Merging of Two Rivers
Christianity and Hinduism

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Learning Objectives
The participants will be able understand

• Who is a Hindu?
• The differences between Popular Hinduism and Scriptural Hinduism
• The Great Two Epics: Ramayana & Maha-Bharatha
• Vedas and Vedantas
• Inculturation and Eastern attempts
• Indiainization and Western attempts

River Ganges and River Jordan
Water = H₂O

Hinduism and Christianity

Can CHRISTIANITY merge with HINDUISM?

Can HINDUISM merge with CHRISTIANITY?
Two Types of Religions

Natural Religions
• Hinduism
• Buddhism
• Paganism
• Tribal Religions
• Confucianism

Religions Revealed
• Judaism
• Christianity
• Islam

A Point Where the Creator and the Creature Meet

Hinduism
Other Names for Hinduism

- Sanadhana Dharma = Eternal Religion
- Manava Dharma = Religion of Humanity
- Arya Dharma = Noble Religion
- Vaidiki Dharma = Religion of Knowledge

Who Is A Hindu?

- Comes from the Persian language. Referred to the people who lived in the other side of River Indus or Sindu (Indus, presently in Pakistan).
- Anyone in India, who is not a Christian, Muslim, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi (Zoroastrian), and Jew.
- Strictly speaking, though tribals are not Hindus, they are also considered as Hindus.
Who Is A Hindu?

One who believes in the supremacy of VEDAS and lives in accordance with DHARMA.

(Dharma = righteousness: good moral and ethical practices in accordance with the Vedas/scriptures).

Major Hindu Scriptures (Texts)

- PURANAS – Ancient stories
- VEDAS – Knowledge (Four Vedas)
- UPANISHADS – END OF VEDAS – Philosophical Discourses
- ITHIHASA - Epics
- JOTHISHA- Astrology
- CHARAKA SAMHITA – AYURVEDA – Medical Science
Two Forms of Hinduism

Popular Hinduism
- Two great epics: Ramayana & Mahabharatha
- Puranas (Old Stories)
- Polytheism
- Gods and Goddesses

Scriptural Hinduism
- Vedas
- Upanishads
- Monotheistic
- Philosophical

Devas (Suras) & Asuras
- Benevolent super human beings
- Shining beings
- Live in heaven
- Malevolent super human beings
- Forces of evil
- Live in Pathala (Nether world)
God Can Appear to Humans in Multiple Names and Forms (Eshwar)

TRIMOORTHIS: Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva

Avatars

Whenever there is decay of righteousness O! Bharatha
And a rise of unrighteousness then I manifest Myself!

For the protection of the good,
for the destruction of the wicked and
for the establishment of
erighteousness,
I am born in every age (Gita IV:7-8)

The purpose of Avatar is to establish order.
Two Sects

- SHIVISM (Shivites)
- Worshipers of Lord Shiva
- Mainly in South India

- Vaishnavism (Vaishanavites)
- Worshipers of Lord Vishnu
- Mainly in North India

Two Great Epics

Ramayana
Mahabharata

Scriptural Hinduism
Four Vedas

- Rig-veda – Praises
- Sama-veda - Melodies
- Yajur-veda - Sacrifices
- Adarva-veda – Occult?
  - Ayur-veda = Health (upaveda)

Upanishids (Vedantas)
Brahman & Atman

Brahman & Atman

- Brahman = God
  - No Beginning, No End
  - Omni Potent
  - Omni Present
- Atman = Soul
  - Inside of the creature
  - Eternal (body is mortal, soul is eternal)
  - Can enter into other forms (rebirth)
Advaita Vedanta

- God (Brhaman) is One
- If you are experiencing Brahman in duality, it is because of ignorance (avidya)

Brahman & Eshwar

- Eshwar is the personification of Brahman
- Can come in different forms (The reason for Polytheism)
- Can be a lover, protector, family deity, a holy man/woman, animal
- It is a personal God
Four Castes

- Brahmins – Priests
- Kshatriyas – Warriors
- Vaisias - Working class/business class
- Shudras – Subservient

Four Goals of Life

- Dharma (Righteousness, Duty)
- Ardha (Security)
- Kama (Enjoyment)
- Moksha (Heaven, Liberation)

Four Core Principles

- Dharma = Individual ethics, duties and obligations
- Samsara = Life in the world (cycle of action, reaction, birth, death, and rebirth)
- Karma = Personal (right) actions (moral law of cause and effect)
- Moksha = Salvation
Four Stages of Life

• Brahmacharya = Learning
• Gruhasthrama = Household affairs
• Vanaprastha = Retirement
• Sanyasa = Renunciation

Four Ways to Attain Moksha (Salvation, Heaven)

• BHAKTI MARGA (Path of devotion)
• KARMA MARGA (Path of dutiful actions)
• JNANA MARGA (Path of knowledge – Vedas – ability to know what is real vs. illusion)
• YOGA MARGA (Controlling of mind-consciousness)
Are we able to see Jesus out of his Semitic identity?

Jesus: the Bodhisattva (Enlightened Being)

Inculturation

The word became flesh and dwelt among us. (John 1:14)
**Muslim Attempt**

**Akbar the Great**  
(1542-1602)

**His Contribution**

- Included Hindus and Christians in his court
- Din-i-illahi = Divine faith: Faith derived from the teachings of Islam, Hinduism, Christianity, Jainism and Zoroastrianism.
- Practiced religious tolerance

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**Socio-Religious-Political Condition**

- Hinduism and Islam
- British rule
- English education, religion, and philosophy.
- Caste system, Sati, situation of women, Brahmanic supremacy.
- Contributions of Christianity to Europe (Protestant reformation)
- Anti-colonial attitude

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**Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1772 - 1833)**

- Father of Modern India
- Founder of Brahmo Samaj
- Assembly of worshipers of Brahman
- The (nameless) unsearchable Eternal, Immutable Being who is the Author and Preserver of the Universe
- To abolish caste system, dowry, sati
- For the emancipation of women
Indianization (Hindu) Attempts

- Kesabu Chandra Sen (1838-1884)
  - Embraced Christian thinking, ideas and even British rule
  - "New Dispensation" (integrating Christian and Hindu religions)
  - Jesus Christ, Europe and Asia (1866)

- Sadhu Sundhar Singh (1889 – ca.1929)
  - Converted from Sikhism to Christianity (Anglican) at the age of 16.
  - ‘Christianity could not penetrate India unless it was in an Indian way’
  - He became a Sadhu (Mendicant).
  - Though he joined an Anglican seminary, he left the seminary for not willing to wear western clerical dress
  - Indian Christian mysticism
### A J Appaswamy (1891-1971)
- Bishop of Church of South India
- His father converted to Christianity
- Studied yoga and mystical practices and mingled Hindu practices with Christian belief.
- 1915 came to USA – Harvard University

### K C Banerjee (1847 – 1902)
- Converted to Anglicanism
- Founder of Christo Samaj

### Manilal C Parekh (1885 – 1967)
- Converted to Anglicanism
- Hindu Church of Christ
- Jesus-Yogi (Born as Yogi)
- A Hindu Disciple of Christ (Christian-Hindu)
- Published in 1943 “A Hindu’s Portrait of Jesus Christ”

### P. Chenchiah (1886-1959)
- Converted to Christianity
- Judge in Madras Presidency
- Founded Madras Christo Samaj
- Spoke against Western Christian Theology
- 1938 “Rethinking Christianity in India”
- Influenced by Teilhard de Chardin and Sri Aurobindo Ghosh

### Inculturation (Catholic) Attempts
• Roberto de Nobili S.J. (1577-1656)
  • 1605 Arrived in Goa
  • Moved to Madurai and started to live and dress like a Hindu sannyasin
  • He used Hindu rituals, Indian customs, local languages for Christian ceremonies
  • He was vehemently opposed by fellow missionaries
  • Pope Gregory XV sanctioned his reforms

• Fr. Bede Griffith.OSB (1906 -1993)
  • Received the name Swami Dayananda
  • Convert from Anglicanism
  • Became a Benedictine Monk
  • Came to India
  • One of the founders of Christian Ashram Movement

• Henry Le Saux (1910 - 1973)
  • Benedictine monk
  • Became Abhishiktananda
  • Co-founder of Sachidananda Ashram
  • Indian-Ashram movement.
• Fr. Reymondo Panicker, S.J (1918-2010)
• "I left Europe [for India] as a Christian, I discovered I was a Hindu and returned as a Buddhist without ever having ceased to be Christian".
• The Unknown Christ of Hinduism (1964)

• Fr. Amalorpavadas (1932-1990)
• Founder of Anjali Ashram, Mysore

Some Vedic Prayers
• Om Loka samastha sughino bhavanthu = May all the world be happy
• From the unreal lead me to real
  From darkness lead me to light
  From death lead me to immortality
Some Great Thoughts

Evam sathyam vipra bahutha vadanti = The truth is one, wise men talk about it differently.
Aham Brahmasmi = I am God or I am part of God.
Antharayamin = God who is inside.
Isavasyam idam Sarvam = God dwells everywhere.
God is Satchidananda = Existence, intellect and happiness