



Eduqas A-LEVEL RELIGIOUS STUDIES

 Theme 3B

 Challenges to Hinduism from secularisation

a<mark>nd scie</mark>nce



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Glossary key terms

Aryabhatta - Indian mathematician/astronomer.

Charaka – a native of Kashmir who contributed to Ayurveda a system of medicine developed in Ancient India. He is regarded as the 'father of medicine'.

Samkhya (sankhya) yoga – Patanjali's synthesis of sankhya philosophy and yoga practice. This philosophical system is dualist and tries to understand the difference between the material (prakriti) and spiritual (purusha).

Other useful key terms

Ayurveda – is the ancient Hindu wisdom of medicine developed by Acharaya Charaka.

Charak Samhita - a detailed account of Ayurveda Medicine.

dosha – meaning 'principles', it defines the three types of substances/elements within each living thing, according to Charaka.

Hindutva – also known as 'Hinduness'. A social and political group that wants to maintain and keep the traditions of Hinduism in India.

rta - cosmic order, within Hinduism everything has an order due to Brahman's Dharmic control.

rishis – seers who have undertaken deep meditation and receive the truth of Brahman, that is then written in the Vedas.

secular - something that is not connected with religious or spiritual matters.

secularism - the separation of government/state from religious institutions.

secularisation - to dissociate from religious or spiritual concerns.

spiriton - life consciousness, found within everything.

The relationship between Hinduism and science in Vedic literature

"Many advances in the sciences that we consider today to have been made in Europe were in fact made in India centuries ago."

(James Grant Duff - British historian 1789-1858)

Hinduism's scientific richness is evident within the Vedas and Hindu practices, allowing science and religious ideas to intertwine within the faith. Hindus believe that the cosmos has order or rta as seen in Einstein's view of cause and effect. However, Hinduism goes beyond science, believing the material revelations from science direct them to the Ultimate Reality. Within the Vedas it refers to Varuna in charge of the order of rta explaining the 'why' behind Newtonian Laws.

"Early Hindu sciences, far from being just mechanistic, integrated spiritual knowledge and technique to promote self-realisation." Rasamandala Das

Das, R, 'The Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Hinduism', Lorenz Books, (2012), ISBN:9780754820567.

The Vedas refer to creative and destructive power of the Aryan deities, some Hindus would interpret the ideas in connection to the Big Bang Theory. The Big Bang Theory is when the universe sprang into existence due to a singularity billions of years ago. Matter imploded (came within itself) and they expanded and cooled, creating the universe itself. Scientists believe that this happened by mere chance but according to Hindus, Brahma is the blueprint behind this creative energy of the Big Bang. The world and even the universe is in constant cyclic change according to Vedic Cosmology. Where there have been a variety of different changes: there is spontaneous creation; existing; and then decaying. This links to the Trimurti's control of not only an atman's reincarnation, but also the reincarnation of the universe. There is not just one creation account, Hindus have numerous accounts of a variety of creations, showing that they have a cycle of creation, destruction and reincarnation. At the moment creation is living in Kali Yuga or the age of Kali, were there is spiritual and physical degeneration. Therefore, the Big Bang could be seen a spontaneous creation of Brahma, and the decaying of the world controlled by Shiva, shown by the Ozone Layer shrinking, Climate Change which all link to Hindu teachings.

The Rig Veda 10 poem 129 verse 1-3 could be seen as the divine explanation for the Big *Bang:*

'Then neither Being nor Not-being was, Nor atmosphere, nor Firmament, nor what is beyond. What did it encompass? Where? In whose protection? What was water, the deep, unfathomable? Neither death nor immortality was there then, No sign of the night or day. That one breathed, windless, by its own energy (svadha): Nought else existed. In the Beginning was darkness swathed in darkness; All this was but unmanifested water. Whatever was, that one, coming into being, Hidden by Void, Was Generated by the power of heat (tapas)'

However, Humanists and atheistic scientists would agree with the 'how' of the Big Bang but reject the idea of a deity or metaphysical being behind the actions, the 'why'. Stephen Hawking rejected the Hindu's claim of divine beings behind creation, stating, 'I believe the simplest explanation is, there is no god. No one created the universe and no one directs our fate' (from 'Brief Answers to the Big Questions', (2018) Spacetime Publications, ISBN:9781473696006).

Another current idea is evolution, where small scale cells slowly evolved and adapted into different animals and eventually humans. The concept of evolution is highly relevant with Hinduism itself, samsara and karma illustrate this point. The atman evolves throughout each samsara from animals, to humans. The accumulated karma (Samchita Karma) of previous lives effect our next evolutionary state and we have a choice on how we karmically evolve. The way we live our present life now will karmically (Agami Karma) affect our atman's future evolution. The Katha Upanishads highlights the evolutionary changes to us in accordance to karma:

'Some enter the womb in order to have a body, as organic beings, others go into inorganic matter, according to their work and according to their knowledge' Katha Upanishad 5v7

The movement of the atman which changes from lower lifeforms to human forms, is believed to be the pinnacle of evolutionists thinking, with regards to the adaptation of the species and for a Hindu, the chance in which to reach moksha.

"We see in these incarnations a movement from lower, aquatic life forms to higher life forms living on the land." Gavin Flood

Flood, G., An Introduction to Hinduism, Foundation Books, (2004), ISBN: 9788175960282

However, Richard Dawkins would reject the idea of a God in control of the evolutionary process. According to Dawkins and Darwin, evolution came about by chance not by divine order (rta). Richard Dawkins completely rejects any form of a deity controlling our life, because if God did exist then *God is a 'petty, unjust, unforgiving, control-freak.....*' (The God Delusion, Black Swan, 2016, ISBN: 9781784161927. Contrastingly, Hindus would claim that Brahman is a complete being that includes the scientific understanding and metaphysical knowledge of rta, controlling the order of the world. This is shown in Sankhya philosophy (see below), where Brahman is both spiritual, but also physically within the world. The Rig Veda 10 Poem 129 verse 4 continues to refer to the idea of evolution:

In the beginning this (One) evolved, Became desire, first seed of mind. Wise seers, searching within their hearts, Found the bond of Being in Not-being.

Sankhya or (samkhya) yoga classifies matter

Sankhya or samkhya means 'taking account or analysing', where the philosophy of Sankya observes the prakriti (physical world) and purusha (spiritual realm). It also classifies the prakriti into 8 elements earth, water, fire, air, space, mind, intelligence and ego. These 8 elements are shown as part of the prakriti (nature in its germinal state, eternal and beyond perception). The scientific understanding of matter is the periodic table, created by Dimitri Mendeleev, where he arranged chemical elements by atomic mass. Again, these ideas are in agreement that elements have an order either with sankhya or the Periodic Table, highlight the holistic nature of Hinduism. Whereas the Periodic Table does not look beyond that of the physical, sankhya also analyses the spiritual matter. The building block of the material world is Brahman. The concept of prakriti has been show through the gunas (Sattva, Rajas and Tamas) which not only looks at matter, but also nature of character. Therefore, highlighting that the gunas acknowledge the scientific matter, but go further and look at the ethical expectations behind how we live our life dharmically and reveal the spiritually divine aspect of the world. These 3 key aspects are:

Sattva (purity) - are the material ideas that don't react, but also it is thought of as purity and goodness. This is the highest level of dharmic understanding and links to the actions of Krishna.

Rajas (passion) - these are the changing materials. On a moral level it could be good or bad. It has characteristics of passion, anger, greed, but also motivation to change. This can be a positive thing to change and evolve into something dharmically good.

Tamas (inertia) - is matter that stays stagnant and never changes. From an ethical point of view this character is thought of as lazy and could slide backwards from an evolutionary or samsara perspective.

In the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna explained these characteristics (Bhagavad Gita 14 v 5)

'These three - Goodness, Passion, Darkness, Are Qualities that from Nature springs, The embodied and unchanging soul In the body they are fettering.'

Our atman dwells in the realm of prakriti or the physical world that we can understand through empiricism, which science accepts. However, in this world the atman forgets the spiritual aspect of purusha or consciousness. The purpose of Sankhya philosophy is to withdraw the senses of prakriti and reach the understanding of purusha.

'When in recollection he withdraws all his senses (prakriti) from the attractions of the pleasures of the senses, even as a tortoise withdraws all of its limbs his is a serene wisdom.' Bhagavad Gita 2v58 Additionally, the Shevetashvatara Upanishad make it clear that we are trapped in prakriti and should seek purusha, through Jnana yoga. Therefore, by reaching purusha or pure consciousness we can understand the true reality of Brahman. This ethical and spiritual concept of reality is rejected by science because all scientists observe is the factual, empirical evidence:

Joel H. Hilebrand, a scientist's states this clearly 'Scientists... proceed by common sense and ingenuity. There are not rules, only the principles of integrity and objectivity, which a complete rejection of all authority except that of fact.'

Therefore, the Vedic understanding of science is not just analysis of the idea of matter it also seeks and understanding of the metaphysical concepts of God, soul and consciousness. Whereas modern science only accepts this physical domain, rejecting the holistic understanding of Sankhya where metaphysical, ethical and material exists cohesively under Brahman.

Hindu Rishis as philosophers

Rishis are seers or great sages who went into a deep Raja yoga (meditation), focusing on Brahman. As a result, Brahman revealed the truth of rta (cosmic order) and gave them the Vedas. Brahman revealed the perfect truth of the dharmic order of the world (rta) via the perfectly poetic books or hymns of the Vedas.

'They (the Vedas) were not composed by a human mind but contain transcendent knowledge, the Vedas are believed to be the most authoritative scriptures' J. Smith

Smith J., 'Edexcel AS Religious Studies', Edexcel limited, (2006), ISBN:9781846900013.

The Vedas explained how the world came into creation (see Rig Veda 10 Poem 129 above) but also the three plans of existence, earth (bhur), atmosphere (Bhuvas) and sky/heaven (svar). The Rishis received the revelation of the dharmic purpose of offerings in the yagna sacrifice, as a way to connect to Brahman via a multitude of Aryan deities e.g. Agni (fire god) and Indra (god of thunder). From the examples you can see the deities are connected to nature and the order of the cosmos, where Brahman has revealed himself within all of nature, as part of the dharmic order. The whole purpose of the revelation within the Vedas is for Hindus to be enlightened and seek God. This is shown quite clearly through the mantra (Man -mind, tra - to free - as sacred saying or Hymn) in the Rig Veda, known as the Gayatri. It is so sacred that the father whispers it into his son's ear during the Upanyana ceremony (Sacred Thread ceremony).

The Gayatri

'Om, That which pervades earth, sky, and heaven, which is worthy of worship, that has no beginning; that which is the light of wisdom and truth; let us meditate on the radiance of that divinity. May that brilliance help inspire and illuminate our minds. That One which represents water, light and is the quintessence in all things; May that almighty spirit pervading the earth, atmosphere, and heaven bless us with enlightenment.'

Mathematician and scientists – Charaka and Aryabhatta

From the wisdom of the Rishis, Hindu scientists and mathematicians interpreted the Vedas and other Hindu scriptures, while also empirically observing the order of the universe, creating outstanding results. These Hindus go beyond that of mathematical understanding and link it to the divine. For example, in the Katha Upanishads understanding of Atman it states '*the atman is smaller than the smallest, and greater than the greatest.*' (Katha Upanishad 2v20). This understanding illustrates again the metaphysical understanding of maths, matter and the spirit.

Acharya Charaka 300BCE

Charaka is known as the 'Father of Medicine' due to his work on 'Charak Samhita' which is a detailed account of Ayurveda medicine. Ayru comes from the word medicine and Veda means knowledge, demonstrating that the 'Charak Samhita' a detailed account of physiological understanding. Charaka's knowledge is quite profound due to his impact in today's modern India. Ayurveda is one of the medical system used and funded by the Indian Government. Professor Sunil Khilnani, in a BBC podcast (https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b05v7th2) states, 'In India they have 2000 calls a day, the Ayruvedic experts will refer to Charaka writings, combing ancient technology with ancient medicine.' This medicine focuses more on prevention rather than a cure, preparing a person to have a more holistic lifestyle. Charaka was the first person do develop the understanding of digestion, metabolism and immunity, by understanding the principles for different bodies. These bodies types are known as doshas or principles:

vata - movement pitta - transformation kapha - lubirication and stability

The doshas are not only body types, but believed to be life forces; for example vata is wind and space, pitta is fire and water and kapha is earth and water. It is believed that we all have elements of each dosha, but we have one that is the most dominant. The dominant dosha is the one that a person must focus on and balance, to alleviate health issues.

Key quote 'life (ayu) is the combination of (samyoga) of body, senses, mind and reincarnating soul. Ayurveda is the most sacred science of life, beneficial to humans both is this world and beyond' Charaka

These doshas are found by intensive questioning of the patients. Charaka's philosophy of medical examination is to find the root of causes of any disorder e.g. IBS or asthma; and then they will find the proper dosha to aid the person in having a better lifestyle. For example, a question related to Vata could be 'do you perspire minimally or only under heavy exertion?'; a question for Pitta could be 'Do you get angry or in a bad mood if an expected meal is missed or delayed?'; and finally a question for kapha could be, 'Do you tend towards colds, hay fever or

asthma?'. By looking at body shape, attitude and behavioural tendencies and ailments, Ayruveda will provide you with the right dosha diet and lifestyle, for you to live your life more comfortably. For example, a diet rule for vata food must not be light, dry, crunchy, cold, raw and anything hard to digest or food that could produce gas. Therefore, a vata diet would have 50% carbs, 20% protein, 20% vetables and 10% fruit and moderate amount of dairy. This process of questioning is done in India today, where the patient might be asked around 100- 200 questions and then come up with which dosha they need to follow.

Charaka was also aware of toxins/poisons to help some bodies and hinder others. 'A potent poison becomes the best drug on proper administration. On the contrary, even the best drug become a potent poison if used badly,' (Charaka). Ayurveda also aids a Hindu to eat and live more cleanly, it gives them a pure mind for Raja yoga by eating a sattivic (pure, vegetarian) diet. It is believed by many sadhus (religious ascetic/monk) that if you eat sattivic food your mind is not clouded and that you can reach samadhi (a blissful state).

This way of living in not just prevalent in India, it is finding momentum within the fitness industry and with celebrities. Supermodel Christy Turlington Burns stated, 'Ayurveda is a sister philosophy to yoga. It is the science of life or longevity and it teaches about the power of the cycles of nature, as well as the elements.' Many fitness programmes in America see the benefits of Ayurveda medicine because it reduces stress, aids weight loss or maintenance, helps hormone balance, limits inflammation of the bowls and cleanses the body. Making this system a perfect aid to peak athletic performance. Additionally, the vegetarian diet that is championed by Ayurveda diet is environmentally sustainable for the West's increasing environmentally friendly ethos.

However, Ayurveda does not include important equipment that aids the sustaining of life, for example life support machines, IV fluids and pace makers. The preventative cures and maintaining of the body is the key for Ayurveda, but modern science cannot be ignored and should be synthesized together for the perfect medical support according to Hindus.

Aryabhatta (476-550 CE)

Aryabhatta's influence in India is clearly seen today with India's first satellite being named after him in 1975. Hindus celebrate the fact that Aryabhatta had mathematical and astronomical works that predate discoveries made in the West. Huge amounts of his mathematical ideas were translated into Arabic and influenced Islamic mathematical understanding. For example, he believed the earth was a sphere that rotated on an axis. This clear thinking was beyond that of Galileo, because he used the understanding of Vedic truths provided by the Rishis. He claimed that none of his ideas were original, but merely showed the knowledge already revealed by Brahman. 'by the grace of Brahman the precious sunken jewel of true knowledge has been recused by me, by means of the boat of my own knowledge. Form the oceans that consists of true and false knowledge, by diving deep in.' Aryabhatta

Taken from BBC podcast https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b05v7tqh

Like the Rishis, he explained the mathematical and astrological understanding through poetry, demonstrating that Brahman's rta is revealed in perfect synchronisation. Some key contributions Aryabhatta made were: the theory that the earth rotates on its axis; solving quadratic equations; the idea of solar; the idea of a lunar eclipse; and the values of zero and understanding of Pie (π). It is believed that he even worked out the area of a triangle, showing the symmetry of the world. An amazing mathematical achievement was that he also calculated the length of a year, he was only 'out' by just over 3 minutes over a year, showing his amazing mathematical mind.

Where mathematicians and scientists would respect his empirical mind, Hindus would see that he is merely revealing Brahman's rta of the world. Many Western mathematicians would reject the claim that Brahman is behind the order of it all. Again, it is the idea that there is metaphysical presence behind everything that modern maths and science reject.

Hinduism's acceptance of scientific advancements – a legitimate but incomplete step towards knowing and understanding reality

There are numerous scientific advancements, however, this section will only focus on a few.

There are many scientific advancements that can be accepted by Hindu's understanding of the material world and rta. One of the key idea is that the world is made of matter and atoms according the Scientist John Dalton. He believes we must think of the world in terms of atoms, which we cannot see with our naked eye; they could be solid, liquid or even gas. He believes that matter is not created or even destroyed due to it being in a closed system. For Hindus the concept of atoms and matter and specifically the tiny particles could be seen as Sprition, this is the life of consciousness that is Brahman. Spiriton is the same as Sat, Chit and Ananda (being, consciousness and bliss). Sri Ramakrishna he believed the atman is the spark in the great fire of Brahman. Also, Shankara would state that the atman is invisible according to the parable of the Banyan Tree in the Upanishads and one of his 'Great Utterances' states that 'All is Brahma. Therefore, from a Hindu perspective matter, particles or atoms are all part of the one Para-atman, the Supreme Spirit, Brahman.

Hilborn's Butterfly Effect Theory shows that very small changes in initial conditions can result in major changes later. Hilborn gave the example that a flap of a butterfly might create changes in the weather. This connects to the Hindu idea of Agami karma (future Karma) where changes in our actions or behaviour

can affect our samsara transition or even aid us in gaining moksha. However, from a determinist scientific point of view, Francis Galton in 1800 believed that genetics and talents were inherited from families, is predetermined. This concept even though is critiquing the free will argument is still accepted by Hindus because they believe that by Brahman's rta we have accumulated karma from our previous lives (Samchita karma) which inevitably leads us in a specific position, due to our karmic fruits in this life.

Scientist acknowledge that we have consciousness, but believe it is still difficult to understand the mere root of it. Christof Koch (a neuroscientist and chief scientific officer at the Allen Institute for Neuroscience in Seattle) believed "the only thing you know is, 'I am conscious.' Any theory has to start with that." Also, Koch and Francis Crick discovered the double-helix structure of DNA believed to be the conductor of the brain, or maybe our understanding of consciousness. Hinduism would argue that our consciousness is actually atman, and our ability within to seek the absolute truth of Brahman. Brahman is the eternal consciousness that is within us, but we merely need to seek it and know that we are Brahman, 'Tat tvam Asi' – 'you are that'.

Furthermore, scientific understanding of the Big Bang Theory and Evolution is also accepted by many Hindus as Brahman being behind these two scientific processes. (see above)

Diversity of views - conservative and liberal (within science)

Fundamentalist or conservative Hindus accept the Vedas as the direct revelation of God (shruti) and therefore whatever is referred to in the Vedas is truth and even if it contradicts sciences, still should be adhered to.

Some Hindus (liberals) believe that the Vedas are not free of errors or flawless, therefore the parts of the Vedas which go against modern science can be rejected from the scripture. This view is highly rational and more acceptable in a secularised modern society.

Many Hindus (liberals) accept the Vedas contain Brahman's revelation, but again the Vedas are not completely accurate because the Vedas were written by human beings, who are not infallible. Consequently, if the scientific ideas and Vedantic ideals are in conflict, some Hindus will interpret it into a new or different light, which makes sense within modern society.

Influence of secularisation in India (as a secular state)

When India became an Independent State in 1947, the Constitution stated that India is "Sovereign, Socialist, Secular, Democratic, Republic." Therefore, there was and still is no recognised official religion of the state. Article 25 of the Indian Constitution also claimed that there should be no discrimination in regards of religion, race, or caste. This is highlighted by Jawaharlal Nehru (the first Prime Minster of India, once it was Independent), wrote to Gandhi in 1933. He stated, "Religion is not familiar ground for me, and as I have grown older, I have definitely drifted away from it... with horror...almost always it seemed to stand for blind belief and reaction, dogma and bigotry, superstition and exploitation." This shows that the first Indian Prime Minister felt that religion was not relevant to their society and certainly not relevant in today's society. However, Gandhi believed secularism meant that there would be equal rights for all religions. Furthermore, India has not just changed its political landscape; the country was influenced by the globalisation in business. Coca-Cola, McDonalds, KFC are all Western businesses that have invaded Indian cultures. Many Indians today opt for Western clothes rather than traditional Hindu attire. History shows that Gandhi reacted to this Imperial, economic globalisation by making his own clothes and salt, so India could be independent of other countries and even businesses controlling an Indian's way of life.

Prior to the Independence of India, there were other faiths which invaded and ruled India's pluralist society. Between the period 1526 and 1857, the Muslim Mughal dynasty ruled India and tried to proselytize Hindus to the Islamic faith. Furthermore, in 1857 to 1847 the Christian British then ruled until India's Independence. Again just as Islam does, the Christian religion also believed in proselytising. The Christian Great Commission to 'Preach the Gospel to the world,' making it a Christian necessity to evangelise to Hindus. From a Christian perspective the use of murtis for an understanding of Saguna Brahman appears to be idol worship, going against their key Biblical teaching; 'Thou shalt not worship idols' Exodus 20. The British politician, William Wilberforce was so angered by the way Hindus lived their lives, he argued, *'The Hindu divinities are absolute monsters of lust, injustice, wickedness and cruelty...their whole religious system is one grand abomination.'*

Indian society would interpret the concept of secularisation to mean that anyone can follow their own pathway, meaning any religious practice is their own pathway. This is why many Hindus do not believe in proselytization because Christians and Muslims are doing their own form of dharmic pathway. There is a western understanding of a secular state, which suggests we should erase religion, but for Hindus it means that every religion is sacred; Islam, Christianity Zoroastrianism, Jains all co-existed well before the two evangelical religious invasions of India which looked to dominate and threaten Hindu practices and believes. There has been an increase in the number of Christian and Muslims who have felt that anything that is deemed as Hindu should not be observed and rejected, even though a lot of their practices in India are based on Hindu traditions. This anti Hindu view has become more pronounced in recent times, for example the Nagaland Baptist Church Council stated 'yoga is a spiritual and physical discipline deeply rooted in the religious beliefs and practices of Hinduism, and hence it is not compatible with Christianity.' Where there is interfaith marriage of Hindu and a Muslim, it is known sometimes as the 'love jihad', where some Muslims are on a mission to covert Hindu and Sikh girls to the Islamic faith. However, there are some very genuine interfaith marriages which are also targeted because they are not converting each other to the faith, they are just accepting each other individual religious practices. Furthermore, there has also been a ban on murtis (image worship) and arti (worship using 5 wicks) in mainly Islamic India areas.

'it is true that both of these invading powers did a great deal to harm Hindu culture, explicitly opposed many Hindu practices and systemized oppression and bias based upon religious communal identity.' Jamison

Jamison, I. 'Hinduism', Philip Allan Updates, (2006), ISBN:1844894207.

Hindutva response to secularisation in context of India as a secular state

These two main impacts of secularisation and the strong religions who believe in converting people to their true faith, slowly led to a backlash within India, known as Hindutva. Whereas most Hindus didn't believe in conversion or getting involved with other people's traditions or religions due to it being their own dharmic pathway, some Hindus believed they needed to fight back politically and socially to maintain the traditions of Hinduism. There is a fear amongst some that Hindu culture will die away if individuals don't stand up for this ancient tradition. Hindutva means 'Hinduness' or 'of Hindu Principles' and rose from the backlash to the growth of Christianity and Islam in India and secularisation. Hindutva wants to return to the 'Golden Age' of the Vedas, living by the truth of Shruti scriptures. Many of these Hindutvas believe in developing a Hindu state called Hindustan. The first person to develop this term was Vinayak Damodar Savarkar who also wanted Indian independence. Even though he was an atheist, who desired the abolition of the caste system, Savarkar still wanted Hindus who have left the faith to be converted back to the Hindu religion. In the Pamphlet 'Essentials of Hindutva' in 1923, Savarkar regarded Hinduism more holistically as a culture, ethnic group and a political philosophy. Savarkar believed that India is the home of Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs, where their ancestors lived, and should not become Islamic or Christian.

"We Hindus are bound together not only by the tie of the love we bear to a common fatherland and by the common blood that courses through our veins and keeps our hearts throbbing and our affections warm, but also by the tie of the common homage we pay to our great civilization - our Hindu culture." Savarkar

Furthermore, another Hindutva named Nathuram Godse rejected Gandhi's sympathetic approach to Muslims and assassinated him on January 30, 1948. This highlights the anger towards the Muslim and Christian 'invasion' of India. The partition of India and Pakistan in 1947 and the People's Republic of Bangladesh in 1971 also caused more of a rift between Muslims and Hindus.

The Hindu Maha Sabha founded in 1909, promoted the idea that India should be governed by Hindu laws. At this point other Hindutva organizations were developed to fight against secular, Christian and Islamic ideologies. RSS or the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (National Volunteer Organization) founded in 1925 which was focused on sewa (charity or selfless service) to India. They do relief work, give money to temples and schools, to promote Hindu work and beliefs. Although, RSS is not just about sewa, the organization defends Hindus in times of difficulty and oppression. For example, in 1927 the RSS led a procession for Ganesh, with music and chanting in front of a mosque, which was a direct challenge to the Muslim rule of not passing a mosque with music, especially Hindu music. As a result, there were riots and violence from both sides.

The parent organization of the RSS is the BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party – Indian People's Party), which was established in 1951 and formed by Syama Prasad Mukherjee. The aim of this party is to gain political representation in the Indian Parliament. Making the BJP the main Indian right-wing party, focusing on giving Hindus a voice in Parliament. The BJP wanted to fight against the other religious groups destroying temples, slaughtering holy cows and stopping puja of murtis in temples.

'an invasion that is describe by the BJP has entailed the whole sale destruction of temples, the massacre of Brahmanas and slaughter of cows had left an indelible mark on them.' Jamison

Jamison, I. 'Hinduism', Philip Allan Updates, (2006), ISBN:1844894207.

In response to the perceived attacks on Hinduism some BJP members destroyed a mosque in Ayodhya in 1992 and built a mandir to Rama on top of the mosques remains. This was to reclaim 'Hinduness' in a reaction to the Islamic invasion, because participants in the BJP rally wanted to build a temple where Rama's birthplace was, instead of having a mosque overshadowing it. Furthermore, during 2002, there was horrific violence between Muslims and Hindus, with Muslims killing 58 Hindus and in response Hindu mobs attacking and killing a thousand Muslims. This became known as the Gujarat massacre.

However, in more recent times the BJP is trying to adopt a more pluralist Hindu approach, their motto being a 'support for all, benefit for all'. The BJP has focused its effort on the political movement, by gaining seats in the Indian Government. As a result, 2014 the BJP won the general election and Narendra Modi of the BJP was sworn as the 15th Prime Minster of India. Many believe the BJP were successful at campaigning before the vote, raising the turnout of voters. There were even 8% of Muslims who voted for the BJP highlighting some change in perspectives in this party. Although, Modi clearly showed that he was a devoted Hindu by bowing his head on his mother's feet straight after he was made Prime Minister of India; a traditionally Hindu action.

'Hindutva exerts great power particularly within India political life.' Jamison Jamison, I. 'Hinduism', Philip Allan Updates, (2006), ISBN:1844894207.

Orthodox Hindus view history as pre-ordained and therefore accept aspects of secularisation

There have been many modern Orthodox Hindus who have adapted and accepted some ideas of secularisation, attempting to promote equality within Hinduism. For example, within the 19th Century, Dayananda Saraswati (1824-1883) was a Shaivite, who followed the cult Shiva Linga. However, he rejected his upbringing by his father, especially the idea of Saguna Brahman and murti puja. He wanted to go back to the root of Hinduism and accept the Vedas, dismissing any other scripture, as it was going against the true essence of Hinduism. Surprisingly, he did accept the Dharma Sastras e.g. Laws of Manu because they refer to Brahman as Nirguna (formless). These Laws of Manu were also accepted by the British colony. Believing that Brahman is omnipotent, eternal and impersonal due to the spiritual formlessness of God, which co-insides with Christian and Islamic teaching, making this tradition more acceptable to the people ruling Hindus. These ideologies are very similar to Advaita Vedanta teaching that Brahman and atman are one, 'Tat Tvam Asi', 'you are that'.

From reading the Vedas, he rejected Varna as scripturally unethical in his eyes. Dyananda believed that later ideas of inherited varnas were added from both Mugal and Christian ideas as a way to control Hindus in India. He went back to the traditional idea of varna being being based upon talents or merit rather than being hereditary due to Sanchita karma. Furthermore, he wanted Hindus to read the original language of Sanskrit, to gain a deeper understanding of the Vedas. Dayananda Saraswati created the Arya Samaj or Nobel Society; the goal of which was to mount a theological attack on Christianity and Islam. This group tried to bring Hindus who converted to other religions back to the true faith of Hinduism, spreading his message not only in India, but also in South Africa and Fiji, where Hindus emigrated. The people who converted back to Hinduism performed a ceremony called Suddhi, meaning 'purification'. Saraswati accepted some of the secularised modern ideas where he believed marriage should be entered into by choice and that child marriage should be eradicated. He also allowed niyoga marriage were a widow and widower could marry, to stop the practices of sati (a widow dying of the funeral pyre). His other modern, secular idea was that he wanted girls and boys to be educated in trades and Hindu traditions, to prepare them for life. The schools he founded for this education are called gurukulas (teacher home) and are still present today throughout India.

Vivekananda (1863-1903) made Hinduism very popular in the West. He believed that Brahman was within everyone and therefore we are all the same. As a result, Vivekananda believed in all religions and that all are essentially the same, as they are all seeking the divine. Vivekananda showed his enthusiasm for unity within all religions, as everyone had a different dharmic pathway but should still treat every religion with dignity and respect, showing unity instead of division and hatred. Vivekananda highlighted the injustices of the western missionaries, who were obsess with preaching the gospel, 'Go and preach the gospels to the nations' Mathew 28. However, the missionaries ignored the social needs of the Indians.

'You Christians who are so found of sending out missionaries to save the soul of the heathen – why do you not try to save their bodies from starvation.' Part of Vivekananda's speech at the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago 1893

Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) is another example of a Hindu still enriched in Orthodox Hindu teachings, but modernizing its message. Gandhi tried to include other religious believers, especially Muslims in his mission to bring about the independence of India. This went completely away from the Hindutva ideology and moved back to the pluralist idea that we all have our dharmic pathways and we are all one in Brahman.

Another key thinker was Radha Krishna (1888-1975) who moved towards social thinking while still accepting the key philosophical teachings of Vedanta. He was an Advaita Vedanta, believing that the atman and Brahman are one. Radhakrishna was educated within Christian schools in India, gaining a western understanding of philosophy. This led him to investigate Hinduism further, so he could defend the Hindu traditions to his opinionated Western teachers. Many of the western cultures, especially Christianity felt that Hinduism was barbaric and idolatrous, but Radhakrishnan wanted to express the positive philosophies of Hinduism and his desire for social justice in Indian culture. He believed that Hinduism should be the religion of spirit and the original religion of mankind. He believed that people could only achieve true godliness by doing good deeds (sewa).

'His clear explanations of the Vedanta (in the 'language' of Western Philosophers) enabled academics in the West to begin to Value the Philosophical insights of the Indian tradition.' Jamison.

Jamison, I. 'Hinduism', Philip Allan Updates, (2006), ISBN:1844894207.

Issues to debate

Can Ayurveda and modern medicine work together?

Can you believe in ancient Hindu wisdom and science?

The effectiveness of Hindu responses to the challenges of science

The extent to which the only effective response to secularisation is the Hindutva response.

Further Resources

https://resources.eduqas.co.uk/Pages/ResourceSingle.aspx?rlid=1246

Eduqas Component 1E: Hinduism Scheme of Work

Useful websites

https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b05v7th2

Charaka BBC podcast.

https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b05v7tqh

Aryabhatta BBC podcast.

https://www.huffingtonpost.com/gadadhara-pandit-dasa/hinduism-sciencespirituality-intersect_b_967628.html

an article by Pandit Dasa entitled "Hinduism: Where Science and Spirituality Intersect".

https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b082r4lv

BBC Radio 4 podcast, Professor Sunil Khilnani presents four audio portraits of figures who have shaped the arc of Indian history: Charaka, Aryabhata, Rajaraja Chola and Basavana.

http://www.faradayschools.com/wp-content/uploads/srsp_11-16_T1_U2c_Unitoverview_Hinduism-and-science.doc

an article on 'Hinduism and Science' by Science and Religion in Schools.

<u>http://firstip.org/legendary-scientists/acharya-charak-father-of-medicine-300bc</u> - article on Charaka from FIRSTIP.

https://www.thefamouspeople.com/profiles/aryabhata-5427.php - a brief summary of the life of Aryabhatta taken from Famouspeople.com -

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https://www.huffingtonpost.com/gadadhara-pandit-dasa/hinduism-sciencespirituality-intersect_b_967628.html

an article by Pandit Dasa on the Huffingtonpost.com on the relationship between Hinduism and Science.

http://indiafacts.org/hindu-political-thought-liberal-conservative-reactionary/

an article by Ashay Naik on Indiafacts.org providing a theoretical introduction to the three varieties of political thought that have emerged among the Hindus in modern times.