to human beings.

12.9 LET US SUM UP

We started this unit indicating the beginning of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission under the aegis of Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda. We then went on to outline the ideology of the Mission, the objects and activities of the Mission. We then described the organisational structure of the Math, Mission and governing body. We turned finally to the financial support structure of the math and the mission. This includes the funding of social welfare and cultural activities. We have therefore dealt with the topic adequately.

12.10 SPECIMEN ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1. a) Sri Ramakrishna
b) Sri Sarada Devi
c) Swami Vivekananda

2. a) Freedom of self, service of mankind.
b) Preaching and practice of Sanatana Dharma as exemplified in the Lives of Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda.
c) Renunciation," service and harmony of all religions should be strained towards.
d) Work and worship should be treated at par and done with utmost seriousness.

Check Your Progress 2

1. Ramakrishna - Vivekananda Mission is a breakaway group from the main Ramakrishna Mission. It emphasized Swami Vivekananda's desire to be born repeatedly among the poor of all races and nations. This mission came to be in 1961 when it was registered and has its headquarters in Barrackpore some 25 km. North of Calcutta city.
2. a) Religious activities like worship, religious services; preaching and celebration of birthdays of great saints.
b) Social Welfare Services like educational and health services like hospitals, clinics, diagnostic centres, dispensaries and invalid homes.

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GLOSSARY

Animatism: a pre-animistic stage in religious development. It attributes life as a characteristic of every phenomena.

Animism: In the context of Tylor's view of religion, it refers to belief in the existence of spirits separable from bodies.

Anti-structure: This is not the reversal of structure, but the source of all structures and their critique.

Arya Samaj: literally the "Society of Aryans" it came to existence in 1875 under the aegis of Swami Dayanand.

Atheist: A person who does not believe in the existence of God.

Belief: a state or habit of mind in which trust or confidence is placed in some person or thing. In this unit, it refers to a rule or body of rules about religion held by a group.

Belur Math: Headquarters of Ramakrishna Mission.

Bhakti: means an act of devotion where one forgets everything except one's worship of the ishta deva

Brahmacharya: the first phase in a pious Hindu's life where is a bachelor engaged in learning.

Canon: Something that is fixed, a rule or norm. The canon of scripture means that fixed list of books that are determined to belong to sacred scripture.

Capital Accumulation: This means the stock piling of resources, which can be reinvested into industry so that industry may expand.

Catholic Church: It is also called the Church of Rome. Its headquarters are in the Vatican City and the head of the Church is the Pope. Before the Reformation, it was the central Church of the Christian religion. After the Reformation, a number of sects broke away from it, e.g. Calvinists, Lutherans, Baptists etc.

Communitas: In the context of pilgrimage, communitas is a feeling of being one with other pilgrims, experiencing a release from all societal constraints, from class or creed. This lasts while the pilgrim is at the shrine.

Charisma: certain supernatural or divinely gifted talents or something received for divine grace.

Clairvoyance: the ability to see mentally into the future.

Conflict: A struggle of contest between two groups of people.

Creed: System of beliefs or opinions especially on religious doctrine. Also, the summary of Christian doctrine.

Cult: a system of religious worship.

Doctrine: a reference to religious belief or teaching.

Dogma: Belief or system of belief, put forward by some authority

Ecclesia: The organisation of Church

Ecstatic: that which makes one feels joyous and may even send one into trance

Esoteric: That act(s) or symbol(s) which is specialized or 'secret' and known only to a few expert people.

Exorcism: to get rid of evil spirits or expel spirits from someone's body through invocation and rituals

Exoteric: Those acts or symbols which are known to and understood by the 'common' person.

Function: consequence of a part for the system

Grihastha: the second phase of life as a householder.

Gurukul: a teaching institution based on the ideals of Arya Samaj

Hagiography: refers to the writing of a saint's life

Holy Mother: Sri Sarada Devi

Identification: Ritual which creates a new identity for the individual concerned e.g. ear piercing ceremony.

Incarnation: means to give concrete or visible form to a spiritual notion. It is believed that Vishnu had 10 incarnations each of which appeared at a moment of social crisis. Of these Krishna was one. Some of the others include Varaha, Mohini, Parashurama. The Hindi word for incarnation is avatar.

Incorporation: Rituals that absorb an individual into society e.g. birth rituals.

Industrial Revolution: This term refers to the striking changes in the economic sphere in the period 1750-1850. England was the home of this Revolution, which then spread to all parts of Europe. New discoveries like steam power, inventions like the power loom, spinning frame etc. revolutionised production. The factory system and capitalism rose in this period.

Integration: The act of process of unification into a whole.

Interpolations: interpretations and extensions of a holy text (in this case, the Vedas).

Ishta Deva: a personal God to whom one dedicates ones worship in search of salvation.

Liminal: The state of being on the journey of a pilgrimage, visiting the shrine or pilgrimage spot, and returning we may say pilgrimage takes place in a liminal atmosphere, of being 'in between' two places the home and the pilgrimage shrine.

Lingam: is the idolic representation of Siva that we -find in temples. This Siva 6ngam is made very small and then kept in a metal container that the Lingayats were around their neck.

Literati: The learned, who have studied the Scriptures.

Magic: standardised series of acts performed as a means of manipulating the supernatural to reach the desired end.

Mantras: sacred words, chants, spell.

Math: Contemplative order

Merit: Religious practices that have the calculated aim of improving the future spiritual welfare of oneself or others.

Mission: Socially active order

Monotheistic: a belief in one God only.

Monotheistic: a doctrine that believes in only one God.

Mukti: spiritual liberation

Murtha: a Coorg ritual performed at the most auspicious time of the auspicious day.

Mystic: that which deals with things of spiritual significance. A person, who lives the life of a mystic, seeks to obtain unity with the divine or God through contemplation and selfless devotion.

Negative rites: interdicts or taboos to be observed before approaching the sacred.

Niyoga: where a widow is allowed to get children by her brother-in-law.

Nyamas: rules and regulations.

Okka: group of agnatically related Coorg males, descended from a common ancestors, with their wives and children.

Orthodox: traditional views often without substance.

Panchang: Hindu calendar of auspicious and inauspicious dates.

Parochial: narrow and partisan views.

Polytheism: a doctrine that believes in the existence of many Gods.

Polytheistic: essentially refers to belief in more than one God.

Positive rites: preparations or purificatory ceremonies undergone before approaching the sacred.

Power: Legal authority which gives the right to and influence people the writings.

Profane: that realm which is kept away from and in opposition to the sacred. In other words, profane is the world of human beings.

Reaggregation: This could be also called the homecoming or returning home to where the pilgrimage ends.

Reformation: Religious revolution in Western Europe in the sixteenth century protesting against the corruption of the Church. It led to the formation of Protestant sects, which broke away from the Catholic Church.

Renunciation: Denial, giving up the worldly possession, desires and attachments.

Ritual: This is the core component of religions. Its rules are transmitted orally or textually.

Rites: prescribed modes of action for a ceremony.

Sacred: the world of the supreme, the venerated, the Holy. According to Durkheim, it is kept away from the profane.

Salvation: means the saving of the soul or a belief that one can be delivered of one's sins, and reach heaven. It is a Religious notion used extensively in Christianity as well.

Sanatan Dharma: The Eternal Religion

Sanyasa: the final stage of life when one renounces the material world.

Sanyasin: one who renounces the world and turns of God.

Selflessness: without thinking of oneself. So 'selfless' devotion would be devotion where one thinks only of the God and not of oneself and what one will get out of such devotion.

Separation: Rituals, such as those at death which intend to sever relations between the living and the dead.

Sorcery: the use of magical arts to achieve something.

Suddhi: Rites of reconversion of Hindus back from the religion of their conversion.

Sufi: refers to the mystic saints that are a sect in the Islamic tradition.

Supernatural: powers that are believed to be not human or subject to the laws of nature.

Syncretism: the unification of different schools of thought or sects or beliefs.

Tenets: refers to basic doctrine, dogmas or principles of a religion

The Profane: It refers to those areas of life, which are not concerned with religion or religious purposes. In other words, they deal with secular aspects

The Sacred: It refers to those areas of life, which are related to religion. For Malinowski, the sacred includes magical rites, which are different from religious rites. So Malinowski's definition of this term is a more inclusive category.

Tirtha Yatra: This is a Hindu expression of pilgrimage. It literally means undertaking a journey to river-fords

Totem: an animal or vegetable or a mythical ancestor. It symbolized the clan and is sacred.

Transcendental: Going beyond 'human knowledge, that which cannot be discovered or understood by practical experience.

Transition: These rites play an important role in pregnancy and initiation rites.

Vanaprastha : the third phase of life when one, having completed, one's duties, proceeds to the forest to meditate.

Vedanta: A philosophy of Hinduism preaching monistic. Unity of all phenomena with Godhead.

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