



- Some of the religions, especially in South Asia, had lost their original direction at the hands of an established priestly class.

2.24 SUFISM

- Sufism was a **liberal reform movement within Islam**. It had its origin in Persia and spread into India in the eleventh century.
- The first Sufi saint Shaikh Ismail of Lahore started preaching his ideas. The most famous of the Sufi saints of India was Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti, who settled in Ajmer which became the centre of his activities.

Philosophy:

- Love and devotion:** Sufism stressed the elements of love and devotion as effective means of the realisation of God. Love of God meant love of humanity and so the Sufis believed service to humanity was tantamount to service to God. They consider love and devotion as the only means of attaining salvation.
- Self-discipline:** It is considered an essential condition to gain knowledge of God by sense of perception. While orthodox Muslims emphasize external conduct, the Sufis lay stress on inner purity.
- Spirit of tolerance:** Sufism also inculcated a spirit of tolerance among its followers.
- Other ideas emphasised by Sufism:** meditation, good actions, repentance for sins, performance of prayers and pilgrimages, fasting, charity and suppression of passions by ascetic practices.

2.25 RAMANANDA (1400-1470 AD)

- The movement which Ramanuja started in South India was spread to the other parts of Northern India by his great disciple Ramananda.
- His concept of God is that he is a person who cares for all men and rewards their devotion.
- Ramananda brought a radical reform and made no distinction between Brahmanas and members of the other castes. He wanted to promote the ideal of inter-dining.

Spirit of religious tolerance:

- Religion is a question of individual approach to God without the necessity of any outside interference.
- Both the Muslims and Hindus are equal and they are the children of the only true God. Nevertheless, the mystics were fearless in pointing out the defects in the belief of both Hindus and Muslims.
- They fought against casteism and idolatry of the Hindus.
- The ideal of Islamic brotherhood exerted profound influence on Hindu social thinking. Islam treats all men equal which was in disregard to caste in the new development of Bhakti philosophy

2.26 RAVIDASA (1450-1540 AD)

- Ravidasa was a great Hindu saint and Philosopher during the medieval times. Although he hailed from a low community, he did not suffer from inferiority complex. He returned good to the evil.

View On Religion:

- He considers religion as the basic need of man.
- Man has religious instinct distinct from hunger and thirst.
- He says that if self-realization is the dawn of the soul, self-negation is the dark night of the soul.
- He can guide those grouping in darkness to their destiny.
- Ravidasa criticizes these teachings of religion which did not appeal to the human reason. He stands against the fallacy of the vain religious action.
- Ravidasa condemns the superstitious practices associated with devotion. For his devotion was chiefly in the form of service.

Human existence:

- Ravidasa considers the human existence as rare, and obtained due to the result of meritorious deeds.
- He should utilize his life in achieving the highest human aspiration which becomes possible only by following a moral code of discipline.