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
• Indianization and Western attempts
River Ganges and River Jordan
Water = \text{H}_2\text{O}
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 tribes 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
Popular Hinduism
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 righteousness, I am born in every age (Gita IV:7-8)

The purpose of Avatar is to establish order.
Brahma & Saraswati
Vishnu & Lakshmi
SHIVA & Parvathi (DURGA)
Two Sects

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

- **Vaishavism (Vaishanavites)**
  - Worshipers of Lord Vishnu
  - Mainly in North India
Two Great Epics

Ramayana

Mahabharatha
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 (Brahman) 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
- Gruhastashrama = 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)
Bodhi sathva

Yogi

Enlightened Self

Yoga = Practice

Union
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
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
• Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1772 - 1833)
• Father of Modern India
• Founder of Brahma 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