

Unit 15

Sikhism

Contents

- 15.1 Introduction
- 15.2 The Sikh community
- 15.3 Teachings of Guru Nanak
- 15.4 The Sikh Tradition
- 15.5 The Sikh Gurus
- 15.6 Interaction with other faiths
- 15.7 The Martial Background
- 15.8 Conclusion
- 15.9 Further Reading

Learning Objectives

After you have studied this unit you should be able to:

- outline salient aspects of the Sikh community;
- describe the teachings of Guru Nanak;
- elaborate on the Sikh tradition of Sikhism; and
- detail the interaction of Sikhism with other faiths.

15.1 Introduction

Sikhism is one of the most important religion of India. It originated on the soil of Indian society with the teachings of its first saint Guru Nanak Dev ji. The Sikh religion has seen several critical phases and gone through important transformations since the days of Guru Nanak Dev ji its first Guru up to the time of Guru Govind Singh ji, its tenth Guru. The important ideas concerning the Sikh religion matured during this period. We shall discuss this important period of the Sikh history in detail. On the other hand, the Sikh community has evolved later on the basis of the tradition and teachings of its Gurus. What is important for us to know is the way in which the Sikhs have responded to the new challenges of contemporary society. One of most important question relating to the sociology of religion could be like: How one behaves or responds to the questions/challenges of contemporary society while being a Sikh or for that matter representing any other religion Such questions concerning some other religious groups have been discussed in the area of 'Sociology of religion' by some prominent classical as well as contemporary sociologists. Here the broader question, however, is what constitutes the religious/ethnic identity and how does it deal with the questions and challenges of contemporary society.

15.2 The Sikh community

The Sikh community constitutes a little less than 2% of the population of India. Although the Sikhs are spread all over India but a larger section of them is located in Punjab state. Although India has been the soil where from the Sikhism originated, but the Sikhs could well be seen all over the world including some European countries, U.S.A. and Canada. However,

there exists a special relationship between the Sikhs and Punjab the place of their origin. The relationship between the Sikhs and Punjab is so strong that sometimes the Sikhs are also referred as Punjabis. But one thing is sure that almost every Sikh speaks of Punjabi as his mother tongue. In fact the notion of 'Punjabi', has taken strides over different cultural groups in certain contacts. Similarly almost every Sikh refers back to religions teachings of its Gurus, Guru Granth Sahib and Akal Takhat.

We are familiar with a man wearing a turban or a lady wearing a Salwar Kurta and can easily identify them as Sikhs, but there are some additional features also which help us. For example, Sikhs invariably wear Kada around their wrists. Although these features of physical appearance are important in itself, but here we are more concerned with some more fundamental questions. The more relevant sociological questions could however be: Who is a Sikh? In other words, here we are more concerned with the Sikh community as it expresses through its own and unique cultural identity. We shall examine these questions in detail and perhaps the most significant answers to such questions can be found in the religious texts. Additionally, the findings of researches conducted by some prominent scholars could also be useful. The same is discussed ahead.

Box 15.1 What is Sikhism?

W.H. McLeod (1999) in 'What is Sikhism?' has dealt with it by asking the same question to a Sikh gentleman. To this question the answer given by the gentleman explains the essence of Sikhism, although in a very simple language. The answer of the gentleman was that "Sikhism can be defined as the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man."

Explanation like that are rooted in the Sikh tradition itself dating back to the days of Guru Nanak Dev. In Adi-Granth Guru Nanak Dev has explained the importance of 'nam', 'dan' and 'insan'. 'Nam' refers to 'divine Name' which is Akal Purakh or God. One is to simply associate with nam or God, share one's earnings with others which is 'dan' and strive for pure living which refers to one's making of 'insan'.

15.3 Teachings of Guru Nanak

Guru Nanak Dev's teachings have been summarized by Kahan Singh explaining the essentials of Sikh dharma in his encyclopedia, Gurusabad ratnakar mahankos. These guidelines refer to individual and corporate respectively. These are the following.

i) For individual

- i) to achieve mystical union with God (Vahiguru) through meditation on the divine Name.
- ii) to read the sacred scripture (gurbani) daily and to reflect on the doctrines which it imparts.
- iii) to view all men as brothers without concern for caste or race, bestowing love on all and performing services without expectation of reward.
- iv) to secure benefits of religion (dharam) while continuing to live the life of an ordinary layman.
- v) to spurn ignorant notions of untouchability, magic, idol worship and superstition and to accept only the teachings of the Guru.

II) For Corporate

- i) to observe the Sikh code of conduct (rahit) in the bonds of unity.
- ii) to accept the corporate community (panth) as Guru and to serve it with loyal devotion.
- iii) to proclaim the Guru's teachings to the world.
- iv) to accept with affection all Nanak-panthis as adherents of the Sikh religion, regardless of their outward appearance and to treat people with respect and sympathy.
- v) To observe in Gurdwaras and other shrines the rituals enjoined by the Gurus.

Additionally views like Nam Japo, Kriat Karo, Vand Chhako meaning thereby "repeat divine Name, work hard and give others a portion of what you earn" were also found to be associated with the name Guru Nanak Dev ji.

15.4 The Sikh Tradition

After the life and works of Guru Nanak Dev Ji the tradition of the Sikh Gurus continued up to Guru Gobind Singh Ji. It is important to know how this tradition continued and who were the Gurus to carry it forward. A reference to the Sikh Gurus along with their time period is given in the following Box 15.2

Box 15.2 The Sikh Gurus

The Sikh Gurus and their Period

- 1) Guru Nanak Dev (1469 – 1539)
- 2) Guru Angad (1504 – 1552)
- 3) Guru Amar Das (1479 – 1574)
- 4) Guru Ram Das (1534 – 1581)
- 5) Guru Arjan (1563 – 1606)
- 6) Guru Hargobind (1595 – 1644)
- 7) Guru Hari Rai (1630 – 1661)
- 8) Guru Hari Krishan (1656 – 1664)
- 9) Guru Teg Bahadur (1621 – 1675)
- 10) Guru Gobind Singh (1666 – 1708)

[Source: W.H. McLeod (1999: 133)]

The tradition of the Sikh Guru begins from Guru Nanak Dev and scholars studying this tradition have given considerable importance to him. Guru Nanak Dev made a significant contribution by establishing a new tradition of religious thinking and guidance therefore it seems proper to know about the Sikh religion since beginning i.e. since the lifetime contribution of its first Guru. Here we shall examine some important aspects related to Guru Nanak Dev Ji's life and his contribution to Sikh religion.

Action and Reflection 15.1

Talk to some Sikh boys and girls. Ask them how many Gurus of Sikhism they can remember. Note down your findings.

Baba Guru Nanak Dev Ji, as he is known today among the followers of Sikh religion, devoted his life completely for the ideas, thoughts and actions which he considered important to promote it. During the course of promoting the Sikh religion, Guru Nanak Dev Ji toured several important places, met a variety of scholars from some other religions and displayed

remarkable understanding of the people and events. In this intellectual journey he met several people who have later commented on the life and works of Guru Nanak Dev ji. It is an indirect way of knowing about him as it is told by others.

Box No. 15.3 The Janam Sakhis

Some significant people who knew him, of course in their own different ways, have conveyed us about his life these contributions are known as janam – sakhis in the Sikh tradition. About Guru Nanak Dev ji's life at least three such janam – sakhis were available. The life and works of Guru Nanak Dev ji, have been attempted on the basis of the contributions made according to: (i) Bhai Gurdas : (ii) Puratan Janam – Sakhis and (iii) Miharban Janam Sakhi.

Although these are some of the different ways to understand his life and works but inspite of a few variations in the opinion of scholars, the method of janam sakhis remains very important. Some of the important aspects of the life and works of Guru Nanak Dev ji can be referred here as it emerged on the basis of the analysis of these janam – sakhis. According to the description available in the sakhis, Guru Nanak Dev ji visited several religious places on festive occasions. There are descriptions available of his visits to Mount Sumeru, Mecca Madina and Baghbad. There were instances of some religious debates at each of theses places and each time Guru Nank Dev ji was able to prove his own point of view. In one of such discourses he pointed out that Hindus and Muslims when they refer to Ram and Rahim respectively they actually mean one and the same God. His visits to Kartarpur, Achal Batala and Multan are said to be associated with such events where he displayed some miracles.

Baba Guru Nanak Dev is said to have born in the month of the Vaisakh, S. 1526 (A.D. 1469) as a son of Kalu, resident of the village Rai Bhoi di Talwandi. He started to display some mysterious things and inclination towards spirituality at the age of five years. Seeing this phenomenon in action Hindus thought him to be an incarnation of God in human form and Muslim thought him to be a true follower of God.

Parents got him married, but he displayed the symptoms of withdrawl from worldly activities. He was invited by Nawab Daulat Khan of Sultanpur and was duly impressed by him. Sakhis also tell us about Guru Nanak Dev was lifted by the messengers of God for divine court where he was given a cup of nectar (amrit) with the command to drink it with “My Name (Nam)”. He did it and returned to the world to preach the divine Name. Some other details regarding his birth and some other important events are available in Miharban Janam Sakhi which is also known as Pothi Sach – Khand.

15.5 The Sikh Gurus

These and some other details would be found in Janam – Sakhis, but it seems important at this stage to realise that it could help us as a method to investigate into the details of the life of Baba Guru Nanak Dev ji. The tradition thus established by him was later known as the Nanak – panth all Gurus upto Guru Govind Singh as well as other believers followed it. Nanak – panthi allegiance constituted some local groups as sangats which sang the songs devoted to Gurus hymns. These satsangs were generally held at dharamshalas where caste discriminations were not allowed. The Punjabi community which was otherwise divided along caste lines was seen as a united entity while observing satsangs. Here we could see the emergence of the Sikh religion as a strong force which displayed unity among various

castes. On the other hand each one was well aware of his caste identity with larger Punjabi community. The Sikh Gurus visited several places on festive occasions and in this context it is important to mention the name of Amritsar where Guru Arjan (Fifth Guru) supervised the compiling of a sacred scripture for the panth. In the early seventeenth century Hargobind succeeded his father Arjan as the sixth Guru. Hargobind came across different and perhaps difficult conditions of society. This was the period when the Sikh Guru had to come out of the earlier environment where Gurus were confined to dharamshalas and religious visits outside. Some significant change could be seen around this period i.e. at the time of the Sixth Guru Hargobind. Guru Hargobind symbolically referred to two swordswomen referring to spiritual authority (Piri) and the other referring to as the newly achieved temporal power (Miri). On the basis of this piri miri combination, a new building known as Akal Takhat was erected. Akal Takhat faces Harmandir Sahib (The Golden Temple) at Amritsar. It reflected a transformation within the Sikh Panth. Some scholars like W.H. McLeod (1999 : 25) have referred this militant tradition to the earlier existing Jat culture. However it has been contradicted by some later scholars like Jagjit Singh (1981). Not much happened during the middle years of the seventeenth century and it appeared as if the Sikh tradition might return back to its earlier days of religious glory. But one important incident happened during this time.

Box 15.4 Guru Teg Bahadur's Sacrifice

Guru Teg Bahadur, The ninth Guru faced a difficult time between 1664-75 and allowed himself to sacrifice his life at the hands of the Mughal rulers in the expectation that some brave men shall rise against Mughal tyranny.

Fearing the same fate some Sikhs chose to remain silent but the next Guru of the Sikhs, Guru Gobind Singh came heavily against this cowardice and came out with the ways and means suggesting that the Sikhs would not be able to hide themselves anymore and be recognized where ever they were present. He symbolically suggested the use of steel in their hands and steel in the soul of the panth. He also decided to do away with the earlier experiment with the decentralization of power and demanded everyone's commitment to the central authority. Sikhs were thus required to become members of his Khalis or Khalsa. Guru Gobind Singh is also known to have discontinued with the tradition of appointing Sikh Gurus. In this way Guru Gobind Singh was the tenth and the last Guru of the Sikh religions. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Ranjit Singh conquered Lahore. He became Maharaj of Lahore in 1801 and since then 'raj Karega Khalsa' prophecy became popular. After the Anglo - Sikh war Punjab was taken over by the Britishers in 1849. The conflicts of the Sikhs with the Mughals and Afghans as well as with the Britishers could be seen all along the history. In this process of confrontation, the Sikh religion has emerged out and transformed itself according to the evergrowing challenges.

15.6 Interaction with other faiths

The Sikh religion throughout its history has had interactions with the people of other faith namely Hinduism and Islam. There are some other instances also like the caste factor coming in the way of Sikhism. As we have seen earlier as well, everyone within Sikh religion was well aware of his caste - origins. We have also seen that at the places of religious activities like in the dharamshalas the Gurus never allowed any discriminations, but in the social life caste played its important role. In the Sikh tradition a typical combination of religion and caste could be

seen. To illustrate just one such case the combination of Sikh religion with Jat culture has been an important issue which is discussed in various scholarly as well as popular writing. There is no dispute however, among the scholars about the origin of Jats. All scholars think alike that the Jats were basically of Aryan origin, settled in and around Punjab and also in some other adjacent plain areas. Kushwant Singh (1999) has argued that with them the Jats brought the Panchayat system in which the five senior members of the community commanded the supreme power within the village. Their decisions were just like the bindings on others.

Action and Reflection 15.2

Talk to Jat Sikhs about their role in Sikhism. Note down your findings.

Every Jat village was like a small republic and a considerable level of equality was observed among the Jats who happened to be kinsmen. However, some inequality was clearly observable between the Jats and some other castes. The notion of freedom and equality enjoyed by the Jats kept them away from Brahminical Hinduism. The denigration of the Jats by upper caste Hindus did not result in lowering down the position of the Jats in their own eyes, nor did it help in upgrading the status of Brahmins and Kshatriyas. The Jats were considered born as workers and the warriors. The Jats did not flee from the village in the case of invasion and went for the revenge in case the outsiders molested the women. The Punjabi Jats were generally ready to risk their lives against any odds. For such reasons the Jat connection with the Sikh community suddenly becomes important. The Jats thus played a significant role in the Sikh militancy. It also explains a typical combination of piri and miri in the Sikh religion. This should, however, not create the impression that the Jats were the only caste which represented the Sikh religion. For example, the Ramgarhia Sikhs were represented by the artisan caste. It also constitutes an important section within the Sikh community.

15.7 The Martial Background

The Sikh Community has been living under the conditions where there had been battles with others, particularly the invaders. Throughout their period of history they had to enter into conflict with others. They tried several permutations and combinations to fight against the Afghan invaders. One Afghan invader Ahmad Shah Abdali made at least nine invasions, the Sikhs sought the help from the rulers of Delhi and Marathas. The biggest challenge before the Sikh community was from the Afghan rulers. The Afghan rulers had made several attempts to capture the territory under the Sikh rulers. Maharajah Ranjit Singh's able leadership thwarted many such attempts. The much discussed event of history known as the 'consolidation of the Punjab' could be attributed to the able leadership of Maharajah Ranjit Singh. On the one hand Maharajah Ranjit Singh was able to prevent the Afghan rulers from invading the Punjab region on the other to fight against the Gurkhas and thus restricting their influence upto Nepal only. The Sikh community thus contributed to the 'consolidation of Punjab' which was a very significant event related to them. Later even the British rulers favoured the Sikh Community leadership to fight against the Afghan invaders. The first Punjabi victory over the Afghan became possible in 1813 after the Battle of Attock. After that the Afghans lost power in Northern India and were pushed back to their own territory. After the consolidation of the Punjabi power under the leadership of Maharajah Ranjit Singh apparently there were cordial relations between them and the then emerging British Power. But the Punjabi leadership, particularly Maharajah Ranjit Singh was well aware of the British power. The Sikh leaders realized soon that the Britishers would sooner or later would like

to take over the rule from them in Punjab. Later on the British power consolidated itself leading to the annexation of the Punjab. The Britishers promised the rule of law in the land of Punjab and initiated some development works there. In the Sipoy Mutiny of 1857, the Sikhs stood with the Britishers and as a result of this more and more Sikhs were recruited to the army. During the period of the world war I (1914 – 1918) the Sikhs numbered about one fifth of the total army. As a result of the proximity of the Sikhs to the British rulers, some of them although in a very small number, had the opportunity to seek migration to the United States and Canada.

15.8 Conclusion

The Sikh community has evolved in a meaningful way, has seen ten Gurus (from Guru Nanak Devji upto Guru Gobind Singh ji). Guru Granth Sahib is their religious text based upon the sacred scriptures compiled by Guru Arjan during 1603-04. It is also known as Adi-Granth. However, later developments in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, a zealous sikh came to be known as Akal Purakh and in twentieth century Akali Dal (Akali Party) was formed. Within the Sikh community, some castes have acquired prominence like Jats and Ahluwalias. During the recent times some sects or groups within the Sikh community have come to prominence like, Ramgarhias, Nirankaris, Mazhabis and Namdhari Sikhs owing allegiance to different cultural identities. In Punjab all the historic Gurudwaras are now controlled by Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee commonly known as SGPC. The Sikh community has also evolved in its relationship with some other communities like Hindus and Muslims.

15.9 Further Reading

McLeod, W.H. (1999), Sikhs and Sikhism New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Singh Khushwant (1999) A History of the Sikhs (Volume 1 & 2), New Delhi: Oxford University press.

Unit 16

Jainism and Buddhism

Contents

- 16.1 Introduction
- 16.2 Jainism: The History
- 16.3 Religious Practices
- 16.4 Doctrine of Jainism
- 16.5 Religious Symbolism and Iconography
- 16.6 Buddhism: Main Traditions
- 16.7 Doctrine of Buddhism
- 16.8 Historical Development in India
- 16.9 Diffusion of Buddhism
- 16.10 Buddhism in the West
- 16.11 Conclusion
- 16.12 Further Reading

Learning Objectives

After you have studied this unit you should be able to:

- outline the history of Jainism;
- describe the doctrine of Jainism;
- discuss doctrine of Buddhism;
- trace the diffusion of Buddhism; and
- Present Buddhism in the West.

16.1 Introduction

The conditions underlying the emergence of Buddhism and Jainism in ancient India were those generally characteristic of a wider process of socio-cultural transition which took place in the first millennium B C across the face of the civilized world, from Greece to China. In the principal centers of the high cultures, archaic social and religious institutions were breaking down under the pressure from more complex forms of economic and political activity, associated with urban revolution and the territorial expansion of new imperial states. In all cases, apparent economic and political advances were mixed with serious social disorders, hardship, and loss of traditional religious moorings. In this process of transformation, new philosophical and religious solutions were sought and attained by the formative thinkers whose teachings still lie behind the institutions and way of life of the world today.

The 6th Century B.C was a period of religious turmoil in India. Simple Religious life of ancient India had become complex, elaborate and expensive in due course of time. The prevalence of the Brahmanical system based on the complicated sacrifice and elaborate ceremonies created unrest among the common people. Further, caste system became rigid creating

inequalities in the society. The Brahmins who now adorned the status of being the highest in the society provoked religious propagators to preach a new philosophy of life and death. Many sects arose which were advocating diverse opinions about God and ways of attaining Moksha. The prevailing ethos common to all these religious perspectives was asceticism, which stood in contrast to the ritualistic Brahmanic schools associated with the earliest period of classical Hinduism. Prominent among them were Buddhism and Jainism which emerged in India around 800-600 BC. They denied the ultimacy of the Vedas and the ritual significance of caste and gave messages of salvation based on personal conversion, usually without ascriptive limitations of caste, class, sex. Their teachings found rich soil among the upwardly mobile urban commercial groups.

Action and Reflection 16.1

Discuss the conditions which led to the rise of Jainism and Buddhism?

16.2 Jainism: The History

We now turn to the history of Jainism. Jainism, as believed by its followers is said to have originated in the antiquity. Mahavira was the 24th and last Tirthankara (literally “Ford-maker”) of the current age (kalpa) of the world. Tirthankaras, also called Jinas, are revealers of the Jaina religious path (dharma) who have crossed over life’s stream of rebirths and have set the example that all Jainas must follow. Born as the son of a Kshatriya chieftain, Vardhaman Mahavira renounced his princely status to take up the ascetic life at the age of 30. Over a period of 12 years, he suffered the most self-denying hardships until he finally reached enlightenment and began to teach others. There remains no objective document concerning the beginnings of Jainism. The date of Mahavira’s death (“entry into Nirvana”), which is the starting point of the traditional Jain chronology, corresponds to 527/526 BCE. However some scholars believe it occurred about one century later.

Mahavira’s acknowledged status as the 24th Tirthankara (or *Jina*) means that Jainas perceive him as the last revealer in this cosmic age of the Jaina Dharma. Mahavira had eleven disciples (called *ganadharas*), all of whom were Brahmin converts to Jainism. All of them founded monastic lineages, but only two- Indrabhuti Gautama and Sudharman, disciples who survived Mahavira- served as the points of origin for the historical Jaina monastic community.

The community appears to have grown quickly in number. However it was subject to a several schismatic movements. The most significant division was that between the *Svetambaras* (literally, white-robed”) and the *Digambaras* (“sky-clad”; i.e. naked) which persists till today. The major points of difference between the two concern the question of proper monastic attire and whether or not a soul can attain liberation from a female body (a possibility the Digambaras deny). These differences were formalized through a series of councils that met to preserve and codify the teachings of Mahavira in written form. It was felt that the teachings, preserved orally since his death, were in danger of being lost. Four councils were held between the 4th century B C and the 5th century A D. The last one held at Valabhi in Saurashtra (modern day Gujarat) codified the Svetambara canon that is still in use. However the Digambaras deny the authenticity of this corpus and instead recognize the authority of “pro-canonical” treatises.

After Mahavira’s time the Jain community spread along the caravan routes from Magadh (Bihar) to the west and south. They claimed to have enjoyed

the favor of numerous rulers, including king Bimbisara of Magadh and later the Mauryan Emperor Chandragupta Maurya. By the 5th century, the Digambaras were influential in the Deccan, especially in Karnataka. Under the Ganga, Rashtrakutas and other Dynasties, Jain culture undoubtedly flourished. As for Svetambaras, they were especially successful in Gujarat where their famous pontiff, Hemachandra served as a minister in the kingdom. Elaborate sanctuaries were erected, such as that on Mount Abu, now in Rajasthan. The rise of several sects testifies to the vitality of the Svetambaras, who even succeeded in interesting the Mughal Emperor Akbar in the Jain doctrine.

Although the Jain community never regained its former splendor, it did not disappear entirely. Nowadays, the Digambaras are firmly established in Maharashtra and Karnataka and the Svetambaras in Punjab, Rajasthan and Gujarat. In modern times, Svetambaras Jainism has maintained a more effective organization and has a larger monastic community than its Digambara counterpart. Both communities devote much energy to maintaining temples and publishing critical editions of their religious texts.

Jainas have traditionally been professional and mercantile people. These trades have made them adaptable to other environments and societies besides those of India. Many Jains have migrated overseas, and this has had the result of increasing international awareness of Jainism.

16.3 Religious Practices

All Jains are members of the four-fold congregation (*samgha*), composed of monks and nuns, laymen and laywomen. They share a common belief in the *triratna* (three jewels): *samyagdarsana* ('right faith'), *samyagjnana* ('right knowledge') and *samyakcaritra* ('right conduct'). Observance of the "three jewels" provides the conditions for the attainment of the goal, which is liberation from bondage. Deliverance can be attained only by the *nirgrantha*, the Jain monk free from bonds both external and internal. Ideal practices are thus in force in the (male) religious community. Nevertheless, householders are permitted certain ceremonies such as the worship of images (a practice borrowed from Hinduism). Both the lay and the monastic followers must take solemn vows (*vratas*), which form the basis of Jain ethics and guides the pious believers' lives.

The monks and nuns take the five 'great vows' (*mahavratas*), pledging to abstain from: injuring life; false speech; taking what is not given; unchastity; appropriation. A sixth vow consists of abstaining from taking food and drink at night with the aim to avoid injury to insects which might go unnoticed at night.

Ordinary monks and nuns live in a 'company' (*gana*) where they benefit from the advice of their superiors and from the active solidarity of their brethren. The *gana* is further subdivided into smaller units.

Box 16.1 Ordination in Jainism

Religious age and hierarchy play a great role. Elders look into the material and spiritual welfare of the company. *Upadhyaya* is a specialist in teaching the scripture and *Acharya* acts as a spiritual master. Full ordination of a member takes place after a short novitiate that lasts approximately four months. Full admission entails taking the five great vows mentioned above. The *nirgranthas* (monks) are also called *bhikshu* (mendicant) or *sadhu* (pious); the *nigranthis* (nuns) are called *bhikshuni* or *sadhvi*. Monks and nuns must observe the utmost reserve. The nuns' status however is always inferior to that of the monk.

Right religious conduct is minutely defined, giving rules for habitation and wandering, begging, study, confession and penances. The begging tour is important in a community where the religious members have no possessions, hence it is minutely codified. Begging and fasting must be conducted with great care and preceded confession (*alocana*) and repentance (*pratikramana*), which are deemed essential activities.

Called *sravakas* ("listeners") or *upasakas* ("servants"), the lay believers also take five main vows, similar to the *mahavratas*, and hence termed *anuvratas* ("lesser vows"). These include *ahimsa*, (non-violence), *satya* (truthfulness), *dana*(charity) etc.

These practices are evidently relevant in a doctrine that emphasizes individual exertion, and that considers the *jinas* to be inaccessible, liberated souls. On the other hand, the Jain church has not been able to ignore the devotional aspirations of the laity, who are also attracted by Hindu ritual. All these practices are believed to lead the soul to achieve its own "perfection" (*siddhi*), acting as vehicles through which one crosses the stream of the innumerable rebirths.

16.4 Doctrine of Jainism

The Jainas religious goal is the complete perfection and purification of the soul. This can only occur when the soul is in a state of eternal liberation from and nonattachment to corporeal bodies. To understand how the jainas perceive and address the problem of impediments towards the liberation of soul, it is imperative to explain the Jaina conception of reality.

Time, according to jainas, is eternal and formless. It is conceived as a wheel with 12 spokes called *aras* (ages), six making an ascending arc where man progresses in knowledge, age, stature and happiness and six a descending one where he deteriorates. The two cycles joined together make one rotation of the wheel of time, which is called a *kalpa*.

Jainas divide the inhabited universe into five parts. The lower world (*adhloka*) is subdivided into seven tiers, each one darker and more tortuous than the one above it. The middle world (*madhyaloka*) consists of numberless concentric continents separated by seas, the centre continent which is called *jambudvipa*. Human beings occupy *jambudvipa*, the second continent and half of the third; the focus of Jaina activity, however, is *jambudvipa*, the only continent on which it is possible for the soul to achieve liberation. The celestial world (*urdhvaloka*) consists of two categories of heaven. At the apex of the occupied universe is the *siddhasila*, the crescent-shaped abode of liberated souls (*siddhas*)

Jain reality is constituted by *jiva* (soul or living substance) and *ajiva* (non-soul or inanimate substance). The essential characteristics of *jiva* are consciousness, bliss and energy. In its pure state, *jiva* possesses these qualities in infinite measure. The souls, infinite in number, are divisible in their embodied state into two main classes, immobile and mobile, according to the number of sense organs possessed by the body they inhabit. The jainas believe that the four elements (earth, fire, water, air) are also animated by souls. Moreover the universe is full of an infinite number of minute beings, *nigodas*, which are slowly evolving.

Matter furnishes to the soul a body in which to be incorporated and the possibility of corporeal functions. There are five kinds of bodies, each having different functions. All corporeal beings possess at least two of them, the 'karmic' and the 'fiery'. The karmic body results from previous actions; it is intimately attached to the *jiva*, for whom it causes servitude. Hence arise incarnation and transmigration, that is, the law of the universe.

Bondage occurs because the subtle matter resulting from anterior intentions and volitions is attracted to the soul exercised by the means of speech, body and mind. The subtle matter that has been attracted becomes *karman* when entering the soul. The pious Jain strives to get rid of these material extrinsic elements. When life ends, the jiva, if it has recovered its essential nature, immediately rejoins the other siddhas at the pinnacle of the universe, otherwise takes rebirth determined by its *karman*.

The process of bondage and liberation then may be summarized in the following categories: 1) *jiva* 2) *ajiva* 3) influx of karmic matter into the *jiva* 4) bondage 5) stoppage of the karmic influx (*samvara*) 6) expulsion (*nirjara*) of previously accumulated karmic matter 7) total liberation.

Action and Reflection 16.2

How, according to Jainism can one achieve liberation of soul which was their ultimate goal?

16.5 Religious Symbolism and Iconography

Image worship was introduced at an early stage in Jainism. However, *jina* himself appears to have made no statement regarding the worship of images. Descriptions of stupas, commemorative pillars and tree shrines appear early Jaina texts, which also refer to the worship in the heavens by gods of images of the four legendary *sasvata jinas* ("eternal victors")

The distinctive feature of the Jain shrine is the image of the tirthankara to whom it is dedicated and the idols of the prophets who flank him or occupy the various surrounding niches. Secondary divinities are frequently added. There are also auspicious and symbolic diagrams: the wheel of Jaina law, and the "five supreme ones"- *arhats*, *siddhas*, *acaryas*, *upadhyas*, and *sadhus*. There are also conventional representations of Continents, of Holy places and of the great festive congregation in the middle of which the Jina is said to have delivered his sermon for the benefit of all creatures. In effect, the Jaina temple is often said to be a sort of replica of this assembly.

Stupas were among the first monuments to be erected by the Jain community. Soon the Buddhists alone continued this tradition, so that in effect, the Jains have two main types of architectural masterpieces: rock-cut and structural temples. It is probably in western India that the Jain temples are the most numerous and impressive

Through the ages the Jainas, though a minority, have clearly occupied a major place in Indian history. Their culture is both original and influenced by the Brahmanic society surrounding them. Conversely, their presence has probably encouraged certain tendencies of Hinduism, perhaps the most outstanding of which are the high value set on asceticism and the faith in ahimsa. The spread of Jainism remained largely confined to India where they form an admittedly small but nonetheless influential and comparatively progressive community of 2,604,837 people (1981 census).

16.6 Buddhism: Main Traditions

We now turn to the main traditions of Buddhism. Buddhism focuses on the teachings of Gautama Buddha, who was born in Kapilavastu (now Nepal) with the name Siddhârtha Gautama around the fifth century BC. Buddhism spread throughout the Indian subcontinent in the five centuries following the Buddha's passing, and propagated into Central, Southeast, and East Asia over the next two millennia. It underwent a massive process of missionary diffusion throughout the Asian world, assimilating new values and undergoing major changes in doctrinal and institutional principles.

The traditional distinction between the major historical forms of Buddhism has centred on a three-fold typology. It is based on doctrinal and institutional differences which seem to fall within relatively homogeneous geographical areas. They are:

- 1) The *Theravada* ("teaching of the elders"), located in Southeast Asia—especially in Ceylon, Burma, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia
- 2) *Mahayana* ("great vehicle") in Nepal, Sikkim, China, Korea and Japan
- 3) *Tantrayana* ("esoteric vehicle") formerly prevalent in Tibet, Mongolia and parts of Siberia

Today *Theravada* represents the sole survivor of the numerous ancient Indian schools. It has a fixed body of canonical literature, a relatively unified orthodox teaching and a clearly structured institutional distinction between the monastic order and laity. On the other hand, the *Mahayana* is a diffuse and a vastly complex combination of several schools and sects based on a heterogeneous literature of massive proportions. Certain key scriptures exist which are regarded as typifying the more universal thrust of *Mahayana* principles over the *Theravada* teachings. The *Theravada* teachings have traditionally been stigmatized as *Hinayan* ("small vehicle") by the *Mahayanists*. Tantric Buddhism, dominantly identified with Tibetan Lamaism and its theocracy, is equally ambiguous. The esoteric tantric teachings, which originated in India, persisted in several so-called *Mahayan* schools in China and Japan. In its Tibetan form Tantric Buddhism was richly fused with a native primitivism, and it underwent important and very divergent sectarian developments.

Amid this diversity there are few central elements which can be considered as the general characteristic of Buddhism throughout the larger part of history. Symbol of Buddha is the common point of unity—revered chiefly as a human teacher in *Theravada* and worshipped as a supreme deity in certain forms of theistic *Mahayana*. The voluntary act of personal conversion in response to the teaching irrespective of the social, ethnic or geographic origin is commonly prevalent.

16.7 Doctrine of Buddhism

The term Buddha, meaning "Enlightened one", refers to the spiritual awakening of an Indian prince, named Siddhartha Gautama, who lived in the 6th century BC. Renouncing the privileges of his royal life, he sought to investigate spiritual truth. On so doing, he passed into the state of enlightenment, known as *nirvana*, which literally means "without desire". Soon he inspired many disciples and came to be known as the "Sage of the Sakya tribe" or Sakyamuni and evolved his own teaching (*Dharma*). He then embarked on a missionary career, preaching his message of salvation openly to all. He formed an ever widening community (*sangha*) of mendicant disciples from all castes, including women and lay devotees.

The major forms of tradition represent the Buddha as teaching an exoteric, practical Yoga which followed the so-called middle path— a means between the extremes of bodily indulgence, self-mortification and speculative philosophy. It is based on the conviction that neither ritual manipulation of external physical forms (including radical asceticism eg. Jainism), nor abstract intellectualism can touch the real core of the human problem.

The Buddha taught that in life there exists sorrow / suffering which is caused by desire and it can be cured (ceased) by following the Noble Eightfold Path. This teaching is called the "Four Noble Truths". The Four Noble Truths was the topic of the first sermon given by the Buddha after his enlightenment¹, which was given to the ascetics with whom he had practiced austerities:

- 1) Suffering: All creatures' existence is marked by suffering, an agonized bondage to the meaningless cycle of rebirths amid a transitory flux which is impermanent (*anitya*) and without essential being (*anatman*).
- 2) The cause of suffering: The desire which leads to renewed existence (rebirth).
- 3) The cessation of suffering: The cessation of desire.
- 4) The way leading to the cessation of suffering: The Noble Eightfold Path;

The Noble Eightfold Path is the way to the cessation of suffering, the fourth part of the Four Noble Truths. In order to fully understand the noble truths and investigate whether they were in fact true, Buddha recommended that a certain path be followed which consists of: Right Viewpoint - Realizing the Four Noble Truths ;Right Values - Commitment to mental and ethical growth in moderation ;Right Speech - One speaks in a non hurtful, not exaggerated, truthful way ;Right Actions - Wholesome action, avoiding action that would do harm ;Right Livelihood - One's job does not harm in any way oneself or others; directly or indirectly (weapon maker, drug dealer, etc.) ;Right Effort - One makes an effort to improve ;Right Mindfulness - Mental ability to see things for what they are with clear consciousness ;Right Meditation - State where one reaches enlightenment and the ego has disappeared

The solidarity of the earliest mendicant community was centred on the charisma and teaching of the buddha. However the growing number of converts, the addition of lay devotees and the settlement of a number of communities forced the routinization of discipline and teaching.

16.8 Historical Development in India

During the first several centuries after the buddha's death, the story of his life was remembered and embellished, his teachings were preserved and developed and the community that he had established became religious force. Many of the followers of the Buddha who were wandering ascetics began to settle in permanent monastic institutions and to develop the procedures needed to maintain large monastic institutions. At the same time, the Buddhist laity came to include important members of the economic and political elite.

Box 16.2 The Buddhist Tradition

During the first century of its existence, Buddhism spread from its place of origin in Magadha and Kosala throughout much of Northern India, including the areas of Mathura and Ujjayini in the west. According to the Buddhist tradition, invitations to the council of Vaisali, held just over a century after Buddha's death, were sent to monks living in many distant places throughout Northern and Central India. The third ruler of the Mauryan empire, King Ashoka converted to Buddhism and promoted Buddhist missionary movements. Subsequently Buddhism succeeded in maintaining and even expanding its influence. Buddhist monastic centres and magnificent Buddhist monuments such as the Great Stupa at Barhut and Sanchi were established. It benefited from extensive royal and popular support in Northwestern India under the Pala dynasty from the eighth to the twelfth century, but Hindu philosophy and theistic (bhakti) movements were critics of Buddhism.

Hardly any distinct Buddhist presence continued in India after the last of the great monasteries were destroyed by the Muslims. Since the early 1900s, however, a significant Buddhist presence has been re-established. A number of Buddhist societies were organized by Indian intellectuals who found

Buddhism as an alternative to a Hindu tradition that they could no longer accept. Following the Chinese quest of Tibet in the late 1950s, there was an influx of Tibetan Buddhists who established a highly visible Buddhist community in Northern India. In addition to the incorporation of Sikkim in 1975 into the Republic of India, a strong Buddhist tradition related to the *Vajrayana* Buddhism of Tibet has been brought to India.

The major component in the contemporary revival of Buddhism in India has been the mass conversion of large number of people from the scheduled castes. This conversion movement, originally led by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar began in the 1950s. In October 1956 Ambedkar and several thousands of his followers converted to Buddhism and the group has continued to grow since then.

16.9 Diffusion of Buddhism

The first clear evidence of the spread of Buddhism outside India dates from the reign of King Ashoka (3rd century B C). According to his inscriptions, Ashoka sent Buddhist emissaries not only to many different regions of the sub-continent but also into certain border areas as well.

SRI LANKA

Sri Lankan Buddhism belongs to the Theravada tradition. About 69% of the country adheres to Buddhism. Sri Lanka is the country with longest continuous history of Buddhism. Theravada has been the major religion in the island since soon after its introduction in the 2nd century BC by Venerable Mahinda, the son of the Emperor Ashoka of India during the reign of Sri Lanka's King Devanampiyatissa. During this time, a sapling of the Bodhi Tree was also brought to Sri Lanka and became known as Sri Maha Bodhi.

The different orders of the Theravada are referred to as *Nikayas*, and in Sri Lanka there are three: 1) *Siam Nikaya*, founded in the 18th century by a Thai monk who perceived corruption in the sangha and wished to purify its practices 2) *Amarapura Nikaya*, founded in 1800 after ordination within Burma by lower-caste Buddhists who objected to the previously dominant practice of selective ordination from the higher-castes 3) *Ramanna Nikaya*, founded in 1864 by Ambagahawatte Saranankara.

SOUTHEAST ASIA

Through trade connection, commercial settlements, and even political interventions, India started to strongly influence Southeast Asian countries. Trade routes linked India with southern Burma, central and southern Siam, lower Cambodia and southern Vietnam, and numerous urbanized coastal settlements were established there.

From the 5th to the 13th century, South-East Asia had very powerful empires and became extremely active in Buddhist architectural and artistic creation. The main Buddhist influence now came directly by sea from the Indian subcontinent, so that these empires essentially followed the Mahayana faith. The Sri Vijaya Empire to the south and the Khmer Empire to the north competed for influence, and their art expressed the rich Mahayana pantheon of the Bodhisattvas. Following the destruction of Buddhism in mainland India during the 11th century, Mahayana Buddhism declined in Southeast Asia, to be replaced by the introduction of Theravada Buddhism from Sri Lanka.

In the areas east of the Indian subcontinent (today's Burma), Indian culture strongly influenced the Mons. The Mons are said to have been converted to Buddhism around 200 BCE under the proselytizing of the Indian king

Ashoka, before the scission between Mahayana and Hinayana Buddhism. The Buddhist art of the Mons was especially influenced by the Indian art of the Gupta and post-Gupta periods, and their mannerist style spread widely in Southeast Asia following the expansion of the Mon kingdom between the 5th and 8th centuries. The Theravada faith expanded in the northern parts of Southeast Asia under Mon influence, until it was progressively displaced by Mahayana Buddhism from around the 6th century CE.

Buddhism in Cambodia dates back to at least the 5th century A.D. Jayavarman of Fu-nan, Suryvarman I and Jayavarman VII were Buddhists. Up to the 13th century, Cambodia was primarily influenced by Mahayana Buddhism and Saivism. After the 13th century Theravada Buddhism became the main religion of Cambodia

Three schools of Mahayana Buddhism, now most influential, were imported into Vietnam: Zen Buddhism, Pure Land Buddhism, and Vajrayana Buddhism. Zen Buddhism, known as *Thiền* in Vietnam, is a branch of Buddhism created by the Indian monk Bodhidharma in China at the beginning of the 6th century. Zen is an abbreviation of *Dhyana*.

CENTRAL ASIA

Central Asia long played the role of a meeting place between China, India and Persia. During the 2nd century BC, the expansion of the Former Han to the west brought them into contact with the Hellenistic civilizations of Asia, especially the Greco-Bactrian Kingdoms. Thereafter, the expansion of Buddhism to the north led to the formation of Buddhist communities and even Buddhist kingdoms in the oases of Central Asia. Some Silk Road cities consisted almost entirely of Buddhist stupas and monasteries, and it seems that one of their main objectives was to welcome and service travelers between east and west.

The Hinayana traditions first spread among the Turkic tribes before combining with the Mahayana forms during the 2nd and 3rd centuries BCE to cover modern-day Pakistan, Kashmir, Afghanistan, eastern and coastal Iran, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan. These were the ancient states of Gandhara, Bactria, Parthia and Sogdia from where it spread to China. Among the first of these Turkic tribes to adopt Buddhism was the Turki-Shahi who adopted Buddhism as early as the 3rd century BCE. It was not, however, the exclusive faith of this region. There were also Zoroastrians, Hindus, Nestorian Christians, Jews, Manichaeans, and followers of shamanism, Tengrism, and other indigenous, nonorganized systems of belief.

Buddhism in Central Asia started to decline with the expansion of Islam and the destruction of many stupas in war from the 7th century. The Muslims accorded them the status of dhimmis as “people of the Book”, such as Christianity or Judaism and Al-Biruni wrote of Buddha as prophet “burxan”.

Buddhism saw a surge during the reign of Mongols following the invasion of Genghis Khan and the establishment of the Il Khanate and the Chagatai Khanate who brought their Buddhist influence with them during the 13th century, however within a 100 years the Mongols would convert to Islam and spread Islam across all the regions across Central Asia

KOREA

Buddhism was introduced around 372 CE, when Chinese ambassadors visited the Korean kingdom of Goguryeo, bringing scriptures and images. Buddhism prospered in Korea, and in particular Seon (Zen) Buddhism from the 7th

century onward. However, with the beginning of the Confucian Yi Dynasty of the Joseon period in 1392, Buddhism was strongly discriminated against until it was almost completely eradicated, except for a remaining Seon movement. As it now stands, Korean Buddhism consists mostly of the Seon lineage. Seon has a strong relationship with other Mahayana traditions that bear the imprint of Chinese Ch'an teachings, as well as the closely related Japanese Zen. Other sects, such as the Taego, and the newly formed Won, have also attracted sizable followings.

CHINA

When the Han Dynasty of China extended its power to Central Asia in the first century B.C., trade and cultural ties between China and Central Asia also increased. In this way, the Chinese people learnt about Buddhism so that by the middle of the first century C.E., a community of Chinese Buddhists was already in existence.

As interest in Buddhism grew, there was a great demand for Buddhist texts to be translated from Indian languages into Chinese. This led to the arrival of translators from Central Asia and India. With a growing collection of Chinese translations of Buddhist texts, Buddhism became more widely known and a Chinese monastic order was also formed. The first known Chinese monk was said to be Anshigao's disciple.

The earliest translators had some difficulty in finding the exact words to explain Buddhist concepts in Chinese, so they made use of Taoist terms in their translations. As a result, people began to relate Buddhism with the existing Taoist tradition. It was only later on that the Chinese came to understand fully the teachings of the Buddha.

In the middle of the ninth century, Buddhism faced persecution by a Taoist emperor. He decreed the demolition of monasteries, confiscation of temple land, return of monks and nuns to secular life and the melting of metal Buddha images. Although the persecution lasted only for a short time, it marked the end of an era for Buddhism in China. Following the demolition of monasteries and the dispersal of scholarly monks, a number of Chinese schools of Buddhism, including the Tian-tai School, ceased to exist as separate movements. They were absorbed into the Chan and Pure Land schools, which survived. The eventual result was the emergence of a new form of Chinese Buddhist practice in the monastery. Besides practising Chan meditation, Buddhists also recited the name of Amitabha Buddha and studied Buddhist texts. It is this form of Buddhism, which has survived to the present time.

Just as all the Buddhist teachings and practices were combined under one roof in the monasteries, Buddhist lay followers also began to practice Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism simultaneously. Gradually, however, Confucian teachings became dominant in the court, and among the officials who were not in favor of Buddhism.

Buddhism, generally, continued to be a major influence in Chinese religious life. In the earlier part of the twentieth century, there was an attempt to modernize and reform the tradition in order to attract wider support. In the nineteen-sixties, under the People's Republic, Buddhism was suppressed. Many monasteries were closed and monks and nuns returned to lay life. In recent years, a more liberal policy regarding religion has led to a growth of interest in the practice of Buddhism.

KOREA

When Buddhism was originally introduced to Korea from China in 372, or

about 800 years after the death of the historical Buddha, Shamanism was the indigenous religion. As it was not seen to conflict with the rites of nature worship, it was allowed to blend in with Shamanism. Thus, the mountains that were believed to be the residence of spirits in pre-Buddhist times became the sites of Buddhist temples.

During the sixth and seventh centuries, many Korean monks went to China to study and brought back with them the teachings of the various Chinese schools of Buddhism. Towards the end of the seventh century, the three kingdoms which existed in Korea were unified under the powerful Silla rulers. From then onwards, Buddhism flourished under their royal patronage. Great works of art were created and magnificent monasteries built. Buddhism exerted great influence on the life of the Korean people. In the tenth century, Silla rule ended with the founding of the Koryo Dynasty. Under this new rule, Buddhism reached the height of its importance. With royal support, more monasteries were built and more works of art produced. From this period onwards, there was a revival of Buddhism in Korea. Many Buddhists in Korea have since been actively involved in promoting education and missionary activities. They have founded universities, set up schools in many parts of Korea and established youth groups and lay organizations. Buddhist texts, originally in Chinese translation, are now being retranslated into modern Korean. New monasteries are being built and old ones repaired. Today, Buddhism is again playing an important role in the life of the people.

JAPAN

Japan discovered Buddhism in the 6th century when Korean monks traveled to the islands together with numerous scriptures and works of art. The Buddhist religion was adopted by the state in the following century. Being geographically at the end of the Silk Road, Japan was able to preserve many aspects of Buddhism at the very time it was disappearing in India, and being suppressed in Central Asia and China.

From the very beginning, the establishment of Buddhism depended on the protection and support of the Japanese rulers. Among these, Prince Shotoku deserves special mention for his great contribution to the early growth and expansion of Buddhism in Japan during the early part of the seventh century. His devotion and royal patronage of Buddhism helped to make it widely known. Many Buddhist temples were built and works of art created. Monks were also sent to China to study. Besides encouraging Japanese monks to read the scriptures, Prince Shotoku lectured and later wrote commentaries on some of these scriptures. His commentaries are said to be the first ever written in Japan and are now kept as national treasures.

The history of Buddhism in Japan can be roughly divided into three periods, namely the Nara period (up to 784), the Heian period (794-1185) and the post-Kamakura period (1185 onwards). Each period saw the introduction of new doctrines and upheavals in existing schools. In modern times, there are three main paths of Buddhism, to which all schools of Japanese Buddhism belong: the Amidist (Pure Land) schools, Nichiren Buddhism, and Zen Buddhism.

Buddhism remains very active in Japan to this day. Around 80,000 Buddhist temples are preserved and regularly restored.

TIBET

Tibetan Buddhism is the body of religious Buddhist doctrine and institutions characteristic of Tibet, the Himalayan region (including northern Nepal, Bhutan, and Sikkim and Ladakh), Mongolia, Buryatia, Tuva and Kalmykia

(Russia), and northeastern China (Manchuria: Heilongjiang, Jilin). It is a multifaceted and integrated teaching, naturally implementing methods for all human-condition levels: *Hinayana*, *Mahayana*, *Vajrayana*

When Buddhism was introduced into Tibet in the seventh century under King Songtsen Gampo, it was apparently centered in the royal court and did not, at first, put down deep roots. Almost a century passed until it found favor again under King Trisong Detsen, who with the aid of Padmasambhava strengthened its position. But even after that “first diffusion,” the new religion lost ground, and it was not until the “second diffusion” of Buddhism in the ninth and tenth centuries that it became firmly and finally established as the majority religion of Tibet.

Buddhism, a comparatively late import to Tibet, was ideologically attractive to the intellectual elite with the innovation of Tantric techniques by which individuals could attain enlightenment within their lifetime. This esoteric doctrine, in large part confined to monastic activities, was made palatable to the general populace in combination with the appropriation of many trappings of the indigenous Pre-Buddhist Tibetan belief system. As a result Tibetan Buddhism amalgamates both elitist and populist traditions to satisfy the different requirements of its two audiences as well as to respond to both religious and mythological dimensions of the Tibetan psyche.

NEPAL

According to archaeological and historical records, Gautama Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, was born in Lumbini, Nepal in 563 BCE. After enlightenment at the age of 35 he returned back to the place. His and his disciples' preaching soon spread Buddhism in the surrounding areas.

It was believed that Gautama Buddha visited Nepal several times. It is said that upon the expansion of the Mauryan dynasty into the Terai plains in Nepal, Buddhism was adopted by the ancestors of the Tharu and flourished until the Licchavis came. The Licchavi period saw the flourishing of both Hinduism and Buddhism in Nepal. Excellent examples of Buddhist art of the period are the half-sunken Buddha in Pashupatinath, the sleeping Vishnu in Budhanilkantha, and the statue of Buddha and the various representations of Vishnu in Changu Narayan. After the overthrow of Rana dynasty, Buddhism gradually developed in the country. Theravadins played a great role for the revival campaign. Presently, there are three main Buddhist schools; Tibetan Buddhism, Newar Buddhism and Theravada Buddhism.

16.10 Buddhism in the West

During the long course of Buddhist history, Buddhist influences have from time to time reached the western world. However, not until the modern period is there evidence for a serious Buddhist presence in the western world. The movement of Buddhism from Asia to the west that took place in the 19th and 20th century, Buddhism was introduced in the United States and other Western countries by large number of immigrants, first from China and Japan but more recently from other countries of SouthEast Asia. Buddhism gained a foothold among a significant number of Western intellectuals and particularly during the 1960s and early 1970s among young people seeking new forms of religious experience and expressions.

Action and Reflection 16.3

Give an account of the spread of Buddhism outside India

16.11 Conclusion

The Buddhist tradition has been more accretive in its doctrine than the other great missionary religions. It has shown an enduring tendency to adapt to local forms, as a result of which one can speak of a transformation of Buddhism in various cultures.

Jainism has been largely confined to India, although the migration of Indians to other, predominantly English speaking countries has spread its practice in many Commonwealth nations and to the United States. Its continuous existence in India for some 2,500 years gives it a unique status as the only Sanskritic non-Hindu religious tradition to have survived in India to the present. In sharp contrast, Buddhism which is widespread in Asia is no longer widely practiced in India. This propagation to foreign countries like Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, China, Nepal, Tibet, Japan etc helped in the exchange of ideas in art, architecture and literature, thus enhancing the cultural heritage of India. Along with Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism remain the most ancient of India's religious traditions still in existence.

16.12 Further Reading

Edward 1951 *Buddhism, Its Essence and Development* New York: Philosophical Library New York: Philosophical Library

International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences Vol. 2 Mc Millan Co. and The Free Press

References

Gail Omvedt (ed.) (2003). *Buddhism in India : Challenging Brahmanism and Caste*. Sage Publications.

Cort, John E. *Jains in the World: Religious Values and Ideology in India*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhism>

International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences, Vol. 2, Mc. Millan Company & The Free Press

Conze, Edward 1951 *Buddhism: Its essence and development*. New York: Philosophical Library

Encyclopaedia of Religion, Vol. 7, Mc. Millan Company . New York

Unit 17

Christianity

Contents

- 17.1 Introduction
- 17.2 Genesis of Christianity as a Religion
- 17.3 Major Features of the Concept of God
- 17.4 The Emergence of Evil
- 17.5 The Bible: Its Books and Its Message
- 17.6 Jesus Christ and His Teachings
- 17.7 The Holy Trinity
- 17.8 The Official Establishment of Christianity
- 17.9 Reformation in the Church
- 17.10 Christianity in India
- 17.11 Conclusion
- 17.12 Further Readings

Learning Objectives

After studying this unit you will be able to:

- Describe the genesis of Christianity;
- Explain the message of the Bible;
- Out line the concept of the Trinity; and
- Describe Christianity in India.

17.1 Introduction

In this unit, the genesis of Christianity through historical evidences drawn from the Semitic religions viz. Judaism and Islam has been discussed. Evidences hint that the theological aspect of Christianity focuses upon the conception of divinity as a mission for believers leading them to build-up a society in the temporal world in accordance with the God as the sole authority; hence, section 1.3 elucidates the personality of God as a Creator of Heaven and Earth as well as the lord of history. The concept of God as Father is the focal point of subsection (1.3.1). It demonstrates the creation of world as God's will towards self-revelation for all human kinds in Christian social setup. However, the other aspect of evil that operates to divert the path of good deals in the Christian society has been viewed in section (1.4). Also the emergence of evil through its significant roots, as Christians believe is symbolized by 'Satan' who basically functions for the cause of seducing human-beings into sin, disturbing God's plan of salvation and accusing saints are the main issues of this section. However, the concept of Sin has been clarified in the subsection 1.4.1 of the section (1.4).

The sacred scripture, the Bible and its collections – The Old Testament (39 Books) and the New Testament (27 Books) – have been introduced along with messages which they transmit in a nutshell in the section 1.5 of the unit. Section 1.6 gives a picture of Jesus Christ and his teachings. The

birth of Christ as narrated by Gospel Lucke has been described in the subsection 1.6.1 while 1.6.2 sub section deals with the message of Jesus Christ. But, during this course of action, Jesus faces resistance which has been elaborated in subsection 1.6.3.

Section 1.7 gives a brief picture of the doctrine of the Church – Here God Himself reveals to the entire mankind a trinity in which the Holy Father, the Holy Son and the Holy Spirit are believed as creatures of universe. The section 1.8 provides the facts relating to the establishment of Christianity, while subsection 1.8.1 gives a note of confrontation with Islam during the spreading of Christianity.

The reformation in the Roman Catholic Church that resulted in the emergence of two great sects viz. Catholicism and Protestantism is analysed in Section 1.9, whereas the Christian ways of social life have been presented in subsection 1.9.1.

The spreading of Christianity in India and its significant feature with reference to Indian caste system have been the focal points of the section 1.10 and finally the summary of the whole unit is given.

17.2 Genesis of Christianity as a Religion

Christianity is a historical religion as well as one of the major religions of the world. It is an integral part of the Semitic religions such as Judaism and Islam. It locates within the event of human history both the redemption it promises and the revelation to which it lays claim. Christianity developed a very special pattern in emphasizing the transcendental character of its conception of divinity. The God which the Christians inherited from the Hebrews was the Creator-Ruler God (*-Yahweh* which is the God of nature and not God in the nature), sole creator and the governor of the world, which included the human condition generally – the condition of all peoples. The Christian theology focused specially on the conception of a divinely ordained, active mission for man. The book of Genesis (Old Testament – OT) specially mentions that the God created man “in His own image” because He wanted man to “do His will” on earth. That will, in turn, ordained the performance of a great collective task that eventually was believed to consist essentially of the building of a society in the temporal world in accordance with the divine plan. It contrasted very sharply with some of the Oriental religions that motivated “adjustment to” the immanent order of the non-empirical universe (Sills, 1968: 427).

This transcendental – activist outlook alone, however, does not account for the broad societal impact of Christianity. It has also characterized Judaism and Islam, but neither of these could generate a modern society on its own, whereas this religion furthermore did the development of religious orientation system itself. However, it was “rationalized” and systematized in a manner comparable with the aforementioned Semitic religions (Ibid: 427).

The theme of human limitation or rather imperfection, in sharp contrast with the transcendence and, thus, in some sense, the glory of God, is acutely accented in Judaism and became the basis of the Christian doctrine of sin. Such imperfection, however, was innately relative to the deep theme of the goodness of the divine creation, of which man, “created in God’s image” was clearly the highest part of its ideology. It is not the “things of this world” or of the “flesh” which are inherently evil but primarily man’s willfulness, his presumptuousness in disobeying the divine commandments and in thinking human being can do nothing without divine guidance (Sills, 1968: 427).

17.3 Major Features of the Concept of God

Within the specific Christian perception and experience of God, there are some definite characteristic features that stand out: The personality of God – God, as the person, is the “I Am That I Am” (Yahweh) designated in the Book of Exodus 3:14 (OT). The personal consciousness of man awakens in the encounter with God understood as a person: “The Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend” (Ex. 33:11). God as the creator – God is also viewed as creator of heaven and earth. The believer thus maintains, on the one hand, acknowledgement of divine omnipotence as the creative power of God, which also operates in the preservation of the world created by him and, on the other hand, trust in the world, which-despite all its contradictions – is understood as one world created by God according to definite laws, principles, and according to an inner plan. The decisive aspect of creation, however, is that God fashioned man according to His image and made the creation subject to man. This special position of man in the creation, which makes man a co-worker of God in preservation and consummation of the creation, brings a decisively new characteristic into the understanding of God. *God as the Lord of the History* – which is the main feature of the Old Testament understanding of God: God selects for Him a special people, with whom he contracts a special covenant. Through His Law, He binds these “people of God” to Himself; He sets before them a definite goal of salvation – the establishment of His dominion – through His prophets He has His people admonished through proclamation of salvation and calamity whenever they are unfaithful and disobedient to His covenant and promise. *God as a Judge* – The genuinely Israelite belief that God reveals himself in the history of His people leads, with an inner logic, to the proclamation of God as the Lord of world history and as the Judge of the world (*Britannica*, 1975:477).

The Specific concept of God as Father

What is decisively new in the Christian, New Testament (NT) faith in God lies in the fact that this faith is so closely bound up with the person, teaching, and work of Jesus Christ that it is difficult to draw boundaries between theology and Christology (doctrines of Christ). Jesus himself embraced the God of the Hebrew patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob), but he also understood himself as the fulfiller of the promise of the Messiah-son of man, who is bringer of the kingdom of God. The religious experience that forms the basis of the Messianic self-understanding of Jesus is the recognition that the Messiah – son of man is the son of God.

The special relationship of Jesus to God is expressed through his designation of God as Father. In prayers Jesus used the Aramaic word *abba* (father) for god, which is otherwise unusual in religious discourse in Judaism. This Father-Son relationship became a prototype for the relationship of the Christian to his God. Appeal to the sonship of God played a crucial role in the development of Jesus Christ's messianic self-understanding. According to the account of Jesus' baptism, Jesus understood his sonship when a voice from heaven said: “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

Faith in the Son also brought about an oneness with the Father. The Son became the mediator of the glory of the Father to those who believe in Him. In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus taught his disciples to address God as “Our Father.” The Father- God of Jesus after His death and resurrection becomes, for his disciples, the God and the Father of Lord Jesus Christ, who revealed his love through sacrifice of his Son who was sent to the world. The faithful-believer Christian can thus become the son of God.

The God of the Bible is the God of revelation; on His initiative, He presses toward revelation. The creation of the world is viewed as an expression of God's will towards self-revelation for all human beings. The Biblical understanding of God, however, was based upon the idea of the freedom of the Creator, Sustainer, and Judge of the world (Ibid: 478).

17.4 The Emergence of Evil

In the Bible, both the Old as well as the New Testaments, Satan (the devil/angel of darkness) appears as the representative of Evil. Satan represents the demonic side of the divine wrath. Only in post-biblical Judaism does the devil become adversary of God, the prince of angels, who was created by God and was placed as the head of the angelic hosts, and who enticed some of the angels into revolt against God. In punishment for his rebellion, He was cast from heaven together with his mutinous entourage, which was transferred into demons. As ruler over the fallen angels, he henceforth continues the struggle against the kingdom of God in a three fold function: the Satan seeks to seduce human beings into sin; he tries to disrupt God's plan for salvation; and he appears before God as the slanderer and the accuser of the saints, so as to reduce the number of those chosen for the kingdom of God. Even in the New Testament, the feature of an anti-Godly power is clearly prominent in the figures of the devil, Satan or Belial and Beelzebub – the “enemy.” He is the accuser, the evil one, the tempter, the old snake, the great dragon, the prince of this world, and the god of this world, who seeks to hinder the establishment of God's dominion (*Britannica*, 1975:479).

Concept of Sin

Although the man was made by God in a state of holiness (from the very dawn of history). Yet he abused his liberty at the urging of personified Evil. Man set himself against god and sought to find fulfillment apart from God. Chapters one and two of the Book of Genesis (OT) tell the story of creation by God. God created all things (in the whole world) including man and woman and saw that they were good. But into this good world entered Sin. In the third chapter of Genesis, the man Adam rejects God and tries to become His equal. As a result of this original sin, the man feels alienated from God. He hides, when the God (creator) confronts him. Adam blames his woman companion Eve for his sin, and she in turn blames the serpent (Satan) for tempting them to eat the fruit of the forbidden tree of the Paradise. With disobedience, the man's guilt has distorted all his relationships. Sin has turned life into a harsh burden. The book of Genesis further depicts the escalation of sin in the world, rippling out from Adam's original sin. According to Genesis, a world of beauty was deformed by sin. The ongoing result has been division, pain, bloodshed, loneliness and death. As Saint Paul declared in the letter to the Romans (5:12), “Sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned.”

17.5 The Bible: Its Books and Its Message

Sacred Scripture, the Bible, is a collection of books. The Old Testament of the Bible was originally written in Hebrew/Aramaic and is consisted of 39 books that were written approximately between the years 900 B.C. and 160 B.C. that is before the advent of Christ. Later they were translated by the Jews themselves into Greek (with seven new books added). The New Testament of the Bible was written wholly in Greek. The 27 books of the New Testament were written approximately between the years A.D.40 and A.D. 140.

The Old Testament collection is made up of historical books, didactic (teaching) books, Prophetic books (containing the inspired words of Prophets, people who experienced God in special ways and were his authentic spokesmen). In brief, the Old Testament books are records of the experience the Israelite people had of Yahweh, “the God of their fathers.” As a whole, these books reveal Israel’s insight into the personal reality of the one God, Yahweh, who acts in the human history guiding it with plan and purpose.

Box 17.1 The Ten Commandments

In the Old Testament, God gives Ten Commandments to His people through Prophet Moses as the Commandments of God. They are as follows: “You shall honour no other god but me. You shall not misuse the name of the Lord, your God. Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day. Honour your father and your mother. You shall not kill. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour. You shall not covet your neighbour’s wife. You shall not covet your neighbour’s goods” (Exodus 20: 3-17; Deuteronomy 5:7-21).

The New Testament books, written originally in Greek, are made up of Gospels (which means proclamation of Good News) and Epistles (letters which were written in each case to meet the particular needs of the early Christian communities by the some disciples of Jesus). First, in the order in which they appear in Bible, are the Gospels of Mathew, Mark, Luke and John. The first Gospels are called *synoptic* (from the Greek *synoptikos*, “seeing the whole together”) because they tell much the same life story of Jesus in much the same way. The fourth Gospel which is called as Gospel of John is followed by Acts of the Apostles (Formation of early Christian Communities).

The final book of the New Testament is the book of Revelation, a message of hope for the persecuted Christians, promising Christ’s ultimate triumph in history. The basic theme of the New Testament is Jesus Christ. Each book reveals a different side of Jesus’ mystery. The four Gospels record the words and deeds of Jesus as they were remembered and handed down in the early generation of the Church. They also specifically mention the story of Jesus’ Passion and death, and what death means in the light of his Resurrection. In a sense, the Gospels began with the resurrection; Jesus’ teaching and the events in his life made sense to early Christian only after his Resurrection. The Gospels reflect the shared faith of the first Christians in the Lord Jesus who is risen and now continues to dwell among us.

17.6 Jesus Christ and His Teachings

In the light of the New Testament, the significance of the person of Jesus is specified and seen as “Christ”. However, beside this title, there are additional titles such as Son of Man, Son of God, Word of God (Logos), and Savior – given in an effort to account for that significance, for within the events of Jesus’ human life the God of Israel and creator of the world had been disclosed (Pelikan, 1987:355).

Birth of Jesus Christ

The initial two chapters of the Gospel of Luke narrate regarding the nativity of Christ. God sent his messenger angel Gabriel to a town of Galilee called Nazareth to a young girl named Mary. She was betrothed to a man of David’s lineage; his name was Joseph. The angel Gabriel said to her that the Holy Spirit will come upon you, the power of the most high

will overshadow you. Thus this holy offspring of yours shall be known as the son of God, and you shall call him Jesus. Joseph, the foster father of Jesus was a carpenter in the village of Nazareth. He was a deeply religious and an ever-faithful head and protector of the family.

Just before the birth of Jesus, the Roman emperor had decreed a census throughout the empire. According to the order, all were to go to the village of their family's origin to register their names, which meant for Joseph and his spouse Mary to go to Bethlehem (town of David). While they were still there, that time came for her delivery. She brought forth a son, her first-born, whom she wrapped in his swaddling clothes, and laid in a feeding-trough for animals, because there was no room for them in the inn. On the birth of Jesus, the shepherds were given the message by a multitude of angels: "Do not be afraid; behold, I bring you good news of great rejoicing for the whole people. This day in the city of David, a Saviour has been born for you, the Lord Christ Himself. This is the sign by which you are to know Him; you will find a Child still in swaddling-clothes, lying in a feeding-trough" (Luke 2: 10-12). Besides the shepherds three learned men (magi) from the neighbouring countries were led by a star to Bethlehem. When they found the child there with his mother Mary, they fell down to worship him. They offered him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh (Travers-Ball, 1962:15-6).

Jesus Christ and His Message

Jesus' teaching sought to return to the core of the Law's purpose and to reduce the burden of their interpretive tradition, the fence around the Law. He redrew the boundaries of the pure and impure in a way that offended some Jews and encouraged others. He preached the message of divine compassion and mercy, the acceptance of which spelled salvation and rejection of which meant spiritual disaster. One of the characteristics of his preaching was the Parable. A Parable, as told by Jesus, portrayed a kind of world-reversal and, as the parables unfolded, the reactions to it revealed the hearts of those listening to it. In their original settings, the parables were remarkably provocative ways of speaking about what the in-breaking reign of God looked like when expressed in thoroughly human terms. Besides the ten commandments of God, Jesus summarized the whole Law into God's two great commandments: "You shall love the Lord, your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind,... You shall love your neighbour as yourself" (Mark 12: 30-31).

Jesus called men and women to discipleship, a different way of acting from most Jewish teachers, who expected prospective students to take the initiative. The people most resistant to his teaching were those "good" fellow Jews who sought to let their righteousness protect them from the new grace that Jesus offered. People who were broken hearted in their guilt and those who were like "children" seemed most open to the gift of divine acceptance he preached. He related publicly to women in ways that did not respect the traditional boundaries of his days, thus implying that service of God's reign, as it was breaking in through Jesus' ministry, was transforming the customary lines of distinction. Jesus gathered about himself a community of disciples. An inner core was called the twelve Apostles.

Reflection and Action 17.1

Meet a Christian priest and ask him about Jesus and his Message. Write down what you learn from him in your notebook and discuss it with other students at your study centre.

Jesus told his disciples that he has come to this world to fulfill the law and not to destroy the age-old law. Besides the Ten Commandments, he gave to his disciples the Beatitudes. The Beatitudes are a summary of the difficulties to be overcome by his faithful followers and the rewards that will be theirs if they are loyal in their following. The Beatitudes are blessed and the poor in spirit; the reign of God is theirs. Blessed are the sorrowing; they shall be consoled. Blessed are the lowly; they shall inherit the land. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for holiness; they shall have their fill. Blessed are those who show mercy; mercy shall be theirs. Blessed are the single-hearted; they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers; they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those persecuted for holiness' sake; the reign of God is theirs (Matthew 5:3-10).

Confrontation with Authority

During Jesus' ministry, he made some enemies. The Gospels portray the Pharisees, Sadducees, Scribes and elders as his chief opponents. The increasingly excited crowds Jesus drew made his opponents fear that he was another messianic pretender. And Jesus' provocative act of symbolically interrupting the normal activity of the Temple would have profoundly concerned the priests in their delicate relationship with the Romans. They would not have had a difficult time persuading some Roman officials that Jesus posed a grave danger to the civil-religious "peace."

The actual trial of Jesus is difficult to reconstruct historically, but the sign over the cross suggests that he was executed by the Romans as a messianic pretender. The mode of execution was reserved in those times for slaves and for those who violated the "pax romana," the religio-political hegemony of the Romans. The final legal responsibility for Jesus' death on a cross lay with the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate. Before Jesus' crucifixion he had Last Supper (Passover meal) with his twelve disciples in an upper room. Thereafter, one of his disciples named Judas Iscariot betrayed him and sold him for thirty silver pieces to the Jewish authority (McDermott, 1997:453).

The stories of the Last Supper and the Agony in the Garden give expression to the freedom with which Jesus went to his death as a service of God and people in full continuity with his ministry. Soon after Jesus' subhuman death on a cross (ca. A.D. 30), he was buried and several events occurred. Some of Jesus' disciples visited his tomb and it was discovered empty (resurrection had taken place). Thereafter the disciples reported his appearances on several occasions. Jesus appears on his own initiative to his disciples and some other people who knew him before his death, he offered them companionship. Before ascending to heaven, Jesus sends them on a mission – "Go to the ends of the world and preach the Good News to all people and baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit." The disciples went on preaching that Jesus was the Christ or Messiah. The apostle Paul was responsible for the transformation of Christianity from a Jewish sect to a gentile movement by the end of the first century of the Common Era. The importance of this change for Christian history is impossible to exaggerate. Jesus had been born in an obscure corner of the Roman Empire, but now his followers took upon themselves the assignment of challenging that empire and eventually conquering it in the name of Jesus. The opposition between empire and the church sometimes during the second and third centuries took the form of persecution and martyrdom (Ibid: 450-1).

17.7 The Holy Trinity

The Trinity of God is defined by the Church as the belief that in God are

three persons who subsist in one nature. The trinity of persons within the unity of nature is defined in terms of “person” and “nature” which are Greek philosophical terms; actually the terms do not appear in the Bible. The ultimate affirmation of the Trinity of persons and unity of nature was declared by the Church to be the only correct way in which these terms could be used (McKenzie, 1984:899).

The Christians believe in the doctrine of the Holy Trinity that is a kind of a mystery of rational monotheism. This doctrine has its ultimate foundation in the special religious experience of the early Christian communities, but this basis of experience is older than the formation of the doctrine of Trinity. It consists of the fact that God comes to meet His people in a threefold figure: God the Father - who reveals himself in the Old Testament; as Creator, Lord of the history of salvation and Judge. The second figure of the Trinity is God the Son - as the Lord who in the figure of Jesus Christ, who came to live in the midst of human beings, who suffered, died on the cross and Resurrected from the dead and Christ will come again to this world to Judge the living and the dead. The Third figure of the Holy Trinity is God the Holy Spirit - to whom the faithful experience as the source of new life, healer and the miraculous potency of the kingdom of God. In the doctrine of the Holy Trinity the formal understanding of the oneness of God as well as the sameness of essence of the son and the Holy Spirit is maintained (“one substance - three Persons”). It is stated in short that the oneness of God and His self-revelation in the figure of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit - without rationalizing the mystery itself (Britannica, 1975:485-6).

17.8 The Official Establishment of Christianity

Almost more than two centuries, the Early Christian communities were persecuted on account of their faith. In year A.D. 64, when the emperor Nero set fire to Rome to destroy it so that he could rebuild the city to his own tastes, Nero made the Christians a scapegoat upon whom to divert public fury. The Christians were targeted by many Romans because they refused to acknowledge the gods of Rome and thus they were burnt alive in the fire.

Box 17.2 The Flaming Cross

The persecution of Early Christians continued under Galerius in the East and Constantius in the west until A.D. 311. Galerius wearily decreed the toleration of Christianity in his realm. In A.D. 312 Constantius' son, Constantine, defeated Maxentius, the son of an earlier Augustus of the West, in the battle of the Milvian Bridge near Rome, to secure his own succession in the West.

It was reported that Constantine prayed before the battle to the “supreme god” in an effort to ward off Maxentius' magical powers. He was rewarded with the vision of a flaming cross in the mid-day sky, bearing the inscription *In hoc signo vinces* (“In this sign you shall conquer”).

Whatever the realities of vision and dream, the historical fact is that Constantine won the battle and the western throne, and he attributed his victory to the Christian God. In A.D. 313, he and Licinius, his counterpart in the East, agreed on an edict Promulgating universal religious tolerance. Constantine seems to have viewed Christianity as a potential unifying force in the empire, but there were ambiguities in his own attitude. Although he called himself a Christian, he was baptized only in A.D. 337, on Pentecost Sunday, a little more than 300 years after the Holy Spirit's descent upon the Apostles during the fateful Pentecost in Jerusalem.

Constantine's acceptance of Christianity and the eventual establishment of it as the official faith of the Roman empire is rightly seen as the most potential event-for good or ill or some combination of the two – in all Christian history: conversely, “the end of Constantinian era” (Ward, 2002:303).

Confrontation with Islam

The missionaries who brought the gospel to various tribes, people and even the barbarians in their own way and with it they gave them their culture too. Each in its own way, both Eastern and western Christendom were compelled, from the seventh century onward, to come to terms with the reality of Islam. During the one hundred years after the death of the Prophet Muhammad in 632ce, the geographical spread of Islam was both more rapid and more effective than that of Christianity had been during its first several centuries. Several of the major centres of the Eastern churches – Antioch, Alexandria, Jerusalem itself – had a Muslim ruled government, although a large Christian population was able to practice its faith under varying degrees of pressure (Pelikan, 1987:351).

17.9 Reformation in the Church

Since the inception of the church many reform movements took place in order to rescue the church in times of crisis-until, through Martin Luther (1483-1546) and the reformation, a crisis arose in which the primary impetus for reform was to express itself not through monasticism or the papacy, but against both monasticism and the papacy (Luther, too, was originally a monk). Already in various late medieval reformations, such as those of the ‘Spiritual’ Franciscans and the Hussites, there was the sense that Christendom could be neither one nor holy nor catholic nor apostolic unless it had replaced the secularized and corrupt authority of bishop of Rome (Pope) with the authenticity of word of God (Bible), for which some looked to the church council while others put their confidence in the recovery of the message of the Bible. That sense finally found its voice in the programme of the protestant reformers. The reformers alienated themselves from the hierarchal structure of the Mother church as well as teaching of the church of their time and they were obliged to look or rather invent for alternative structures and teaching of their own (Ibid:351-2).

The principal difference, at least as seen both by the protestant reformers and by their Roman Catholic adversaries, lay in the area of religious authority: not the church or its tradition, not the Papacy or a church council, but the Bible alone, was to be the norm that determined what Christians were to believe and how they were to live.

In this reformation particularly at the religious level the crucial development was done by the reformer(s) that is the upgrading of the Christian laity and granting them a new role in the church. This was effected by ending the individual dependence on the sacerdotal (priestly) mediation. The individual soul stood in *immediate* relation to God through Christ. With respect to the ancient triad of functions the effect was to throw emphasis strongly away from the institutional forms of the “cure of the soul” and of “casuistry.” It opened the door to an altogether new emphasis on “conscience” which emerged particularly in the Calvinistic branch once the more subjective concerns of Lutheranism had given way to concern with objective activism in secular callings. Although it is true that the basic status ‘differential’ was eliminated, this did not imply any lowering in the evaluation of the clergy or of the system, within which statuses had been “equalized” (Parsons, 1968:436).

Many of the corruptions that had acted as tinder for the Reformation received the careful attention in the council of Trent (1545-1564), with the result that the Roman Catholicism and the Papacy emerged from the crisis of the Reformation diminished in size but chastened and strengthened in spirit. The historical coincidence of the discovery of the new world and the protestant reformation, which both protestants and Roman Catholics interpreted as providential, enabled Roman catholic missionaries to recoup in North and South America the losses in prestige and membership caused by the reformation (Pelikan,1987:352).

The Christian Ways of Social Life

As a system of love – and love is the “greatest” and above all according to the formula of Saint Paul, Christianity presents itself to its hearer as a way of life. The Christian way of life as love is conventionally seen as finding its ultimate fulfillment in the church as the loving community of believers set apart from the world. But alongside that strain in the Christian tradition, there always stands a concern and a love for the entire world (Ibid: 361). At the Last Supper Jesus gives a new commandment to his disciples, “Love one another as I have loved you.” And along with this new commandment, he sets an example of service by washing the feet of his disciples. It is the fundamental duty of each and every Christian to exhibit one’s faith by imparting service to the poor and the downtrodden because Jesus has pronounced: “Whatever you do to the least of my brothers and sisters (a weaker section of the society) you have done it to me.”

Action and Reflection 17.2

Meet members of the Christian community and ask them about their beliefs. Make a note in your note book about your findings.

17.10 Christianity in India

The first Prime Minister of India, Pandit J. Nehru, has once said that if anyone who says that the Christianity came to India with the colonial rule then they do not know the history of India. Before the Gospel could spread in Europe, one of the Apostles (out of twelve) of Jesus named Thomas (A.D. 45), came to south India to spread the Gospel. According to the traditions, Thomas founded seven churches in South India, where he was martyred. The early Christian community of India was small in number and had very limited influence over the rest of the existing religious sects.

In the sixteenth century, with the advent of colonial rule, the second phase of missionary activity took place. The mass conversion took place in various parts (coastal areas) of India where the Portuguese, Dutch and French had their colonial rule. In some places newly converted Christians were segregated from the local community and imposed upon them traits of western culture. A little over a century ago, the Christianity came to NEFA, where many tribals accepted the new faith. Today in some north-eastern States, Christianity is the major religion.

On commencement of the nineteenth century, the British India faced a severe draught. A large population of Dalits and the tribals were prey to the starvation and the outbreak of the epidemic. In this situation the missionaries erected the asylums for the needy and the sick to provide round the clock medical assistance and by opening community kitchen, a great number of ravenous were given a daily square meal. During this time, many tribals and Dalits accepted the Christian faith. However, in another instance, many lower castes (*Shudra* or *Atishudra*) were forced to accept the Christianity due to the atrocities done to them by the upper

castes – for example, the mass conversion of Nadar community (*Shanas*) of Tamil Nadu.

Today in India, the population of Christians is less than three percent but their contribution to the Indian society is immense. The Christians run almost many educational institutes as well as a number of hospitals equipped with medical facilities for the poor and the needy people of this country.

Christianity is an egalitarian religion which does not speak of inequality ideologically. Nevertheless, the Indian case of Christianity appears to be a peculiar one, as Indian Christians due to the conversion from different Hindu castes, seem to have retained the generations' old caste structure within their social setup. Various movements for the recognition of 'backward' class status within Christians are the sheer reflection of such an acceptance. In this connection, the anthropologists and sociologists seem to be agreed that Indian Christians are greatly influenced by the ideology and values of Hinduism, and particularly as being weakened against the pervasive influence of caste. For instance, Dumont treats the adherence values of monotheistic religion with egalitarian tendencies which are weaker than the fundamental values on which the caste system rests (1972: 251). Further, he believes that the influences of Hinduism on Indian Christians are contributing to the existence of caste-like elements among them (Ibid, 83-84). A number of studies clearly indicate that the social way of life of Indian Christians is very much influenced by caste-like structure. Here Fuller (1976: 65) narrates that the egalitarianism of Christianity had marginal impact on the Hindu way of life.

17.11 Conclusion

Christianity came into existence from Judaism because Jesus was a Jew by birth. And Jesus himself said: "I have come to fulfill the Law-Torah and not to destroy the Law." Jesus in his teaching stressed on love for God, the Father, as well as love for the neighbours.

While teaching the law of love he had confrontation with established religious authorities who crucified him on the cross. After his death, he resurrected himself from death and appeared to his disciples. After descending of the Holy Spirit, the disciples went on spreading the Gospel of Christ. The early Christian community faced persecution for about two centuries from the Roman Empire.

In the seventh century, the Christianity was encountered with the new emerging religion of Islam. And in the sixteenth century, a Man called Martin Luther brought first-major reformation in the Church. Later on, this was named as Protestantism. With this reformation, a new kind of religious ethic was emerged in the Christian Church and Papacy tradition. The Church preaching were replaced by extra emphasis on the teaching of the Bible and in this context a new interpretation of worldly life was commenced within the Christianity which later turned into Calvinism, resulting in modernism and capitalism in the society (Weber, 1930).

17.12 Further Reading

Parsons, Talcott, 1968, "Christianity", in (ed.) David L. Sills, *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, Vol. I, Macmillan Co., London, Pp. 425-446.

The New Encyclopedia Britannica, 1975, *Christianity*, VoloHoh.4, Macropedia, Chicago Press, Chicago, Pp. 466-505.

Ward, Kaari, 2002 (1987), *Jesus and His Times*, The Reader Digest Association, Inc., New York.

References

Dumont, Louis, *Homo Hierarchius*, The Caste System and its Implications, Vikas Publications House, Delhi, 1970.

Fuller, C.J., *The Nayars Today*, Cambridge, New Delhi, 1976.

Handbook for Today's Catholic: Beliefs-Practice-Prayers, 1997, Liguori Publications, Liguori.

McDermott, Brain O., 1997, "Jesus Christ", in (ed.) Glazier Michael, *The Modern Catholic Encyclopedia*, Claretian Publication, Bangalore, Pp. 450-4.

McKenzie, John L., 1984, *Dictionary of the Bible*, Asian Treading Corporation, Bangalore.

Parsons, Talcott, 1968, "Christianity", in (ed.) David L. Sills, *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, Vol. I, Macmillan Co., London, Pp. 425-446.

Peliken, Jaroslav, 1987, "Christianity", in (ed) Mircea Eliade, *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, Vol.3, Macmillan Publishing Co., New York, Pp. 348-362.

The Holy Bible – Revised Standard Version.

The New Encyclopedia Britannica, 1975, *Christianity*, VoloHoh.4, Macropedia, Chicago Press, Chicago, Pp. 466-505.

Travers – Ball, IAN, 1962, *What Think You of Christ?*, St. Paul Publications, Bombay.

Ward, Kaari, 2002 (1987), *Jesus and His Times*, The Reader Digest Association, Inc., New York.

Weber, Max, 1930, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, tran. by Talcott Parsons, Allenn and Unwin, London.

Unit 18

Islam

Contents

- 18.1 Introduction
- 18.2 Genesis of Islam
- 18.3 Teaching of Islam
- 18.4 Concept of Islam and Law
- 18.5 Prophet Mohammad
- 18.6 Metaphysics of Islam
- 18.7 Islam in India
- 18.8 Conclusion
- 18.9 Further Reading

Learning Objectives

After studying this unit you should be able to:

- describe the genesis of Islam;
- outline the teaching of Islam;
- delineate the life of prophet Mohammed; and
- Provide some aspects of Islam in India.

18.1 Introduction

In this unit, the genesis of Islam as historical phenomena has been discussed while doing so, social and cultural treatments have been given so that sociological perspective can be understood. Even some lights are thrown to clarify the sectarian divisions in Islam. The teaching of Islam bounds the individuals cutting across the national and a racial boundary forming the equalitarian society has been elucidated in section 1.3. The concept of Islam and law which have been drawn from the words and deeds of prophet Mohammad constituting the normative customs of the Muslims regarding to rituals have been analysed in section 1.4. Section 1.5 of this unit gives a detailed note relating to the Prophet Mohammad's birth and work as well as the conditions under which he extended Islam as religion. However, sub section 1.5.1 of this section gives a sketchy description of the spread of Islam beyond its birthplace. The section 1.6 presents a brief account of the metaphysics of Islam clarifying it through God, revelation, spiritual realm, humanity, final judgment which have appeared in respective subsections (1.6.1), (1.6.2), (1.6.3), (1.6.4), (1.6.5) of the section 1.6. However, the situation of Islam in India has appeared in section 1.7 and finally the summary of the unit is given.

18.2 Genesis of Islam

Islam is extensively applied as a term for those who have faith that Koran is the true word of Allah (God), transmitted to the human kind as a revelation through his messenger, Prophet Mohammad. Earlier, the term was used in scanty to submission which is commonly bracketed with belief *Iman*. The believer of this faith is a Muslim. However, the term "Islamic"

denotes social as well as cultural settings of the faith consisting of Muslims' theology and Islamic Law.

Islam as a historical phenomena, conceived in Arabia in the early stage of the seventh century. Regarding the genesis of Islam, two focal elements must be separated from each other in religious backdrop, namely; the purely Arab background and the intermingling elements of Christianity and Judaism (Megher, Paul K, 1979).

With a prosperous economy in South West Arabia there has existed a civilization (Sabian era). At the beginning, the Sabian religion was a Trinitarian star cult, which in the fourth century had been replaced by a monotheistic cult – Al Rahman denoting mercifulness. However, in due course, in the sixth century, the elements of Judaism and Christianity were accepted by Al. Rahman. Nevertheless, this tradition of adaptation could not be continued for long because the Meccans had never dealt with them nicely due to the Judo-Christian ideas.

During the revelation of the Koran, it was clarified that the primary background of Islam is Arab rather than Judo-Christian. Nevertheless, the latter elements have had their strong impact on Islam.

The sectarian division in Islam can be observed on the basis of succession after the death of Prophet Mohammad. The sect which holds that succession belongs to *Qurayash*, the Prophet's own tribe is *Sunnites*. And those believe that succession belongs to *Imam* are the *Shiates*. However, *Sunni* Caliphas and *Shiate Imams* have never accepted the authority of each other. Apart from this division of power and privilege, there is no centrally organized religious authority in Islam. Perhaps, this is the sole factor that the social organization of Islamic Society varies significantly from society to society in classical Vs. local. For instance, in the localities of Africa and far east, Islam had absorbed the pagan elements and in India the elements of caste system representing the amalgamous feature of classical and local elements.

18.3 Teaching of Islam

The primary religious obligations of Islam are termed as “pillars of Islam”. They are imperative upon every believer. They are: (1) to pronounce the testimony *shahadat*; “there is no other god then Allah (God) and Mohammad is the one Apostle of God; it is more than enough to bear this testimony to make one totally a Muslim; (2) the ritual prayer *Namaz salat*; which is performed five times a day after certain intervals (at dawn; noon; after noon; sun down; sun set and late evening) facing towards Mecca. *Namaz* is an individual's obligation which may be offered at any place. However, it is a must, to save noon of every Friday when the believers are obligated to attend public services in the mosque. Hence, collective offering of Friday's *Namaz* is desirable; (3) Almsgiving *Zakat* is a fixed percentage, varying according to the nature and value of goods possessed by an individual as well as fixed by the several Islamic schools; (4) One month's fast during the month of *Ramazan*; and (5) To make the pilgrimage *Hajj* to Mecca at least once in one's whole life span. It is obligatory for those who are capable economically and physically (Robinson 1998: 322).

18.4 Concept of Islam and Law

Apart from these, Islam recognizes the basic validity of Judaism and Christianity and conceives Mohammad as “the seal of prophets.” The above recognition itself indicates conformity with the teaching of the Koran, since Prophet Mohammad was sent almost with the same message

as that of Abraham, Moses, John the Baptist and Jesus (Who held to be also messengers of God *Rasul*) to reaffirm the message against distortion and innovation that had crept into them and to bring the essential message to its final and perfect version. Since the pivotal stress of Islam is the Koran and a Prophet, hence the Koran has relatively more significance in Islam rather than the scriptures of Judaism and Christianity. It is treated by the orthodox Muslims to be “verbatim” and uncreated “speech of God.” Because of the expressive command that the language has right from the beginning, it is believed to be a peculiar miracle that recognises the divine genesis of Prophet Mohammad’s mission, preaching and teaching. His orthodox doctrines adhere notably to the text of the Koran and their recitation is the most common form of popular devotion. Although all matters pertaining to religion are not set forth explicitly in the Koran, yet the Prophet is considered to be the source and the model. His actions and words are the norms and references for the individuals and for the community which jointly constitute the *Sunna* that are embodied in the written form of traditions (*Hadith*). Although they are not very firmly considered revealed, yet they have canonical authority over the Islamic religion. In all, the formal religious law in Islam rests on the Koran and *Sunna*.

Action and Reflection 18.1

Talk to some Mohammedans about Islam. How do they describe the pillars of Islam. Make a note of what they say in your notebook.

A vital fact must be taken into account here that the nature of law in Islamic society lies in the legal theory of God’s creation, human needs and political expediency. In such an evolutionary process of civilized life, the notions of anthropology, sociology and social justice are seemed to be secondary. Islamic society rests on the words of God, while edifice of practices is constructed by human knowledge and reasoning in the sense that *fiqh* is founded upon *Manqul* (revealed notions) that is Koran as well as *Sunna* (*Sunna* is created by human logic in the forms of *ijma* and *qiyas*). This situation indicates that the source of law and its purpose is different. The ultimate purpose of Islamic society is to seek closeness (*qurba*) to the Diving Being by conforming to His code, as this is the doctrine of duties and obligations of Islam. The established fact is that there is nothing to be accepted against the will of God. Such tendency is further extended and strengthened by the notion that without good deeds, the approval of Allah is not possible for salvation i.e. Divine Grace.

An evaluation concerning the definition of law in Islam may give some insights regarding the differences. Abu Hanif defines: that “the law is the soul’s cognizance of its rights and obligations.” The definition itself hints the subjective ingredients in the concept of *fiqh* as well in the pretext of conscience where the conscience is of an individual, which is a final arbiter. Hence, the individual in every action and dealing has to ask himself/herself “it is wrong or right”. Considering this tendency, the Islamic terminology, of course, becomes significant but it has its own history (Fyzee, 1981:29). However, such a situation may be understood by taking into account *sharia* or *fiqh*. Such treatment hints that the Islamic Law (*fiqh*) is universally defined where as the individuals’ rights and obligations are abstracted from the Holy Koran and *Sunna* or deduced from both on the basis of knowledge (interpretation). Nevertheless, these act as core values in Islamic society and have their greater impact on the ritual, family and inheritance on one side while on the other, they jointly constitute the equalitarian social structure. Therefore, the world-view of Islamic society is non-hierarchical, monotheistic as well as historical in ethos, although, the historical ethos of traditions is the dominant authority in all

revealed religions, (Hodgson, 1960). Nonetheless, it is more striking in Islam. The significance of history in various religious faiths reveal that for the Christian history is significant and decisive but for Muslim history is decisive but not final (Smith 1957:21). Hence, the role of history to the revealed traditions has significantly contributed worldview of Islam as a holistic and socio-centric cultural oriented religion. Ideologically, the Islam does not allow any institutionalized role for priest, hence, *Ulema* not at all priests. The nature of such ideological orientation leads no clergy in Islam, i.e., any Muslim may lead a congregation in prayer offering (Smith, 1963: 38). The above situation suggests that in ideal typical form, Islam has perfect foundation of universal ideology in its conception of social order than any other religion. Sociologically speaking, the principle of universalism in the revealed tradition of Islam is distinct from hierarchism but hierarchism has no place in ideology.

Box 18.1 Holism and Hierarchy

The distinctive nature of such holism as well as much stress on the historicity of tradition have generated the specificity and exclusiveness in Islam. Moreover, the universalism is founded on the unity of believers, *Umma*, the collectivity of the Muslim. Such principle oriented unity passes cutting across the boundaries of nations. The unity, however, is abstracted from the conformity of the believers to the religio-ethical codes and principles embodied in the Koran and/or *Sunna*, the *Hadia* (many traditions), and the *Shariya* (legal codebook of Islam). The conception of nation in the sense of territory has no place in Koran, as the Koran does not mention a number of Islamic states but does mention the *millat* (one nation of believers). The holistic principle that is embodied in the notions of *umma* and *millat* carry on the egalitarian values. However, equality is meaningful within the immutable and persisting contexts of the principles of holism and hierarchy.

18.5 Prophet Mohammad

Mecca was invaded by Yemen in 570 AD, however, the invasion was not successful due to the army as the army was equipped with elephants. It was known as the era of elephant in the history. In the same year, Prophet Mohammed was born in a small clan of *Quraish* tribe. His father's name was Abdullah. Perhaps, the word 'Allah' has come from the name of Mohammad's father. Allah as the God might be possible, because of the actual rejection of polytheism by Mohammad's father. However, its influence on Mohammad is not known as he died before the birth of Mohammad. This critical situation was further extended as his mother died when he was about six year old leaving him an orphan. Mohammad's father's brother was a merchant operating a caravan and he looked after him. Prophet Mohammad also adopted the traditional occupation of the family and became a merchant. As a young man, he was appointed by a rich widow named Khadija to operate her trade through caravans. However, at the age of 25, Mohammad married her leading a happy family life. The life of prophet indicates that being a successful businessman and family man, he became a Prophet.

In 610 AD, at the age of 40, he began to have visions often in a cave on a nearby hillside of Mecca where he used to spend many hours in communication with Allah. Before revelation, the angel Gabriel appeared to him and told "you that are wrapped up in your vestments, arise," and give him further warning, "magnify your lord, cleanse your garments and keep away from all pollution."

Mohammed fled from such experiences to hide himself. But his wife Khadija encouraged him to listen to the revelations which came to him often. Also, his wife's cousin named Waragah, was a Christian by faith and motivated him much. Ultimately, Mohammad sensed that he was receiving messages from Allah. He started to transmit them to the Meccans. The message stressed on the acceptance of only one God, that the Mohammad is His messenger, that worship of idol and killing of girl children is totally forbidden, and that one must be prepared for the judgment, 'Kayamat' .

Initially, a few after listening him, accepted Mohammad as a Prophet and embraced Islam and became Muslims. When Mohammad initiated preaching against the generations old practices of idols worship in Kabah many people of Mecca resisted, thus they became his opponents. Even economic disparities had also been condemned by the prophet. However, next 10 years were the span in which Islam grew gradually but with it, tension also increased to such an extent that it was difficult to sustain the life of the Muslims without the support of their clan-members against the sporadic violence. During that social setting, it was almost impossible to sustain with out the support of the clan members as there was nothing like formal law and order in the state. At one instance, a non-Muslim master attempted to torture to his Muslim slave of black race called Bilal. Bilal was forced to lie down on ground and heavy stones were piled on his chest to tarnish. But he was emancipated by a Muslim who purchased him from his old master. Besides many such kind of instances, the expansion of Islam was initiated in 615 AD, when some followers of Islam were sent by Mohammad to Abyssinia for the propagation of faith.

Mohammad's uncle who was looking after him from his childhood protected him from an assault before he died in 619 AD. So much so, that Mohammad also lost his wife in the same year. These incidents led to a critical situation for him, thus he marched about 375 kilometres to the north in a city of Yathrib where he was given the status of Chieften of the city's tribes. However, the situation of Mecca arose so worse that Mohammad in association with two hundred followers migrated to town called Medina in 622. This, in Islamic history is called "*hijarat*" and it marks the beginning of Islam as a religion. Since that the Islamic calendar counting started which is popularly known as '*hijari*' in Islamic terminology.

In Medina, Mohammad was received by the people with respect as he was made town's head. Here, he started to implement the social changes that he received through the revelations. Hence, Mohammad had the status of a prophet as well as statesman. This makes the distinction between Mohammad and other Prophets as they were only prophets:

Action and Reflection 18.2

Read section 18.5 on the life of Mohammed. Write down what strikes you as its most important aspects in your notebook.

During those days Medina was an agricultural town comprising of *Pagans* who embraced Islam and Jewish who did not, leading distrusts and differences between the two. Consequently, Jews were expelled from the town.

On the account of trade, Medina and Mecca had antagonistic relation. Meccans went for war against Medina. Mohammad then became a general as well. War was continued till seven years sporadically, and it was associated with Muslims' victories as well as defeats. Medina was taken into possession for two weeks by the Meccans. By that time, many tribes had already embraced Islam. Hence, Mohammad succeeded in acquiring more allies leading surrender of Meccans to the Muslim army in 630 AD

and they also embraced Islamic faith. Mecca, thus, got the status of centre of Islamic Arabia. Mohammad cleansed the Kabah from its idol and restored it for the worship of Allah and the pilgrimage of Muslims as well. However, within short span of two years, the whole of Arabia accepted Prophet Mohammad as their leader and embraced Islam. On 8th of June 633 AD at the age of 65, Prophet Mohammad left the world.

Spread of Islam

Within a century, after the death of the Prophet Mohammad, the power of Islam had spread far beyond the Arabian peninsula extending from the Atlantic coasts of Spain and North Africa eastward as far as Ferghana in Transoxiana (Now in Uzbekistan) and across the Indus river into Sindh (Presently Pakistan). Currently, Islam is a predominant religion throughout North Africa, in the Middle East, the Sudan, Iran, the Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkey Tadzhitan as well as in Kirgiz in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Sinkiang province of China. Whereas in Southeast ward into the Malay Peninsula of Archipelago in Malaysia, Sumatra, Java and Borneo etc. However, there are considerable minorities of Muslims in Albania, India and Southern Philippines, Somalia, Mozambique, Madagascar, Nigeria and Islam's influence is expanding rapidly in both east and west Africa even. (Meyagher, 1979).

18.6 Metaphysics in Islam

Apart from the five pillars, Islam has very deep understanding about the nature of every thing that exists in the universe. But the most important concerns of Islamic metaphysics are God, Prophet, Revelation and Religion; the spiritual worlds; the human beings and their ultimate goals for existence and, the last day of Judgment that they will have to face.

God

Islam is such a religion that it stresses the oneness of God (*Twhid*). The *Shahada* begins with "there is no god but Allah", constituting monotheism as a basic element of Muslim belief. Mohammad who came from polytheistic society, not only removed their idols, but also satisfied those people that the idols were powerless and helpless. That is why Islam interdicts to carve or draw images of God at the place of worship. Because of these interdictions, the mosques are not permitted to have images of any person or nature under any circumstances. Even partnership with Allah is sin (*Shirk*) and if some one does this would be considered or termed as Mushrik (Polytheist). God is all powerful and all knowing and that illustrate the total submission of human beings to the divine will. The Koran strongly asserts human responsibility and obligation warning men about the dire consequences of violating God's will. As at the beginning of every *Surih*, Allah is referred to "the most merciful, the compassionate" stressing on God as judge and punisher.

Revelation

Islam stresses that God communicates humanity through selected persons whom He reveals. God has done it even in the past through a number of individuals – Prophets like Noah, Salih, Had, Abraham, Moses, David Solomon and Jesus. Through them God has given humanity, a revelation which has been compiled into a book of some sort, yet not all the books are survived but the Koran as the scripture has been the scripture of Allah. The followers of the scripture are known as the "People of the Book". And they are often referred as Christian and Jews. The Koran pronounces two words to refer the prophetic figures, the first is '*Rusal*' messenger or apostle of God or Allah. This term was used in *Shahada* for Mohammad, who is *Rusal* of God, the second is *Nabi*, means 'Prophet' which is used only for the

Prophet Mohammad in the Koran. The use of *Nabi* also appears to be absent from the earlier prophetic revelations. The phrase used in the scripture is (*'Khatam a nabiyyin'*), means “seal of the Prophets”, which has been understood by all the Muslims that Mohammad was the last prophet and the last messenger of Allah.

Spiritual Realm: Life after Life

The Koran describes paradise or heaven and hell in which paradise is place where men are rewarded by all kind of foods and women of their own choice. However, it is distinctly seemed to be symbolic. Hell fire is described as the punishment to the unbelievers. The Koran also mentions '*Jinn*' and angels, who too are created by God. Hence, Muslims believe their existence, though they cannot be seen, as they are mere spirits. Such kinds of spirits are variously referred in Koran by their names like Jibrail (Gabriel), who brought revelation to the Prophet Mohammad and Azrail, Israfil and Michael as well. Saitan – an evil spirit is also mentioned in Koran at the same time by the name of *Iblis*. According to the Islamic tradition, this was the spirit who declined to obey the God's command of bowing before Adam, as he would not bow to any other being than Allah. Because of his disobedient act, *Iblis* (Saitan) was thrown out from the heaven.

Humanity

The Koran speaks: “God created humanity from backed clay” but there is no mention that individual was being created by two different parts, a body and soul as this is associated with Christian belief. Nevertheless, at a later stage, this belief was accepted in Islam. The Islamic theology stresses that human beings were created for good cause. Islam does not say regarding the fall and original sin. Nevertheless, human beings are challenged continuously in their lives for constructing moral alternatives. Hence, human beings have free desire and so more free moral agents. In brief, it can be said that humanity in Islam is an essence of creation which supersedes even the spheres of knowledge and values.

Box 18.2 Mission of Human kind

Allah asked to the heaven and earth: “Would they take-up the task of creating a moral order of creation, on the account of heavy burden, it had been refused by them; Koran speaks humanity accepted the challenges rather a mission of humankind for the sake of establishing moral and spiritual orders on the earth.” In this respect, *Iblis* (Saitan) is not only sole actor who tries to disrupt these moral and spiritual orders of the world but laziness in humanity and distortion of actual form of nature also act simultaneously where unbelief makes it very complex. Hence, Mohammad was called on by Allah to shoulder the responsibility to accept, to surrender, and to obey God's will borne by humanity. In Islam, creation has no option, but to become a true Muslim one has to surrender to the God's will. However, human being has open option in the form of humanity.

Final Judgment 'Kayamat'

The Koran often mentions about the day of judgement when all human beings will be accounted of their humanity through their deeds. If belief was formed true, they will be rewarded by Paradise (*Zannat*) and in case of unfaithful they will be punished by hell's fire. On the day of judgement – *Kayamat*, all dead bodies will rise up from their respective graves / tombs and with this, ultimately, the whole universe will be eliminated.

18.7 Islam in India

The impact of Islam on India is more than a millennium old. It influence initiated when Arab conquest the Sind in the beginning of eighth century.

Hence, Islam is an important religion in India historically and very meaningful cultural tradition too. The Islam in India has been co-existing with Hinduism, representing their own traditional world-view. Value themes of Islam in general were holistic, ideologically the principle of inequality in the form of caste was not accepted and its values of transcendence were rooted in the principle of monotheism.

Islam does not provide any margin for social inequalities. The principal concept working in Islamic faith stresses that all human beings are equal before the Allah (Almighty). The concept prevails as *xalaaqulla* (the people of Almighty). But the case of Indian Muslims suggest that the Hindu social structure is persisting along with the Islamic values in the form of inequality. Ashrafs always maintain their social distance from the converts in the establishment of marriage and kinship ties and never recognize them as equal to them. The caste inequality continues within the converts. They perform their traditional caste rituals and continue to remain engaged in their generations old traditional occupations (Singh, 1973, 193-194).

However, the apparent heterogeneity found in Islamic community from Arab to Indus makes out a case of social inequality. The Indian case appears to be peculiar one, as Indian Muslims seem to have accepted the caste – like structure within their social set up. Various movements for the recognition of ‘backward’ class within the Muslim are the sheer reflections of such an acceptance (Abbasi, 1999). A number of sociological and anthropological studies indicate the presence of caste – like structure among the Indian Muslims (Ansari, 1960; Dumont, 1970; Mandelbaum, 1972; Ahmed, 1978; Abbasi 1988; Chauhan, 1992). Dumont (1970) has treated it as a cultural entity and argued that the presence of caste – like structure among Indian Muslims is the result of cultural assimilation. On the other hand, several other scholars treat caste as a structural entity and argue that the elements of Hindu social structure have been transferred among Muslims as a consequence of conversion enmass during the Muslim rule in India.

The Indian case of Islam, hence, presents a typical illustration against the universal theme values of egalitarianism and brotherhood. The inequalities are attributed and in way institutionalized by birth, to the highest and lowest strata of society. These structural features survive even after embracing Islam.

18.8 Conclusion

Islam came into existence in the early stage of seventh century as historical phenomena, through revelation, which are supposed to have come to Prophet Mohammad via the Angel Gabriel. These revelations are given in 114 Suras or chapters. However, Muslim doctors interpret that revelation must have come to Mohammad by direct inspiration of the Angel Gabriel or in visions in which the Angel Gabriel appeared to him. Before the revelation, the social setting of Arabia was such that killing of female girls was very common. Polytheism was practiced rampantly and clan based social organization was relevant. Idols worship was very common. In order to abolish these social evils, Mohammad was chosen by God as His messenger. Mohammad began to take the revealed message to the people of Mecca. His message emphasized to accept the one and only transcendental God; the Mohammad is His last and beloved messenger; that idol worship and killing female babies were forbidden and one must be always ready for the final day of judgement (*Kayamat*). Islam is a structured religion, having its major summary of teaching consisting in five pillars, which in turn determine the universal way of social life as well as life after death. In addition to the five pillars, Islam does have its metaphysics – an understanding about the nature of existing things. The

major concerns of Islamic metaphysics are : Allah, the Prophet, the Revelation, and the religion; the spiritual dominance further extends as heaven and hell, saitans, angels, and *Jinns*; then nature of human beings, their norms for existence, nature of physical realm and the last day of judgement they will have to face. All these ideological themes altogether constitute an Islamic society, cutting across the national and racial boundaries.

However, if sociological treatment is given to Islam, one would arrive that Islam originated in a nomadic socio-cultural setting in Arabia at the initial stage, having tribal egalitarian features in its social structure. Since the structure of such nomadic groups was not highly ordered and their shifting from clan and kin based egalitarianism to religion, oriented egalitarianism was relatively convenient (Singh, 1973:65). However, Islam was even spread in the complex societies. Within a century, after the death of Prophet Mohammad, the power of Islam was established far from the Arab peninsula covering the Atlantic coasts of Spain and North Africa as well as across the Indus River.

18.9 Further Reading

Ahmad Intiaz, *Caste and Social Stratification Among Muslims in India*, (ed Book), Manohar, Delhi, 1978.

Smith, Donald E., *India as a Secular State*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1963.

References

Abbasi, Parvez A., "Muslimo Men Jati: Ex Samiksha", *Manav*, No. 2 & 3, pp.107-118, 1988.

Abbasi, Parvez A., *Social Inequalities Among Indian Muslims*, AC Brothers, Udaipur, New Delhi, 1999.

Ahmad Intiaz, *Caste and Social Stratification Among Muslims in India*, (ed Book), Manohar, Delhi, 1978.

Ansari, Ghaus, *Muslim Caste in Uttar Pradesh*, Ethnographic and Folk Culture Society, Lucknow, 1960.

Chauhan, Brij Raj, *Muslims in Meerut: Rural Urban Dimensions*, ICSSR Project MS, 1992.

Dumont, L., *Homo Hierarchicus: The Caste System and its Implication*, Vikas Publishing House, Delhi, 1970.

Fyzee, Asaf AA., *A Modern Approach to Islam*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1981.

Hodgson, Marshall G S, A Comparison of Islam and Christianity as Frame Work of Religious Life, *Diogenes*, Vol. 32, pp. 49-74, 1960.

Mandelbourn, David G., *Society in India*, Popular, Bombay, 1972 (1970).

Meagher, Paulk & et.al, *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Religion (ed.)*, Carpus Publications, New York, 1979.

Robinson, Francis, "Submission to Allah: Muslim Civilization Bridges the World", in (ed.) Howard Spodek, *World's History Combined Edition*, Prentice Hall Inc, New Jersey, 1998.

Smith, Donald E., *India as a Secular State*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1963.

Smith, Wilfred C., *Islam in Modern History*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1957.

Singh Yogendra, *Modernization of Indian Tradition (A Systematic Study of Social Change)*, Tomson Press Ltd., Delhi, 1973.

Unit 19

Hinduism

Contents

- 19.1 Introduction
- 19.2 Methodological Perspective
- 19.3 Etiology and Definition of Hinduism
- 19.4 Hinduism and the Concept of Religion
- 19.5 Purusharth: The four ends of Hinduism
- 19.6 Dharm-Achar Complex in Hinduism
- 19.7 Conclusion
- 19.8 Further Reading

Learning Objectives

After studying this unit you should be able to:

- provide a working definition of Hinduism;
- describe Hinduism and the Concept of religion;
- outline purusharth – the four ends of life; and
- explain the dharm-achar complex of Hinduism.

19.1 Introduction

What is called Hinduism today is not like a bolt from the blue. It has grown out of a long historical (including pre-historical) process. Rather, it has grown out of the dynamics of an ongoing configurational evolution. The drama of this evolution originated and unfolded itself on the soil of Bharat that is Hindustan and India – that India which throughout her history refrained from coinciding its political frontiers with its religious and/or cultural frontiers. In its ontology, both in Time (*Kal*) and Space (*Desh*), Hinduism has been having a remarkable resilience and continuity, though it has grown out of the acculturative give and take of diverse ethnic groups and races, and their language cultures and thought-processes. Or, to use D.N. Majumdar's phrase, it has grown out of the dynamics of 'clash of cultures and contacts of races,' and even religions leading to a striking synthesis in which Sanskrit language played a crucial role (Majumdar, D.N. 1965, Chatterji, S.K. 1965).

Nevertheless, the ontology of Hinduism has been being inspired by the *Upnishdic* exhortation of *charaiveti* (march on, march on) and the Gita's mystical but matter of fact worldview of *avibhaktam vibhakteshu* – unity in diversity. These principles emanate from and pervade *jagatyam jagat* (ever changing world); and, hence, they also pervade the metaphysical and the mundane, the world herein and the world hereafter – in short, they pervade man and his existential bases and dimensions.

Realization of *avibhaktam vibhakteshu* is the intrinsic trait of the highest and purest knowledge (*uttam* and *sattvik jnan*). For his ultimate welfare and happiness, man has to endeavour to cultivate it (Gita, chap. 18). So, in its ideological worldview about man and his existence, about Nature and Nurture in relation to man, Hinduism has tended to combine unity

with diversity, catholicism with eclecticism, orthodoxy with heterodoxy, world-negation with life's fulfillment, *yog* with *bhoga* and *loksangraha* with *aparigraha*.

A Way Of Life

In certain judicial pronouncements, Hinduism is characterized as 'a way of life'. There emerges a logical query – whose way of life? Is it of the so called Hindus or of the people of India who, according to a very early definition, fall within the definitional penumbra of the Hindu and Hinduism.

On the other hand, with regard to its contents, Hinduism is seen contained in its caste-structure and its mechanistic operation in ritual mobility. Caste structure, the real and the empirical, is wrongly equated with *varna*-order (the ideal). Hinduism, consequently, becomes a religion of a society, bound by its time and space. It is supposed to attain nationalistic overtones. Its existence beyond the Hindu, the caste and Bharat (that is India) is viewed to be a nebulous possibility (Bonquet, A.C. 1964).

19.2 Methodological Perspective

Having reference to the issues raised here, and also in the framework of these issues, the present essay presents an introductory description and analysis of Hinduism. This analytical description is presented from a sociological perspective. This perspective does not accept the dualism of Anthropology and Sociology. In India and also in South-East Asia, because of the social-structural phenomena prevailing here, Social Anthropology has created an 'intellectual space' in Sociology (Madan, T.N. 1985).

This presentation therefore cuts across Sociology and Anthropology. It is not biotic though it has elements of ethnography in its description. It is mostly historical-comparative. It is not through and through structural and/or functional. It, however, does not sidetrack structure though it lays a greater emphasis on 'meaning' in relation to ideology. For, even structure attains meaning in the light of ideology. Whether one believes in and worships *nirakar* (impersonal) or *sakar* (personal) or one believes in monotheistic or polytheistic theology or in both, or in atheism, it does not depend on structure but on ideology though structure does reflect in the Man-God-Relationship anywhere and everywhere.

Sociology overemphasizes empiricism and theory. Anthropology also follows that path. In the perspective on which Hinduism rests, there is continuum between the empirical and the philosophical and even the mystical just as there is continuum between *Lok/Desh* and *Shastra* in the ever moving backdrop of *jagat* and *kal*. Both in Sociology and Anthropology, we have tended to emphasize – rather over emphasize – the empirical (*Lok / Desh*). In the continuum of Hinduism *Lok* and *Shastra* borrow from and straighten each other (Misra, Vidyanibas ibid., 1995). So do the empirical and the philosophical.

19.3 Etiology and Definition of Hinduism

Hinduism is a compound and a hybrid term. It consists of Hindu + ism, with both the terms being of foreign origin. In English, 'ism' is a derogatory term when used in the context of 'any distinctive doctrine or practice'. If used as suffix to form a noun, it expresses especially a state or quality, or a system or principle or peculiarity in language.

Hinduism (as in barbarism and heroism) does not express a state or quality. It also does not express a peculiarity in language (as in Americanism). It sounds reasonable to suggest that those who might have

coined this term possibly used it in the sense of the system or the principles of life of the Hindus denoting their orientation to the traditional (in a way conservative) style of life and its ideological resource. However, derivatively, it may be surmised that Hinduism stands for the principles of the social system of Hindus as found in their traditions which combine a characteristic conservatism with dynamics, eclecticism and change and continuity.

It is in this sense that Hinduism stands not for 'a way of life' but for the way of life of Hindus. And, who is Hindu? In the context of this question, the meaning of the term Hindu as socio-linguistic usage and its dynamics attains a crucial place in an endeavour to define Hinduism. In the long span of India's social history, as socio-linguistic usage, the term Hindu has undergone changes but has had a thematic continuity. Linguistically, the term Hindu is said to be a corrupt form of Sindhu. It came into being when, linguistically, the 'S' of Sindhu (the river) changed into 'H' and Sindhu incarnated itself as Hindu and, later on, in English, as the Hindu or Hindus.

Box 19.1 The Term Hindu

As a linguistic usage, the term Hindu originated in the land sprawling to the West of the river Sindhu. It is said to have had Persian ancestry just as the term India is said to have had Greek ancestry. The river Sindhu, Indus in Greek, entered into the early definition of the Hindu and India.

Evidently, thus, the term Hindu originated with the geographical connotation, referring to those who inhabited the land lying to the East of Sindhu. With the advent of the followers of Islam in India (the Arab, the Turk, the Mughal and the Persian) this connotation received contrasting religious overtones in the dichotomy of the Hindu and the Musalman. This approach, in spite of its rejection, tended to continue.

With the consolidation of British colonialism and the advent of aggressive evangelical Christianity, many developments took place simultaneously. Both the Hindu and the Muslim recoiled in the grooves of their heritage and grew parallelly. Evidence of it may be traced in the writings of Raja Mohan Roy and Sir Saiyad Ahmad Khan and, later on, in the writings of Ravindra Nath Tagore and Allama Iqbal (Dinkar, Ram Dhari Singh *ibid.*).

During the medieval period, spanning over about one thousand years, there originated four processes having the undertones of religious experience but basically operating in the broad expanse of acculturation between the Hindu and the Musalman or to use the current phrase, between Hinduism and Islam. One process is evident in the Arabicization of Islam in India, linking Indian Muslims to Arabic traditions of Islam. This is not something peculiar to Islam. It is found as a process of acculturation almost in all organized and proselytizing supra-national religions owing existence in the religious experience of a historical person who is given the hallow of being a messenger of the *Alaukik*.

Simultaneously, in the medieval period flowed the powerful stream of *Bhakti Marg*, encompassing both the Hindu and the Muslim. Like the Ganga-Yamuna-Sangam at Allahabad, it is a confluence of two currents – *Sagun Bhakti* and *Nirgun Bhakti*. *Sagun Bhakti* is traditional, revivalistic and nativistic. It is evident in the Ramcharit Manas of Tulsi Das and Anandvan Bhuwan of Ram Das, Shivaji's Guru (Sarkar, Binoy Kumar *ibid.* 1937).

Both these outstanding personalities of medieval India take recourse to *Avtarvad*, with Tulsi Das presenting Ram as an *Avtar*. Ram takes *Avtar* to kill *Nishachar* (*Rakshas*, demon) and *Khal* (the deviants from the righteous path). As he accepts, he seeks to establish what has been propounded as righteous path by different Puranas and the traditions of *Agam* and *Nigam*.

It is often not taken into consideration that nearly all the propounders of *Bhakti* and the religious experience of *Advait*, *Dvait*, *Dvaitadvait* and *Vishistadvait* drew their mystically-philosophically oriented theological view of religious experience from *Prasthanatryi* – *Upnishad*, *Gita* and *Brahmasutra*. These classical works acquired cardinal strategy since Hinduism faced the problem of its theological distinction. And, this necessitates a relook at the prevalent view of a majority of historians that the *Bhakti* movement was inspired by Islam. Rather, it grew from within the cultural resource of Hinduism having strong touch of nativism and protest which is social as well as political. *Bhakti*, whether *nirgun* or *sagun*, is wrought and overflows with the ideology of avibhaktam *vibhakteshu*.

Sanskritization and Hinduism

In this context, let us refer back to the question already posed. This is about the kinship between Sanskritization and Hinduization. It need be noted that in the different conceptual shades of Sanskritization, the term 'Sanskrit', '*Sanskritik* (*Sanskritic*)' and '*Sanskritic* Storehouse' occupy crucial place. All these terms definitely refer to Sanskrit language and to literature in Sanskrit which normatively relates to various aspects of man's existence. The *Sanskritik* attains meaning only in the dichotomy of '*Sanskritik*' and '*non-Sanskritik*'.

Box 19.2 Aspects of the Sanskritik

To differentiate the '*Sanskritik*' from '*non-Sanskritik*' is treacherous. Is goat-sacrifice, as prevalent in the Mahasu temples among the polyandrous people of Western Himalaya, *Sanskritik* or *non-Sanskritik*? In spite of being associated with the ritual of goat sacrifice, Mahasu is believed to be Maheshvar and a form of Narain. He is also Raghunath which is an epithet for Ram.

Mahasu, on the other hand, is derivable from word 'Su' meaning Devta in Kinnauri, with the latter falling in the Austric family of languages. The Kol and the Mundari belong to the Austric family and are linked to proto-Australoids (Chatterji, S.K. *ibid.*, 1965). Mahasu, thus, may be derived as 'Maha' (Sanskrit) + 'Su' (Austric). In this mixture of language cultures, the *Sanskritik* and *non-Sanskritik* mix as milk and water and not as water and oil. Similar is the case with the intermixture of flower-ritual which is Dravidian and the ritual of Havan which is Aryan. When the term Sanskrit is pivotal in the concept of *Sanskritik* why the other dimension of its meaning be neglected. As an adjective, the term 'Sanskrit' means what is perfect, refined, polished, cultivated, consecrated, hallowed, purified and excellent. It also connotes what has been purified and consecrated through purificatory rites (Apte, V.S. 1963). This meaning is the crux of the Sanskrit in Sanskritization. It refers to the nexus of rituals and also to the whole nexus of *varnashram* ideology of which *varn*-caste based rituals are a part.

In the Hindu Social thought, the dichotomy of the *Shashtra* and the *Lok* has been used since ages to understand the linkage between what is today being conceived as the *Sanskritik* and *non-Sanskritik*. India developed the categories of the *Lok* and the *Shashtra* to maintain and to explain unity in

diversity. This dichotomy seems to be more relevant than that of the Sanskritik and non-Sanskritik. As Vidyaniwas Misra (1995) points out, there is no either or relationship between the two. They enter into and borrow from each other to lend empirical meaning to and straighten each other.

With these brief notes, let us again refer to the propounders-expounders of Sanskritization and their exposition as far as goes the genetics of Sanskritization in its kin-relationship with Hinduism and Hinduisation. With Sarkar, Sanskritization is not a well-assessed and meticulously constructed methodological concept. It is at best a perspective on the onward march of Hindu positivism, contained in the dynamic continuity of *Smritiniti* tradition. In his work on *The Positive Background of Hindu Sociology*, he uses this term Sanskritization in the context of the Sanskritization of Tamil culture, of Marathi language and Sanskritizing or Hinduizings of Persian texts. Apparently, Sarkar's usage of Sanskritization is essentially linguistic but, as a perspective, it gets loaded with wider implications when his usage of 'Sanskritizings or Hinduizings' is taken into consideration (Sarkar, Binoy Kumar 1937 *ibid.*, 372, 507-8, 511, 538).

M. N. Srinivas's Viewpoint

Srinivas seeks to present Sanskritization as an empirically valid and value-neutral concept though the phenomenon it seeks to delimit and comprehend is not value-neutral. To quote Srinivas (1966, 6), "Sanskritization is the process by which a low Hindu caste, or tribal or other group, changes its customs, rituals, ideology and way of life in the direction of a high and, frequently twice born caste. Generally, such changes are followed by a claim to a higher position in the caste-hierarchy than that traditionally conceded to the claimant caste by the local community."

In this process of mobility, the behaviour of the dominant caste of the region, nor the *varnashram* ideology, is the guiding star of the process of Sanskritization. The dominant caste is the caste which carries a lion's share in the social-economic-political resources of the region. The dominant caste of the region may come from any of the three castes, viz., the Brahman, the Kshatriya and the Vaishya.

Since, a dominant caste – for that matter any caste of any of the three levels – falls under the penumbra of a *varn*, operationally, Srinivas's Sanskritization gets interlinked with *varn*-model of the dominant caste. Srinivas delineates the three *varn*-models – the Brahman, the *Kshatriya* and the *Vasihya*. Which of these *varn*-models operates where depends on the dominant caste of the region. Srinivas's *varn*-model is thus derived from the dominant caste. In his scheme, the empirical possibility of the dominance of *Shudra* model is absent though it is also a reality. Both these stands are untenable ideologically as well as methodologically.

Action and Reflection 19.1

Talk to some knowledgeable Hindu practitioners about the definition of Hinduism. Note down the main points of your discussion in your notebook.

To Srinivas (1952, 65) being 'an enormously complex and amorphous phenomenon, Hinduism defies to lend itself to a definition. It, however, has a long history and a wide and complex vertical and horizontal spread. In the process of its growth it has developed certain characteristics. Its structural basis lies in the caste. As evident in the caste-based rites, rituals and beliefs, it is both Sanskritik and non-Sanskritik. The more one moves downward on the horizontal ladders of castes, the non-Sanskritik

becomes more conspicuous and profound at the levels of beliefs and practices, rites and rituals and even man-*devta* relationship.

Srinivas delineates three levels in the spatial-structural setting of Hinduism. The intellectual-philosophical level is represented by the Upanishad, the Gita and philosophical systems and commentaries on them. The level of the ordinary and the common consists of feasts, fasts, *vratas* (rites and austerity performed to achieve certain ends), pilgrimages, visits to nearby temple and sayings and songs of local saints.

Operationally, the third level of Hinduism relates to the process of its horizontal and vertical spread. In the horizontal spread of Hinduism Srinivas delineates four strata – All India Hinduism (which is chiefly Sanskritik), Peninsular Hinduism, Regional Hinduism (not clearly defined) and Local Hinduism. As Srinivasa's work indicates local Hinduism is village based.

Srinivas is aware of the diversity of the local but he does not emphasize and elaborate it. He seems to be more concerned with homogeneity that spreads through his constricted concept of Sanskritization than diversity and its amorphous networking through individual and society.

He emphasises on the absorption of diversity into Hinduism bespeaks of it. In the vertical and horizontal spread of Hinduism, Sanskritization plays a crucial role. He attributes All India spread of Hinduism to the extension of Sanskritik deities and ritual forms to outlying groups, greater Sanskritization of inside groups, easy absorption of local deities and the role of kings (political power) in the vertical and horizontal spread of Hinduism.

Generally, so far, sociologists have tended to neglect the role of power and acculturation in the origin, organization and spread of religion. This is so inspite of the fact that in the Indian ideology, in the relationship between man and *devta*, *devta* is *Raja* and *Raja* is *devta*. Ghurey's analysis of the role of elites in the conceptualization of God and/or gods could not catch the attention of the sociologists of incoming generations.

In our approach to understand the relationship between religion and society, we have been so much enamoured by the Western approach that we did not care – and, even today do not care – as to how in the past we have sought to explain our own structural setting based on *varn*-caste and the ideology of *avibhaktam vibhakteshu*. In this context we need to have a clearer understanding of what is Sanskritik.

19.4 Hinduism and the Concept of Religion

If Hinduism defies a definition, it also challenges the cardinal postulates of the concept of religion as it is prevalent in Sociology and Anthropology. To say that Hinduism is not religion does not however imply that Hinduism, as a way of life, is totally devoid of what sociologist conceives as 'religious experience'.

Sociologically, religious experience is intrinsic to social phenomenon called Religion. But religion, however, is not definable solely on the basis of this experience. Though subjective, experience in general tends to be related to something external, material and non-material. It may be internal as well. Religious experience relates to something which is unempirical and non-material, believed to be beyond this phenomenal world. That something is the Supernatural of the sociologist and the anthropologist. It is non-Human, super-human and all-pervasive transcendental Power. Like procreation and other institutionalized forms of behaviour related to man's needs, it is an intrinsic part of man's existential baggage. By his very

nature, in his existence, man combines the world herein and the world hereafter. The Superhuman belongs to the world hereafter.

Religion takes birth when this experience enters into and expresses itself in man's institutionalized behaviour, in his beliefs and practices related to the Supernatural – and, all this complex of phenomenon affects and shapes man's interpersonal, intra-group and inter-group relationships with a strong sense of identity as related to the concept and explanation to the conceived Supernatural.

Monotheism and Religion

Here, the monotheistic and monolithic concept of religion, intellectually set in the civilizational framework of Semetism, stood face to face with the polytheism of the multiplicity of gods coupled with the worship of ghosts, spirits, material objects, phenomena of Nature, with each phenomenon being governed by a god or gods and ancestor worship. Here gods and spirits were personal and anthropomorphized, as good as fellow human beings who, by possessing selected males and/or females, would talk face to face with the person in distress and difficulty or needing emotional security and serenity.

In the monotheistic concept of religion, the Supernatural Power, by concept, was the male. Beyond this, the Supernatural Power also manifested itself in the masculine and feminine genders and with innumerable varied forms. This interface of the savage and the civilized, the sophisticated and the bizarre turned the European thought to evolutionism as a methodology. It is evident in the evolution, diffusion, modernization and development – all these thrown up in quick succession one after the other.

It led to the search for the origins of religion and that led to many alternatives. These alternatives are the concept of soul, the ancestor/ghost worship (which seems to have been transferred from the Divinity of Ghost of the dominant religion of Europe), Animism, childlike psychology of the primitive and the early man and to fear and the need for emotional security coupled with the need for spiritual serenity.

Consequently, on the methodological-intellectual planes of Sociology and Anthropology, there surfaced, in bold relief, the dichotomy of animistic (polytheistic) and monotheistic religions, with the former being looked at as something bizarre and beyond the civilizational framework. In spite of apologetic methodology of functionalism – which overflows with sympathy and lacks empathy – it has tended to continue, somewhere surfacingly and somewhere clandestinely and in disguise.

Box 19.3 Aspects of Sampradaya

As the doctrine of *marg*, *panth* and *Samaj* gets rigid and averse to modification and change, it becomes a *sampradaya* with a touch of fundamentalism. It then invokes protest either doctrinally or through the form of the Supernatural the Sampradaya is associated with. The protest may be against the socio-political order of the day and, that, too, more through the doctrine and pronouncements of the Supernatural (Hardiman, David 1987). The dynamics of schismatic divisions and differentiations within the Bramha Samaj and Radha Swami *panths* bear witness to it (Bhatt, G.S., 1968, 1994).

It is opined that, as a methodology, the Church-sect typology, with certain adjustments, can be applied to modern religions which develop organizational structure. *Panths* and *Samajas* which grew in modern and medieval India can hardly be described as sects since Hinduism is

not Ecclesia. Hinduism has been having its own social organizational dynamics which solicits sociological enquiry.

Before closing this section let us again return to the concept of religious experience. Why this experience of the Supernatural? Is it for founding religion? It is well known that religions have been founded not by those who had the religious experience. Religions have been founded by those who followed the original preceptor and on the basis of his sayings and/or writings. Initial experience is not for founding a religion. It is ecstatic. It is *anand* – *sachidanand*.

It is the state of spiritual bliss where as Kabir feels one becomes *kanchan* (gold). As says Tulsidas, “*Soi Janahi jehi dehu Janaiyi / Janati tumahi tumahi hoi jayi* – only that one can realize you whom you make yourself known. After knowing you one becomes You”. And, what is that ? That is One and That exists and in that existence, ultimately, neither that exists nor the One. It is the stage of nothingness to which *puja* takes the devotee. For, in the Flame of Light of That, the devotee and That mingle for a bliss of nothingness, *shunyata*. Is such an experience religious? How and in what way. It is at best a way among many ways. A true experience originates in the *Lok* but, ultimately, it becomes *Alaukik*. Religion cannot lift one to that level of experience leading to realization. It is essentially individual.

19.5 Purusharth: The four ends of Hinduism

In view of what has been presented so far, Hinduism is an ideology. This ideology is based on empirical realities of man's existence. Since, in these realities, the aims, needs and ultimate welfare of man occupies strategic place, this ideology besides being ideal, tends to be philosophical. It may be termed as ideological-philosophical. It encompasses both the empirical and the philosophical aspects of man's existence.

Dharm, therefore, becomes the highest and the most prestigious and highly sought for end of man's life. It, however, is not the only one, there being the other three, known as *Arth*, *Kam* and *Moksh*. Considering individual's organic and social evolution in society (enculturation and socialization), they are placed in a sequential order. In that sequence *Dharm* is placed first. Then, in order it is followed by *Arth*, *Kam* and *Moksh*. Despite this sequential order of hierarchy, in the totality of the order of *Dharm*, each one of these is equally important as, without each one of them, man's life in society would be incomplete and not conducive to the required happy fulfillment of life.

Action and Reflection 19.2

Read the section on Purusharth and then discuss it with a Hindu Priest. Is his view similar to yours or not? Write down your findings in your notebook.

As a conceptual term, in the Indian thought and literature, *Dharm* has had a long history. It has been used in various contexts and has varied linguistic usages. It is said that in the sense of Cosmic Order, it, in due course, replaced the Vedic concept of *Rit*. The latter stands for the laws determining the order of the Cosmos. There, it is a mystical force binding the universe to a natural order and man's social existence to a moral order.

In the Vedic usage, *Dharm* stands for custom, moral laws, general law, duty and what is right. In general, *Dharm* carries two connotations. In one, it stands for the laws of the natural order of a phenomenon. In

another, it stands for obligations which man owes to himself, towards others including man, animal and universe. An anecdote cited in *dharmik* discourses may illustrate it.

Arth is commonly used in the sense of *dhan* (wealth). It is also used in the sense of money. But, as *Dharm*, *Arth* becomes far more inclusive. It includes attainment of riches, property, worldly prosperity, advantage and profit. Broadly, it is used in the sense of riches. In a specific sense, *Arth* may be taken to stand for such 'tangible objects' as 'can be possessed, enjoyed and lost'. Man needs them to found and raise a family and for the fulfillment of life.

In Hinduism, poverty is not virtue. Poverty and hunger can drive a man to commit any sin. Man's virtues shine only in and with wealth. Without wealth even a good lineage does not bring status. Wealth is needed to follow *Dharm*. *Dharm* alone cannot be the source of happiness. Kautilya emphasizes importance of wealth in man's life and opposes widespread renunciation as it interferes with production.

Ordinarily, **Kam** is taken to be sex-drive and its satisfaction. As that, it is viewed as the lowest of *Purusarthas* though in the ideational ranking of the ends in man's life, it is placed at the third place. It comes before *Moksh* which is the highest end of life. It indicates that without the fulfillment of *Dharm*-regulated *Arth* and *Kam* attainment of the highest end remains an unachievable possibility.

As mere sex-drive and its satisfaction, *Kam* is lust, sensuous enjoyment. It is an obstruction to man's spiritual progress. As such, it is an enemy of man, others being anger, greed, temptation, conceit and jealousy. But, on the other hand, *Kam* is the basis of socially regulated mating (marriage). On it depends the propagation of species. Marriage is the door to *Grahashthashram* (the householder stage) which is viewed as the most crucial in man's social existence. This is the highly praised stage.

From the psychological perspective, Prabhu defines *Kam* a bit more inclusively. He includes all the desires in man for the enjoyment and satisfaction of the life of senses. *Kam*, therefore, refers to the native impulses, instincts and desires of man and his natural mental tendencies. It finds its equivalent in the use of such English terms as desires, needs, basic motives, urges or drives. In totality, *Kam* refers to the innate desires and drives of man (Prabhu, P.H. 1963, 80).

Gokhle B.G.. (1961, 82) opines that *Arth* is good source of fulfilling the desire and needs of *Kam*. For, good food and drink, pleasant and charming company, fine clothes, perfumes, ornaments and garlands are pre-eminent sources of *Kam*. However, looking at the importance of a woman as a wife in *Grahashthashram*, and, in a wider perspective, at the place of male-female in the expression of *Kam* and at the view in which *Kam* is the enemy of man, it is ordained that the good of man depends on a harmonious blending of *Dharm*, *Arth* and *Kam*. Mental and bodily happiness is the immediate object of *Kam*. Indulgence but with detachment is advocated as the medium path in the attainment of *Arth* and *Kam*. It is termed as *nivrityatmak pravritti*.

Moksh is the highest and most sought after *Purusarth*. Like *Dharm*, it is highly critical and most discussed. Literally, it means freedom. As commonly understood, it stands for freedom from *Sansar*, this world. It is based on the theory that this world is illusion. It is substanceless. The real is the *Parmatma*. Man's soul being a part (*ansh*) of *Parmatma* yearns to mingle and merge in *Parmatma* eternally.

In this view, the theory of rebirth and *karm* finds a strategic place. The soul is born again and again till it attains *Moksh*. It may be reborn in any of the eighty four lakh *yonis* (species) as per the *karm* of this and the previous birth. Its evolution in the hierarchy of *yonis* depends on the *karm* in this life coupled with those of the previous life. Birth in *Manushya Yoni* (human form) is the highest evolution of soul and an opportunity to attain *Moksh*. The choice lies with man. His success or failure depends on his *Karm*.

Ashram-Sanskar : Along with the four ends of life, goes the ideology of *Ashram* and *Sanskar*. Like the four *Purusharthas*, there are four *Ashramas*, the stages of man's life in society. They are rather four spans. Presuming man's life's span to be of one hundred years, man's life is divided into four spans, with each span consisting of twenty five years. It begins with the stage of *Bramhacharya*, leading to *Grahashthashram* and then to *Vanaprasth* and finally to *Sanyas* leading to final extinction.

The four *Purusharthas* are associated with these four stages. The first stage, the studentship (*Bramhacharya*), is for acquiring of knowledge of *Dharm*. The second, the *Grahashthashram*, goes with the pursuit of *Arth* and *Kam*. With *Vanaprasth* begins the gradual retirement leaving the reins of family in the hands of new generation. With *Sanyas* begins the complete renunciation. It is the stage of renunciation from family, village, caste and even from the life partner.

If the idea of complete renunciation has been held in Hinduism, it is in Hinduism that it has been challenged as well. Doubts have been raised if complete renunciation is a possibility in view of Gita's dictum that *Dehivan* (one with an organic form) cannot be *akarma* (that is devoid of *Karm*). Requirements of body, particularly of food, sleep and shelter, would not admit that. No *Sanyasi* could ever live away from *Math*, panthic Gurudwaras and Ashramas. They often moved and lived on the periphery of village – now they mostly live in the city.

Sanskars, described as rites de passage, are ordinarily said to be sixteen in number. Their linkage with the stages of life has been very well described by Prabhu and others (Prabhu, P.H. ibid 1963). All these *ashrams* are the part of man's life and its evolution. As proliferation of *ashrams* tends to indicate *Vanaprasth* and *Sanyas* have not become eclipsed. Rather, they have acquired new dimensions.

Here certain aspects of *Purusharthas* and *Ashramas* need be noted. In view of their inevitable linkage with life which can not exist without and away from society, *Sanyas*, as associated with the *Purusharth* of *Moksh*, assumes social significance in the scheme of life. Ordinarily, whole life is viewed as preparation for *Moksh*. The Ashram of *Sanyas* is viewed to be a specialized stage for the preparation of *Moksh*.

This is the stage in which through the institution of *Sanyas* man can become *Mumuksh*, i.e. one oriented to *Moksh*. Viewed differently, in this stage of life, man, infact, attains freedom. Nirmal Kumar Bose viewed *Sanyas* as the safety valve of caste society. On entering *Sanyas*, one rises above caste, its occupational and economic bondages, its distinctions, differentiations, disabilities and hierarchy. He becomes a free man provided he wills for it.

Raj Dharm : Since, in Hinduism, *Dharm* encompasses the whole of man's life in society, there also developed the concept of *Raj Dharm* i.e. the *Dharm* of *Raj*. The word *Raj* does not denote *Raja* but governance. This *Dharm* binds the ruler and the ruled in a righteous order for which *Raj Dharm* lays down the rules. In *Raj Dharm*, besides the rules of governance,

there developed the concept of *Raja Devta* with tutelary character and role. It was present during the medieval period and it was present during the British period as evident in the title of 'Company Bahadur' for East India Company and the song composed by Rabindra Nath Tagore which has been incorporated in India's National Anthem.

In this song, addressed to the British king, George V, the king is addressed as '*Jan gan man adhinayak*' – the ruler of the hearts of common man and he is hailed as that. This finds expression in '*Jaya*' of political leaders. Historians have amply brought out the ingredients of the *Raj Dharm* under the subject of the ruler, state and society (see Gokhle, B.G. 1961; Ghoshal, U.N. 1959; Majumdar, R.C. and Pusalkar (ed.) 1953, 54).

Uttam Purush : The concept of *Uttam Purush*, the highest of man, as an ideology has been present in Hinduism since its inception. It has been translated as Ideal Man. But Prof. Radha Kamal Mukherjee conceptualizes it as Ideal Person. To call it the Man Perfected (Gokhle, B.G. 1961) is against the ethos of Hinduism. For, perfect is *Ishvar* and not man howsoever divinity he may acquire or inherit. Emphasizing the spirit of the age, the *Uttam Purush* is the guiding star of his age. The *jnani* of the *Upanishad*, the *yogi* of *Yog Marg* and the *Sthitprajna Karm Yogi* of the Gita, the *Buddh* of the *Bauddhmat* and the *Kewalin* of the *Jain Mat* are some of the examples of ancient India.

The *Bhakt* is the *Uttam Purush* of medieval period. In the modern period, from the Arya Samaj arose the ideal personality of the Arya. The Arya stands for the sanskritik tradition and invites Indians to merge differences in Aryaism and become Arya. Gandhi's impact threw up the concept of *Satyagrahi* which with Vinoba Bhave grows into the concept of *Sarvodayi* who seeks development of all in the village-based traditional social structure which is an antidote to Westernization, commercialization and industrialism. *Sarvodayi* stands for *Aparigrahi* renunciation (Gokhle, B.G. 1961; Bhave, Vinoba, 1964).

19.6 Dharm-Achar-Complex in Hinduism

In Hinduism man's existence in society from birth to death is *lokyatra* (journey through this world). This is unavoidable. Without it neither fulfillment of life, nor *Lok Sangrah* (welfare of the people) is possible. Fulfillment of requirements and obligations of *Dharm* are not possible without *Karm*-based vigorous *lokyatra*.

Man's *Gun-Shram* flower through *Karm* and *Lokyatra*. Linkage of *Karm* to *Dharm* results in the linkage of the both with *achar* (righteous conduct). To follow *achar* is the primary basis of *dharm*. That, however, does not imply that *Dharm* is unidimensional. Linkage of *dharm-achar* (Dharmachar) links individual to *Shashtra* and *Lok / Desh*. This linkage is present in *Kul*, *Varn*, *Jati*, village and *desh* – which, sociologically, form the structural basis of man's social existence.

There is the dichotomy of *Acharvan* (the followers of righteous conduct) and *Acharbhrasht* (apostate, the fallen one). The latter is deviant and personally disorganized; he has lost the meaning and relevance of life. As in any other system, Hinduism, too, does not approve of deviation. It rather, ideologically, allows for protest against tyrannical and injurious deviance threatening the very righteous existence of man. The *kathas* in epics support this view.

Achar is conduct, behaviour, manner of action or of conducting oneself. *Achar* is custom, usage and practice. It is also used in the sense of customary law. In essence, it is usual, customary and established practice

(Apte, V.S. 1963). *Achar*, thus, is usual but righteous practice. In the sense of usual practice, *achar* is also *lokvyapar* (usual behaviour, practised by people). Being righteous and usual, it is *Karniya Karm* (*karm* worth doing) unless of course it goes against the standards of righteousness as defined by the *Shashtra*, *Lok* and *Kal*.

As *Karniya Karm*, *achar* seeks to promote the welfare of individual in society and a synthesis of *swarth* and *paramath*. Linked to *Dharm*, *achar* pervades almost all the aspects and departments of life. Even a *sanyasi* is not above the *achar* of the *dharm* of *Sanyasi*. Since, man exists and operates at many levels and dimensions of his existence, *achar* tends to be specific to the level of the situation. Each ashram and *Purusharth*, for example, is linked to a set of *achars*.

Kulachar, that is the *achar* of the *Kul* (lineage) encompasses marriage, family, *Kul* and extends upto kinship and caste. To cite an example, marriage with mother's brothers daughter in the plains of North India would be against the *achar* while, in the south and in the Fateh Parvat (in Uttaranchal), it is not a violation of *achar* relating to socially regulated mating. Again, marriage of a woman and her brother's daughter with the same person making them co-wives would not violate the local norms of marriage in Fateh Parvat (Bhatt, G.S., 1991).

After *Kul* and *gotra* come **varn-jati**. Though interlinked as the ideal and the real, they need be treated separately. However, in their explanations, sometimes, *gun* and *karm* are used. However, as linked to a *gun*, each *varn* has its innate disposition related to its prescribed *karm* in society. To follow prescribed *karm* becomes the *achar* of each *varn*. But, *achar* of a *varn* is most closely related to its rights, privileges and disabilities.

The linkage of *Varn*, ashram and *Purusharth* has crystallized in the *achar* of each *Purusharth* and its related ashram. In the form of do's and don'ts, an elaborate complex of *achars* are provided for the student, the householder and the *sanyasi*. The householder, in particular has to follow the *achar* of *kul*, *gotra*, *varn*-caste and of *lok* along with those prescribed by the *Shashtra*.

The caste till recently and largely even now in the rural living – circumscribes the life of an individual. Culturally, it is rather a bundle of *achars*. They relate to endogamy and exogamy, rules of commensality, pollution and purity, consumption of food stuffs, socially inherited occupation and the way one is expected to conduct oneself in society. When in operation they carry a touch of the nuance of ritualism.

In the people's perception, at the level of *Lok*, they take the form of *Dharm-Karm* and are assiduously followed – once, in the scorching heat of the month of June, I travelled on bicycle from Lucknow to our village. On the way, I felt thirsty. On a wayside village, two villagers, cleanly dressed, were drawing water from a well by their *lota* (jug) and *dor* (thin rope). I requested them to help me with water. They said they were *chamar* by caste and felt hesitant. Being thirsty, I insisted. I reminded them that to quench the thirst of a person – and that, too, during summer – was a *punya karm*. The elder of them thought a while and then came forth, "we will not spoil our *dharm-karm*. You may do, if you like." They put their *lota-dor* on the pavement of the well and sat aside. They looked at me with wide eyes when I picked their *lota-dor*, drew water from the well and quench my thirst.

This happened about fifty years back. Such instances do occur in the country-side. But the *achars* of caste-behaviour are being modified and changed as well. Village studies, studies on caste and intercaste relations

and also in novels written on the rural life, graphically depict operation and change of the *achar* related to caste and religious ethnocentrism.

Achar relating to karm is multifarious and multidimensional. From the point of view of *achar*, *karm* has been classified variously but mostly in such dichotomies as *Karniya-Akarniya Karm*, *Sit-Asit Karm* and *Shukla* and *Krishn Karm*. Gita's threefold classification, the triad, of *Sattvik*, *Rajas* and *Tamas karm* is most popular and finds mention in the literature of *varn-karm*. Whereas the dichotomous classifications are ethical, the threefold classification is rooted in the methodological concept of *gun*, its types and their play. However, this methodological concept is intrinsically related to the philosophy of *gun* which cannot be avoided in understanding the role of *gun* in the social existence of man (Prabhu, P.H. 1963).

19.7 Conclusion

We have described and explained and analysed important aspects of religion with a relatively eclectic framework of method. We then moved on to describing the etiology and definition of Hinduism. Our next endeavour related to our exposition concerned Hinduism and the concept of religion itself. We then moved on to describing *purusharth* – the four ends of life. We finally examined the *dhar-achar* complex in Hinduism. The unit has then touched upon some of the core issues of Hinduism and dealt with them adequately.

19.8 Further Reading

Bhatt, G.S. 2001, *Themes of Indian Social Thought*, New Delhi, Jawahar.

Karve, Irawati. 1961, *Hindu Society – An Interpretation*, Poona, Deccan College.

Kupuswami, B. 1977, *Dharm And Society*, Delhi, The Macmillan

Prabhu, P.H. 1963, *Hindu Social Organization*, Bombay, Popular.

Misra, Vidyaniwas. 1995, *Bhartiya Chintandhara*, Delhi, Prabhat.

References

Apte, V.S., 1963, *Sanskriti-English Dictionary*, Delhi, Motilal Banarsi Das.

Bhatt, G.S., 1968, *Bramho Samaj, Arya Samaj and the Church Sect Typology*, Review of Religious Research X/1, Religious Research Association, Kausas (USA).

_____, *Bhartiya Navjagran – Praneta Tatha Andolan*, Dehradun, Sahitya Sadan.

_____, 1991, *Women and Polyandry*. In Rawain Jaunpur, Jaipur, Rawat.

_____, 2001, *Themes of Indian Social Thought*, New Delhi, Jawahar.

Bonquiet, A.C., 1964, *Comparative Religion*, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England.

Bhave, Vinoba, 1964, *Revolutionary Satvodaya*, compiled by Nargolkr, Vasant, Bombay, Vidya Bhawan.

Chatterji, S.K., 1965, *Race Movements and Prehistoric Cultures*: Majumdar, R.C. (ed.) *et al.*, *Vedic Age – The History and Culture of the Indian People*, Bombay, Bhartiya Vidya Bhawan.

Dinkar, Ramdhari Singh, 1956, *Bhartiya Sanskriti Ke Char Addhyaya*, New Delhi.

Ghoshal, U.N., 1959, *A History of political Ideas*, Bombay.

Madan, T.N., 1985, Concerning Categories of *Shubh* And *Ashubh* In Hindu Culture – An Exploratory Essay, *Journal of Developing Societies*, Vol. I.

Majumdar, D.N., 1965, *Races and Cultures of India* (reprint) Bombay, Asia.

Majumdar, R.C. and Pusalkar (ed.), 1953, *The Age of Imperial Kaunauj*, Bombay, Vidya Bhawan.

Misra, Vidyanibas, 1995, *Bhartiya Chintandhara*, Delhi, Prabhat.

Prabhu, P.H., 1963, *Hindu Social Organization* (reprint) Bombay, Popular.

Sarkar, Binoy Kumar, 1937, *The Positive Background of Human Sociology*, Allahabad, Panini.

Srinivas, M.N., 1965, (reprint) *Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India*, Bombay, Asia.

_____, 1966, *Social Change in Modern India*, Berkley, California Press.