

The Evolution Concept and the Rise of Religions in India.

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ABSTRACT

Identifying the primary religions that have co-existed in India for a long time. Describing the religions in India, including a brief history of each, their core beliefs, and their holy texts.

Keywords: Religions, Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Islam, Sikhism.

INTRODUCTION

Everyone knows that India is a secular democratic country. Secular refers to a lack of religious commitment on the side of the Indian government. Like several other countries such as Pakistan and Nepal, India has no national religion. Indian citizens are allowed to practice any religion they choose. The Indian constitution does not make extensions based on the person's faith. The Indian constitution promises equal protection to all religious communities.

Indian Religious Situation: An Overview

The religious scenario in India is quite complex. It is because of the following facts. First, there are diverse religions. The Indian population is divided into numerous different faiths and sects. Second, multiple historical religions reasons and events have added to the complexities. Third, the social composition of the adherents of all of these religions is also diverse. They have different customs and traditions. Diverse religious communities have various kinds of social governance.

Hinduism

Hindu Dharam is the most ancient religion of India. It was also known as Sanatan Dharam. Sanatan means eternal (Sarvavyapi). It came to be known as Hindu Dharma from 4th century BC then Persian invaders reach northwestern India to attack India when they reach the Bank of river Indus, they pronounce this river "Sindhu" as "Hindu". Thus, the people living on the banks of "Sindhu" come to

be known as "Hindu", their country as "Hindustan" and their religion as "Hindu Dharma". Hindustan was known as the Bharat Varsh.

From 4th century onwards Bharat Varsh the word Hindustan come into the existence and Sanatan Dharma as Hindu Dharma.

This Norman creature come into existence after Persian invasion. However, the Sanatan Dharma is the oldest religion of Hinduism.

Roughly the great religions of the world have been grouped/classified from 3 sources

- The Indian group - Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism.
- The western group - Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity and so on.
- Shino-Japanese group - Taoism, Confucianism, and Shintoism.

Of all the living religions, Hindu Dharma or Sanatan Dharma is the most ancient among all the religions. It was not founded by a particular person or an individual or a prophet (Religious head). Sanatan Dharma is based on our religious scripts and these scripts can be divided into **six** parts-

- Shruti- It includes all the four Vedas, Brahmin grant, Aryanna and Upanishads etc.
- Smriti- It includes number of smritis such as Manu Smriti (first law book written by Manu) yoga-balky Smriti, Narada Smriti, Gautam Smriti, Bhraspati Smriti and Prashanth smriti.
- Itihaas- includes epics like Mahabharat and Ramayana.
- Purana- puranas are 18 in number out of these 18 puranas, Bhagwat purana and Vishnu purana are very popular.
- Agam- this word is related to all religions. particularly used by Jains.

- Darshan- It is the cream Churn out of Hindu Dharma or Sanatan Dharma and Indian scriptures like Vedas, Bahamians, Arsenal, Upanishads, etc.

And these have vision of Bhartiya darshan. According to these scriptures, Indian philosophy has been described through six philosophical system popularly known as shad darshan.

Namely-

- Mimansa- Founded by Rishi Jamini.
- Sankhya- Founded by Maharshi Kapila.
- Nyay- Founded by Akshapada Gautama.
- Vaisheshik -Founded by philosopher Kanada Kashyap.
- Yoga- Founded by maharishi Patanjali
- Vedanta- Propounded by Gaud pada (7th century) and Adi-guru Shankaracharya (8th century).

Main concept of Hinduism

I. Hindu Dharma is known as Sanatan Dharma-

Sanatan Dharam believes in the God, Supreme God or in the BharmaVishnu and Shiv. These three represents the supreme God and are known as Trimurti.

This is also known as Mahesh Murti. These three represents the activities.

activities of process of Creation, Reservation, Destruction respectively. It means Bharma is Creator, Vishnu is Preserver and Shiv is Destroyer.

In Sanatan Dharma, through there is one God but there are many gods worshipped by the people according to their faith. But in reality, all these gods are the manifestation i.e., they all represent the same supreme power.

In Sanatan Dharma God has been described as Omnipresent, Omnipotent, Omniscient, Infinite, Eternal and Merciful. God is beyond all forms and names.

this concept leads to the Nirakara form of Bharma and people also worship the Nirakara and Nirguna form of Bharma.

thus, two types of worship prevail in Sanatan Dharma-

- Saakar,
- Nirakara and Nirguna and both types of worships are practices till today.

II. Sanatan Dharma believes in Soul-

Philosophy of Vedanta believes in the existence of soul or Jeev-*aatma*. Vedant believes

that after death, soul assumes a new body and new life or rebirth is governed by the law of karma. Soul is eternal. There are several questions regarding soul and the only answer is that the soul without body and without form and beyond the experience of pleasure and pain.

Hindu philosophy believes in the theory of karma, these are the two types-

- Sanchit karma- which we earn in our previous life.
 - karma in the present birth and it is accumulated.
- we take birth according to our Sanchit karma depending upon the merit and demerit of our karmas.

III. Sanatan Dharma believes in Liberation or Moksh-

If our Sanchit karma are of highest degree then we attain Mokshi.e., liberation from the cycle of birth and rebirth that is why Indian philosophy stressed up on the theory of paap and punya, merit and demerit.

directly related with our actions.

Vedant deals with spiritual aspects and moral aspects.

The theory of Upanishads deals with the research of truth.

Later on, after Upanishads, Bhagwat Geeta added its theory of karma, Gyan and Bhakti. This theory of Bhagwat Geeta further enhances the theory of birth and re-birth and finally Bhagwat Geeta speaks about the synthesis of Bhakti, Gyaan, karma and yoga.

Epics like Ramayana and Mahabharata both speaks about the spiritual and moral truths related to Indian philosophy.

Buddhism

Buddha was born in 6th century BC. Probably he was born in 576 BC at village Lumbini. Lumbini was near Kapilavastu at the border of Nepal.

Buddha's father's name was Shuddhodhan and he was the king of ShakyaVansh. Buddha's mother's name was Maya, who died in 7 days after giving birth to buddha when she was pregnant, she had a dream related to a white elephant. She narrated her dream to shuddhodhan.

Shuddhodhan asks the astrologers about the meaning of the dream and the astrologers declares that she will give birth to a son, who will be an Emperor or a Mahayogi.

The personal name of Buddha was Siddharth and family name was Gautam.

Five Great Events of Buddha's Life

1. Birth.
2. Leaving the palace and the Kingdom and going to the forest for meditation as a sanyasi.
3. Enlightenment of Buddha.
(After this event Gautam came to be known as Gautam Buddha, the tree under which he attains enlightenment came to be known as “Bodhi Vraksh”)
4. After getting enlightenment Buddha as a mendicant reached Sarnath there he delivered his first sermon in the Deer Park to his five disciples.
5. Maha-Pari-Nirvana-Buddha breathed his last at Kushi Nagar(modern village Kasia) near Gorakhpur in U.P.

After achieving enlightenment, buddha wandered as Bhikshu and preached his people. So that their miseries/sufferings are removed, his teachings came to be known as the Dharam of Buddha.

His main teachings are known as Four Noble Truths of Buddhism. which are-

- Buddha realized that a Life is Full of Sufferings-He preached this as “Dukh-Samudaya”. buddha in his preaching always said that life is painful and full of difficulties such as-Birth, Old age, Disease, Death, etc. Pain is the outcome of Pleasure, Poverty, Greed, Diseases, Anger, Hatred etc.
- Buddha said that There is a cause of suffering- he said that there must be a cause of sufferings without any cause there cannot be any pain/Sufferings. The main cause of our sufferings is our birth and then there comes the cycle of birth and re-birth. Therefore, birth and death are related to each other. In this regard buddha again said that the desires are the main cause of our sorrow and sufferings. He said that desires are of many types such as sensual pleasure enjoyment of life for wealth and worldly attachments all these are the main cause of sufferings and all these are caused due to our ignorance.
- There is Cessation of Sufferings- This Noble truth is related to the destroying the cause of sufferings.
- There is way of Cessation of Sufferings- this truth is related to the way of end of sorrow and sufferings and this path (Marg) is of 8 types known as 8 golden paths (Ashtangik Marg).

Eight Golden paths

- a) Right Vision – the right vision has been defined and the true knowledge about real nature of things. Generally, due to our ignorance we do not realize that real nature of

things. Therefore, this ignorance became the root cause of sufferings for which right vision or Samayak Drishti is must.

- b) Right Resolve- here Buddha tell us that to know the real truth is not only enough, unless we resolve tools lead a perfect balanced or spiritual life and to root out in thoughts, desires etc.
- c) Right Speech- Here, Buddha preached about the control of speech such as Avoidance of lies, Harsh words, Useless Talks, Unless Criticized, Painful Speech, etc.
- d) Right Conduct-for right conduct, he says we should refrain our self from activities like doing injury to life, theft, ill behavior etc. In this Buddha has prescribed different codes of conduct for everybody such as Hermits, Parents, Children’s, Students, Teachers, Husband & Wife and all Relations.
- e) Right Livelihood-It means one should earn his or her livelihood by honesty and fearless and one should strictly avoid to earn money by bad means such as Bribe, Fraud, Corruption, Dacoity and Dowry.
- f) Right Effort- It means one should make a continuous effort to root out evil thoughts and pursue right thoughts i.e., cause constant effort for preventing bad ideas.
- g) Right Mindfulness-He said, we should always keep in mind the good thoughts and right activities and try to avoid unnecessary desires and longings.
- h) Right Concentration- The Buddha said that one who practice the above 7 codes of conduct, becomes fit to enter the path of concentration and this leads to the stage of samadhi.

Seven Jewels of Buddhism law

- i. Meditation on body, mind, ideas and reason it deals with the conception of right and wrong.
- ii. Struggle against sin and sinful actions
- iii. To acquire personal powers to pursue the way to saintship.
- iv. Moral powers.
- v. Spiritual senses, i.e., Faith, Energy, Thought, Comprehension, Wisdom.

Wisdom is of 7 kinds

- a) Energy
- b) Thoughts
- c) Comprehension
- d) Investigation
- e) Joy
- f) Repose
- g) Serenity

vi. The 8 Noble golden paths.

vii. 5 commands of Buddha (**PanchShree**). i.e.,

- a) Do not kill any living being.
- b) Do not take what is not given to you.
- c) Refrain from falsehood.
- d) Do not take intoxicants.
- e) Do not commit adultery.

Division of Buddhist Community

During the Kushan period the 3rd Buddhist council was held during the period of Kanishka at this time Buddhist literature was revised and amendments were made. Wisconsin the most important agenda was about the division of Buddhist sang. Just off the Buddhist song members wanted to introduce buddhas image worship ultimately, divisions took place and Buddhist song was divided into two parts

- The Original Hinayana Sampradaya
- Mahayana Sampradaya

Hinayana Buddhist were very orthodox and conservative. They used to worship Buddha through symbols like-Stupa, Chaitya, Chakra, Dharam-Chakara, Paduka, Lotus (Kamal) and Elephant (Hathi) etc. They also follow the teachings of Buddha in a most Orthodox way.

In comparison to the followers of Hinayana Buddhist, Mahayana Buddhism is very liberal and they started worshipping Buddha through the images with the result, during the period of Kushana ruler Kanishka two schools of art were established- Mathura School of Art and Gandhara School of Art.

These two schools of art produced a large number of images, sculptures of Buddha and Bodhisattva. These two divisions are still existed in Buddhism like other religion cults.

During the period of Ashoka Buddhism spread all over the India, Ashoka patronized the Buddhism. He appointed missionaries to spread Buddhism in the India and other neighboring countries.

His son Mahendra and daughter Sanghamitra propagated Buddhism in Nepal and Sri Lanka. Buddhism crossed the boundaries of India and reach Indonesia, Burma, Thailand, China, Korea, Japan, Mongolia and even up to Kazakhstan.

Jainism

The word Jain has derived from Ji which means to “conquer”. Therefore, literally the Jiis the one who has conquered all passions and has attained liberation. The ji is called the Tirthankar. In this case, the word tirthankara means the landing of place from where we cross the river. This is also called tirtha. From this word tirtha the word tirthankara came into existence.

According to according to Jain traditions there are 24 tirthankaras. Rishab was the 1st tirthankara and Mahaveer Vardhman was 24th and the last of the tirthankara.

Mahavir was born 599 BC and died in 529 BC. He was born at Vaishali at Bihar. He became an ascetic at the age of 30 and after great meditation and penance, he attained enlightenment and he preached his ideas to the people and his doctrine came to be known as Jainism. Mahavir is called the founder of Jainism. His chief contribution was the principle of ahimsa or non-injury.

This is the foremost principle of Jain religion which is followed by all monks, Jain sadhus and Munis.

Jain Ethics

The most important teachings of Jainism are Right Faith, Right Knowledge, Right Conduct.

This is called the Tri-ratan of Jainism.

- Right Faith- Belief in the real existence of things is right faith. It needs devotion to truth. It is sincere belief in the principle of Jainism.

- Right Knowledge- It means to know the real nature of things without any doubt. Right knowledge is free from doubts or uncertainty.

- Right Conduct- Right conduct has been described as the assemblage of five great virtues that is Ahimsa, Satya, Non-Stealing, Chastity, Renunciation.

The main doctrine of Jainism is ahimsa which declares Ahimsa Parmo Dharma. Jain ethics and Jain's code of conduct is based on mercy which includes kindness without any reward, any expectation of reward, to rejoice at the well-being of others, to sympathize with the poor and depressed and mercy to all pity creatures. In Jain philosophy much important has been attached to punya. Which are - giving food, providing water, providing clothes, to provide shelter, to provide bed and bedding, spending without offending anybody. Jainism put great emphasis on selfless service.

In Jain philosophy, there is no place for God and they believe in amenity achieved by self-efforts and penance. Jains do not have faith in Vedas and Vedic literature. They only worship

Bhagwan Mahavir and other Tirthankaras, sadhus, Acharyas, Upadhyaya's and Munis. Like Buddhism, in Jainism also there is divisions- Shwetambar and Digambar.

Islam

Mohammad the prophet (Messenger of God) was born in Mecca is about 570AD. The prophet Mohammad founded Islam. He followed the profession of shepherd and while doing his profession he felt the presence of God or the Divine power sometimes he used to pass his days in the caves of mount Heera. Sometimes his begum Khaliza also accompany him. At about the age of 40 he realized the divine inspiration and felt that he was the prophet of his people. At this age he started telling to his people the revelation of divine power. All these revelations were later on composed in Quraan. In the beginning, his fellowmen declared him as insane but there was no effect on him about what people say and his faith in God became fun. By the age of 44, he became confident about the presence of God and his revelations. By this time his followers increased in large number and Mohammad's name spread like anything. At the age of 63 in the year 632 he left this world. Mohammad felt that there is God from whom he receives the divine messages and called him Allah. He further said that there is only one God and not many and he told his people in the Arabic words- "la 'ilah 'ilaaAllah" that means there is no God but Allah.

Islamic Fundamentals

Mohammad preached against idol worship and he also declared that there is no one but one God and Mohammad is his prophet. He ordered to obey God alone and not anyone else. He advised his followers to pray to Allah, to give alms to the needy, to keep fast when one is not sick or travelling, to speak the truth, to be affectionate to our neighbors and relatives, to abstain from wicked act, not to quarrel.

He advised his followers to follow the doctrine of Islam. He preached the majesty of God i.e., Allah. He declared that Allah is the source of life, knowledge, power, will, hearing, seeing, speaking. It means according to Islam; Allah is the source of everything. He is the creator of the world, including heaven and earth. He determines everything in the world and he has a number of attributes. According to Islam, Allah is the light, Allah knows everything. He is present everywhere. He is sovereign.

5 pillars of Islam

According to Islam, every Muslim should do 5 kinds of religious act which are known as 5 pillars of Islam and these are –

1. Creed- Creed means faith in God, his angels, his scripture (holy granth i.e., Quraan), believe in resurrection and the day of judgement, believe in God's absolute power.
2. Prayer- every Muslim should perform prayer to Allah three times a day facing towards Mecca.
3. Charity- Charity in Quraan is mentioned as Zakat. Which means voluntary give to the poor and needy.
4. Fasting- the fourth pillar of Islam is fasting. It has been called the gate of religion. In Quraan it has been mentioned these are three stages of fasting.

Stage I- To remain away from craving and lust, to restrain the belly and other parts of the body from craving and lust.

Stage II- To restrain eyes, ears, tongue, hands, feet and other parts of the body from sin.

Stage III- Restraining from worldly desires. In Islam, there is period of 1 month known as Ramzan or Ramdan. One Muslims keep fasts to do not eat anything from sunrise to sunset.

5. The fifth pillar of the Islam is pilgrimage to Mecca.

Every true Muslim should follow these 5 pillars of Islam. Quraan is the holy book of Muslim which contains the revelations of almighty. Though there is unity of faith in Islam, still there are multiple sets among Muslims the main groups are known as Sunnis and Shias.

Sunnis follow the dictators of Mohammad and his 3 successors namely- Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman.

Shias believes in the dictates of prophet cousins and son-in-law Ali.

These two generally fight among each other and have their own strong wholes followers the Muslim Dharama.

Sikhism

Sikhism is not an original religion. It is mixture of Hindu and Muslim religion. Followers of Guru Nanak founded Sikhism that is why Guru Nanak is said to become founder of Sikh religion. Guru Nanak was born at Talwandi in 1469 AD. His father's name was Kaluand mother's name was Tripti/Tripta. He was Khatri by caste. Right from childhood Guru Nanak was indifferent towards worldly affairs and as the year passed, he become perfectly devoted to God and composed a number of hymns in praise of God. One day Nanak left his

home and wandered in search of God. He travelled all the parts of the country and started preaching. Nanak became very popular and he was highly appreciated by his followers. He was considered as Guru and came to be known as Guru Nanak. He died in 1539AD. After the death of Guru Nanak, his successors in turn by became Guru Angad, Guru Amardas, Guru Ramdas, Guru Arjun, Guru Har Govind, Guru Harrai, Guru Harkishan, Guru Teg Bahadur, Guru Govind Singh.

There are 10 gurus of Sikh community. After Guru Govind Singh no one succeeded to become a guru in the human form. The Holy book of Sikh religion that is Granth Saheb. It was declared as Guru and since then this holy book come to be known as "Guru Granth Saheb".

Philosophy of Sikhism

In Sikh religion they followed the concept of Brahm as 'Sat-Chit-Anand'. The most fundamentals are related to the oneness of God and the fellowship of men. Through the Sikh believes in personal God, Guru Nanak call himself formless or Nirakara.

Sikh believe in 5 Ks

- Kaccha (Kachera)
- Kesh
- Kirpan
- Kangha
- Kada

Guru Govind Singh is the creator of Khalsa who represented the militant group of Sikh. In Sikhism 'SEVA' is the main thing such as construction of Gurudwara by hand (kar seva), Langer.

In Sikhism importance attached to Gurus because they believe that without gurus none has found God. Guru granth sahib is worshipped like a guru and the hymns of Guru granth sahib are recited sweetly they call guru granth sahib as holy grant. As Quran is the guide of Muslim similarly Guru granth sahib is the guide of Sikh community. As ethical values of guru Nanak preached for purity of heart and mind which is essential for God's realization. Sikh religion condemned caste, idol worship, Ritualism. Sikhism believes in rebirth. In Sikhism there are some sects-

- Nanakpanthi,
- Sahajdhari,
- Khalsa,
- Keshdhari. Etc.

CONCLUSION

In the preceding sections, we explored the many religions and sects in India, as well as their main doctrines and concepts. Religious evolution

has traditionally been perceived as a progressive process; the theory proposed in the study focuses on evaluation in order to draw attention to the key aspects of natural evolutionary processes. As a result, this theory explaining the evolution of religions is provided.