Medieval History · GS - I

The Bhakti movement received a remarkable re-orientation with the advent of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Discuss.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2018	GS - I	Medieval History

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Krishna devotion; ecstatic worship; sankirtana; Bengali Vaishnavism; social inclusiveness; vernacular traditions; devotional literature; religious reform

Model Answer

Introduction

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu (1486–1534) revitalised the Bhakti movement through an intensely devotional tradition centred on Lord Krishna, particularly in Bengal and eastern India.

Remarkable Re-orientation of the Bhakti Movement

1. **Emotional devotion:** He emphasised loving devotion to Krishna as a direct path towards spiritual liberation.
2. **Sankirtana tradition:** Collective chanting of divine names through music and dance made worship participatory and accessible.
3. **Community participation:** His devotional gatherings brought together followers from different social backgrounds, challenging some barriers of religious participation.

4. **Vaishnava philosophy:** His tradition developed the idea of *Achintya Bheda Abheda*, emphasising the simultaneous inconceivable difference and non-difference between God and the individual soul.
5. **Vernacular culture:** His movement enriched Bengali devotional literature, music and regional religious traditions.
6. **Institutional influence:** His followers developed centres of Krishna devotion and helped spread Gaudiya Vaishnavism beyond Bengal.

Conclusion

Chaitanya Mahaprabhu gave the Bhakti movement a more collective, emotional and participatory character. His legacy continues through devotional music, literature and Krishna-centred religious traditions.

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