

Gods, Gurus and Missionaries

- Manu Pillai

Introduction: A Brief History of Hinduism

- "In 1831, Raja Ram Mohan Roy ... landed in England with a cow."
- Pre-Suez Canal, the journey to Britain was six months isn't. Cows usually didn't survive the journey.
- Cows: "...breathing totem of custom and faith for men wedged between traditional religiosity and colonial modernity."
- Circumventing karta prani - travel abroad carried the family deity. Madho Singh of Jaipur.
- Indian priest - manipulation of tradition.
- Peasant chief / warrior gains power - turns to the priest for legitimization. Upgrade in caste.
- Two-way transaction. Ruler gets legitimacy. Priest takes home the gold cow from the ritual.
- "Keepers of the song & lore which shaped its national narrative confronted such dizzying contingencies that a degree of plasticity was integral to holding it all together."
- At some point, most of Indian subcontinent is mleccha-desa. Brahmins weren't supposed to step foot. But they do. When they do, assimilation, elimination & consolidation begins.
- When spreading/selling brahminical ideas in new territories, less rigidity, sensible bargains were made.
- "Hinduism, as it would emerge, was not so much what Brahmins wanted; instead it is the story of their negotiations with a bewildering variety of counter-thoughts & alternate visions."

- Bronkhorst: "much of Brahminism's success comes from its transformation into a 'socio-political ideology' as opposed to a religion."
- "The Kshatrin does not flourish without the Brahmin, and the Brahmin does not prosper without the Kshatriya."
- This version → focused on pleasing gods.
Contenders → Buddhism & Jainism → ethical living.
- Period of Mauryan empire,
"unforeseen political and cultural ideas were also entering the fray from a different direction, adding to the competitiveness of the religious market".
- Choice - Become irrelevant
- somehow bring foreigners into this framework.
- "All ideas were welcome, but those closest to the Brahmins' own were deemed higher or superior, and those more grating, lower."
- Christianity comes to the Middle East → religion in India changes as well.
- Ideas transmitted through epic poetry
- First millennium CE - Hinduism sheds its Vedic appearance & becomes a mixed commodity known as the Puranic religion
- Oral traditions into Puranas. Include & weave in diverse traditions.
- Sivapurana - incorporate local deities including Ganapati
- "By design, therefore, the Puranas were quite flexible."
- As more tribes & societies drawn in, more changes appear in sub-puranas for regions.
- The "ancient text" Bhavishyapurana even has references to Queen Victoria! (Victoriat)

- "They acquired their fluid form not to meet present-day scholarly standards but to tie the local with the pan-Indian, and the evolving with the stable; to universalize what was provincial, while seeding the parochial with the universal."
- Velchuru Narayana Rao: all civilizations make their own past to make sense of the present.
- "... Hinduism - became a 'macro-reality of organically united micro-realities'..."
- Note 73: as late as 19th century, it was admitted that many castes 'originally... were not Hindus'.
- Brahmin identity was not uniform.
"It is not surprising, therefore, that even on the cusp of modernity there were feuds about whether some Brahmins were Brahmins at all."
- In the Gangetic Belt, a pattern of describing local goddesses as Shiva's wife
- "Brahmins went out of their way to identify each river and claim for it a common source with others; in creating an overarching explanatory frame they sought unity while maintaining a formal supremacy for themselves & their ideas."
- "... so long as the vedas were not denied and the caste superiority of Brahmins were accepted practically anybody - holding a variety of ideas - could be brought into the frame."
- Belief in similar myths & taangages legends, told and recd in multiple forms & languages.
- Vedic system had little bearing on the lives of most people considered Hindu.
- "... every time new forces emerged, the Brahmin was equipped, in return for preservation, to provide from his all-encompassing bag of myths, material tailored to fit the moment."
- Links between temple culture & bhakti
- Bhakti received theological certification as a legitimate route to liberation.

- worshipping a deity was simply a part of everyday life, not a marker of identity.
- Examples of kings of Brahmin descent but patronising patrons of Jainism.
- "Even Buddhist royalty had an incentive in upholding Brahmin theories on caste, for example, viewed more as a sociopolitical instrument than as a religious principle."
- Sacred geography - pilgrimage becoming a popular means to experience divinity.
- "By encouraging devotees to travel to such sites, not only were they told that they could gain spiritual release, but it also generated a culture of commonality despite different vocabularies, tongues, and histories."
- Feuds were not uncommon between partisans of Siva & Vishnu.
- "Saiyas & Vaishnavas baited one another, while Buddhists and Jains were reduced to submission."
- Then 'Islam' enters the picture.
- Kings converting to Islam in Kerala - maritime commerce
- In the north raids of Mahmud of Ghazni (eleventh century). Eaton warns against calling these as Muslim raids (two raids).
- Islam would be perceived by some as a devourer of Hindus, and a civilizational adversary.
- For the first time in history India was to reconcile to the existence of a separate culture-community
- Islam was different but not inexpressibly alien - muslims in India were diverse and the opposite of a monolith.
- Both Hindu & Muslim kings plundered territories
- "Hindus did not think of themselves as only Hindus, viewed in contrast to muslims - that claim appeared in the modern period. Until then, identities were shaped by multiple parameters such as caste and region and language, religion being one of many factors."

- "Yet, the religious divide was not an artificial or a colonial invention notions of 'us and them' always persisted between Muslims and Hindu elites."
- Pluralistic India vs Hindu India
- European powers arrive - more complexity
- Pillai does not agree/believe that Hinduism is a western invention.
- "Hinduism was not 'invented'; it represents the latest milestone in a long-running religious process."
- "... while the name is modern, the river is old."
- "Historically, Hinduism did not fit the mould of book-based religions, though in its modern form, it does appropriate many of the latter's features."
- "Gradually, colonialism seeded a feeling among many Hindus that their identity needed muscle; and in forging this defensive frame, they would position themselves against the West and Muslims both."
- "(This book) is only an investigation into human action and reaction, in a context of political conquest, cultural domination and resistance."

Chpt 1 : Monsters and Missionaries

1579 - Akbar invites Jesuits to Delhi to learn about Christian texts. Jesuits thought Akbar wanted to convert. Akbar was at odds with the Muslim ulema. Asked to have the Bible translated to Persian.

The Jesuits viewed Akbar's heterodoxy as a character defect.
→ Akbar allowed people to follow their own religion.

- * "(Akbar's) interest lay in grasping the principles of each competing faith to craft a new philosophy for himself as a monarch, and in scrutinizing all religions fairly."
- Akbar listened to advice on 'auspicious days' based on Hindu astrology.
- "missionary exaggeration" → incentive for Jesuits to portray ground realities in a very different light. This improved chances of getting funds.
- "there was a massive appetite in Europe for news of foreign lands."
- Tilted narratives → stereotyping → sensationalize
- * "... the Jesuits' letters remained a powerful source of knowledge about India, in the process cementing cliches that still endure."
- European audiences did not have context w.r.t what they read. They imagined 'unchristian subjects' from familiar Christian templates.
- multi-headed Indian deities thought of as monsters.
- Pagan gods in Europe received similar treatment. Countless idols destroyed in Europe. They used this framing to describe Indian gods as demons.
- "To Indians, these images were visual theologies & visual scriptures". Think Nārasimha.
- "Interestingly, these descriptions were recycled formulaically by European travellers, resulting in a standardized and negative image of Hindu culture."
- Similar exaggerations about Sati.
Piñai shows that Sati was rare.
- Another rumour of death by chariot wheel.
- Pattern: someone writes something exaggerated. Other travel writers amplify same garbage.

- "Such repeated confirmation in travel accounts of India's barbarity was essential to promoting in Europe its own sense of civilization."
- "in late medieval England, women who conspired against their husbands were burned alive,..."
- divine debauchery - part and parcel of the missionary strategies of denigrating and ridiculing.
- "The West had to save the East not only from its own men and women, ..." but also sham gods & demonic forces."
- There would have been isolated human sacrifices & women killing their husbands. "But the elevation of the specific as a timeless standard perpetuated the idea of India as a savage Other to Christendom..."
- "But as the white man's political power grew in the country, his skewed narratives... acquired the ability to afflict their world."
- Hindus were forced to answer - who were they really?
- "It was in the construction of these answers that Hinduism took its contemporary form, drawing pride & confidence from certain aspects of its past and shame from others."
- 1498 : Portuguese arrive in Kerala. (malabar coast)
- Portuguese first didn't see Indian gods as monsters. They hoped to win special terms of trade from the local raja. It was when this did not happen, that things turned bitter. Politics tinted their gaze.
- Mainland rulers, even Mughals, were not much bothered that the Portuguese were militarizing the ocean.
- "... the overtly political nature of Portuguese trade meant that it was not long before religion entered the fray in India too."
- "... the colonizer's rigid religiosity had grown stiffer still in reaction to the anti-Catholic Reformation occurring in Europe."
- "In 1540-41, hundreds of temples were razed, their assets appropriated for Christian institutions."
- Exodus of gods (idols) from the area. ppl were spending money earned in god in neighbouring lands.

- In general, Jesuits did not hesitate to use force to expedite conversions.
- "... Catholics were seizing at Goa's idols - and idolaters - in the same period that Protestants attacked their icons in Europe under the charge of idolatry."
- On Nasranis: "Kerala's Christians received bishops from Persia, not Rome..." They performed similar rituals as Hindus, had notions of caste purity, and maintained links with temples.
- "in 1806, when a local rajah was informed that the British and Nasranis were of the same faith, he remarked that this 'could not be the case, else he must have heard it before' - so different was the 'native' Christian from the European."
- Among Hindus - persecution by an alien race wielding foreign force - soul searching.
- Goa hosted four orders: franciscans, jesuits, dominicans, augustinians.
- Many 16th century conversions. Employment, political status and much else was contingent on christianization.
- Brahmins manufactured rites to re-convert lapsed Hindus. Temples of exiled deities outside Goa were grander.
- 17th century - return of tolerance. Dutch challenged Portuguese dominance at sea, Marathas on land. Old habits of coexistence reappeared.
- "local culture ultimately triumphed over decrees of the foreigner."
- This history still left a mark on Goa.
- Most missionary activity was limited to the coast and its non-elite classes.
- "The assumptions that Hindus were a polytheists could not hold."
- "Nobody important believed that idols were gods; they only symbolized divine power."
- They had to properly engage with Hinduism.
"... the father in Calicut combined missionary zeal with a command of Hindu mythology."
- Local rajah → how could Jesus be divine when he was gibeted on a cross and killed by the Jews?

- For Portuguese, god and the gun went hand in hand.
- 1603 - Roberto - Jesuit - set out for India. Went to Madurai. "I small become an Indian to save the Indians. Could Hindus be won by methods less slick, more carrot?
- They would have to understand Hindu culture, and then make their case in forms intelligible to intended converts.
- composed Krishnapurana ('Christ Purana') in Malathi & Konkani.
- "...to have an impact, missionaries must match one local image of holy men."
- Roberto de Nobili would become the most committed advocate of this inculturative strategy.
- Most converts were of lower caste → this association haunted missionaries.
- Note 225: The Hindus have... a much greater respect for Nasranis as opposed to those who went over to the Catholics, which may be accounted for by their not associating with the lower orders & pp.
- Hindus, (de Nobili) believed, might welcome the Bible if it looked browner."
- Note 229: over two centuries later, missionaries would still get excited at the prospect of Brahmin conversions.
- Di Nobili dressed like a Sanyasi in cotton clothes, even wore a sacred thread and became a vegetarian.
- "and men were drawn to this indigenized Christianity & its spokesman."
- Cut Brahmins' thread, gave them a cross.
- Did puja before mass.
- Created a caste system. Ignored the Pope when he visited.
- Made converts sit in separate rows by caste.
- When de Nobili went to Goa, took along a Brahmin cook.
- In 1619, to the irritation of his adversaries, the Vatican endorsed this style. By the time of his death in 1656, the Madurai mission commanded the loyalty of thousands. Not many Brahmins, but other high-caste people.

- different approach: "converts could retain everything from their past lives, including caste prejudices, so long as they replaced Hindu gods with Jesus and Mary."
- "This Infiltration grew so strong that when in 1744 Rome withdrew support, it was simply too late - Tamil Catholics were more amenable to European micromanagement."
- centrality of 'caste' to 'native' Christians.
separate seating, demarcated cemeteries.
chariot processions with virgin Mary. "It was perfectly Christian to sacrifice goats too."
- wanted to position Jesus as a more refined alternative to Hinduism.
- "...but equally, Christian saints simply joined a general cast of gods and goddesses in these parts."
- "Just as Hindus prayed at the tombs of Muslim Sufis for children, they now also went to shrines to the Virgin."
- also Tamil Catholics continued to make offerings to village goddesses.
- 1700s → Protestant missionaries were the new challenge to Jesuits. "Protestants accused Catholics of idolatry, superstition..."
- "When the first Protestant fathers landed nearby, Madurai denounced them as 'heretics'..."
- Jesuits said that only greedy, lower-strata of society fell for Protestant propaganda.
- By the end of 1700s, "Jesuits would be marginalised in the very evangelical space they helped create."
- "It was Protestants who now began to build a following in India, reinforced not long after by the might of the East India Company."

Chpt 2 : 'Heathens' and Hidden Truths

- Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg from Denmark. Protestant missionaries. Danish EIC was not supportive of these Protestant missionaries.
- He learnt colloquial Tamil.
- "Meanwhile, sensing that they were 'more likely to achieve success with children whose minds were still impressionable', Plutschau & Ziegenbalg began spending their meagre resources on a new school, borrowing when they needed more food & coin."
- "Just as different castes & tribes in India chose from a panoply of sects, deities, and styles of worship - ranging from ascetic renunciation to boisterous, ecstatic Shakti - Christians were welcome to do what they pleased. But they, were expected to operate within a competitive spiritual marketplace, not attempt to capture or overturn it."
- Laissez faire attitude to religion.
- "To Christians, theirs was the only bona fide religion; everything else was diabolical pretension to primitive paganism."
- "Because why, he wondered, should he subject himself to the inconvenience of baptism, when 'I may be damned in yours, as well as in my own' religion?"
- Bible offered the possibility of salvation, but so did other alternatives.
- Ziegenbalg's classes were growing restless. Converted only 117 Hindus in 6 years.
- He gathered manuscripts of Tamil texts.
- "... Ziegenbalg slid from learning 'about India' to proposing that perhaps there was something to pick up 'from India'."
- "... to Hindus, on the other hand, heathens were those 'who live contrary to God', with bad habits and morals. And these existed in all religions."
- These missionaries were finding parallels with Christian teachings.

- People back in Europe did not care about this mance. "missionaries, ... were sent out 'to extirpate heathenism', not 'to spread heathenish non-sense in Europe.'"
- White men might corner power in India. where religion & identity were concerned, though, 'natives' could - & would - smoothly continue to repel invasion.
- It was Brahmins who typically provided narrative coherence for this diversity of thought and action, tailoring answers to the askers' expectations.
- The centrality of the Brahmin was widely admitted.
- Europeans started recognizing that Hinduism contained a spectrum. Recognized subtleties and nuances.
- "By eighteenth century, then, the attitude towards Hinduism became a welter of contradictory feelings, ranging from violent opposition to compromise."
- "The Hindu scheme of time alone - yugas, each lasting many millenia - cast doubt on Biblical claims that the world was under 10,000 years old, for instance."
- × "Europe too, that is, was discovering 'higher' & 'lower' Hinduism. And in isolating the first & seeking monotheism outside the Christian tradition, it would soon fix its attention on the Brahmins' most hallowed literature: the Vedas."
- Dara Shukoh - Aurangzeb's brother - was reviewing Brahmin scripture - and longed for a cleric-free society - was also trying to find the world's original fount of monotheism.
- Got Upanishads translated into Persian.
- This was/became the reason for his execution.
- Europeans do noted Vedas. But it featured multiple deities - not pure monotheism. Also, religions & civil polity were mixed.
- Brahmins didn't show these to other Hindus; even harder for Jesuits to procure them. Many were handed ancient looking texts (Scanned)

- most Brahmins also lacked copies. It was written in archaic Sanskrit → hard to read / decode even for those who possessed the copies.
- "It is ironic that in eighteenth-century Catholicism was so anxious to assault Hinduism by stressing the cleavage between scriptural recommendations and actual practice."
- 16th century onwards, Protestants said the same about Catholics. Roman Church banned translation from Latin. "... god's message circulated among the clerical few."
- "All the church really cared about, it was alleged, was preserving its institutional dominance."
- Ziegengesell to Brahmins - if Vedas were really god's message, why hesitate to reveal them?
- Parallel between Brahmin exceptionalism & catholic clergy.
- "... Hindus could not filter truth from falsehood due to unfamiliarity with their texts."
- Lack of access to texts threatened by conversion to other religions, which allowed freer access (Jains)
- Science was rising, more ppl were reading the Bible and getting sceptical. "Corruption in the church too invigorated its critics...". By eighteenth century, Rome looked besieged.
- Reason & rationality were leading virtues.
"If god intended the Bible for all, why did he not bestow it upon every society?"
 - Christianity faced the test of reason.
- "At best, this religion - of human design, not divine revelation - was one among several; Biblical tales were mythology, not fact."
- Reformation - separated scripture from church
Enlightenment - severed god from Christianity.
 - ppl curious about ideas on god in foreign cultures
- "If Hindu texts predated the Bible, it confirmed that the latter was not the key to monotheism, not divine revelation necessarily essential."
- "Simply put, white intellectuals, dismissive of Hindu society in the present, began to romanticize its past."
- Voltaire declared the 'Ezourvedam' older than the Bible, thus placing Hindu monotheism centuries before the birth of Christ. 'Ezourvedam' was a fabrication though.

- Europeans in India wanted to use the vedas to show that the practise of Hinduism was very different from the scriptures. still wanted converts.
 - could use knowledge of vedas when debating with Hindus.
 - * "... a self-serving romance around the vedas - in their impenetrable, mysterious language - among enlightened minds."
 - "It was the idea of the vedas that gripped Europe, not its contents."
 - "They (Europeans) preferred Hinduism's crazy antiquity - where they could fill in the blanks as suited them - to its living reality."
 - Top-down reading → there was a textual Hinduism first, reduced to fragmented confusion.
 - "Puranic Hinduism emerged not because of invasions but through an interaction between the Brahmins' religion, as it migrated with them across the subcontinent, with a variety of local systems."
 - "Hinduism was not a fixed set of ideas from one batch of texts but a hybrid culture of overlapping encounters."
 - foreigners would teach Indians 'authentic' Hinduism and where to find it.
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- "But the vedas' internal richness aside, history also impacted their place in Hinduism."
 - Their direct presence in Hindus' lives were limited.
 - "If the vedas were unknown to most Hindus - including many Brahmins - so too the Bible was alien to the great majority of say Christians."
 - in more real terms, Hinduism's outlines were fixed by the epics along with orally transmitted Puranic tales.
 - Hindus formed a novel method of linking all kinds of other texts to the vedas ...
 - different Hindu scriptures of varying origins would all claim Vedic inspiration.
 - "... room & board for diverse texts was available, in which none surrendered their validity, while the vedas occupied an honorary head office."

- "Similarly, though the Vedas show little room for image worship, Vedic mantras became an essential component of temple ritual."
- "and yet their role in active religion was not the same as western scripture."
- foreigners idealized a pure Vedic Hindu religion, that never existed.
- "Hindus, after all, rarely sought out an 'original faith': their religion was mixed, complicated & disputed even - but it was what it was; a living, organic, elastic entity."
- "And in their (EIC's) effort to understand the land, they would not only fall back on half-boiled theories, but also infuse these with power and certainty."
- "But even in battling colonialism and its ideological filters - shaped by Christianity, western contexts, the Enlightenment & plain misreading - certain European filters were, nonetheless, coopted. wedded to matching indigenous ideas, these would be recast as, in fact, Indian. It was in these circumstances that Hinduism's current avatar emerged - with one foot in tradition, the other in European sensibilities & confusion."

Chpt 3: Governing the Gentoos

- letter from Puri's priests to Lord Wellesley. The Brahmins were in praise for him simply because they expected the British to be in power for a while.
- the EIC did quiet trade for several years.
- 17th century - treated local rulers with watchful respect.
- "Besides sponsoring courtesans & poets as one British grandee remarked, 'in this country, men who are fond of showing their wealth & grandeur have as yet found no better means of displaying them than by the building of temples.'"
- violin fused into classical south Indian music
- EIC increased its grip slowly. Becomes more like a sovereign nation than merchants. See Dalrymple - many faced resistance from Marathas and others in the south. Amitav Ghosh also talks about this in Enslaved & Stages.
- Company was quite dependent on Indian Bankers.
- There was, however, uncertainty & stress for the British. Caution towards Hindu institutions & cultural centres. When they took Orissa from Marathas, were super respectful of the Jagannath temple.
- "Profits from the pilgrim economy were too lucrative..."
- "White men became guardians of gods, managing festivals & religious endowments..." happened in Puri, Madras shrines...
- "By 1830s, British Civil servants would be watching over 7500 temples in just their peninsular territories."
- "An army could dominate, but not sustain conquest; so the British would have to compensate by filling Hindu dynastic shoes as seamlessly as possible."
- mask the Company's alien origins by posing as custodians of legitimate authority. Won over the Peshwas, installed a dummy Maratha King, who the Peshwas had previously defeated.

- Thomas Munro - middle path. "Indians might accept foreign domination if those foreigners made an effort ... to respect their customs & mores." Munro seems to be an outlier though.
- When British failed in these aspects, led eventually to anti-colonial mobilization. This particularly affected Hindu identity. → Hindu nationalism.

- Warren Hastings (1732-1818) had tried something similar. came to make a fortune. became governor of Bengal in 1772, the EIC's first governor general.
- The company was in debt. Some individuals prospered & Bengal suffered. Famine.
- Hastings had to clean up the mess. alienated his own officers with reforms. Didn't want to be at odds with the people of Bengal.
- a system "Indian enough to please its subjects but comprehensible to its (white) masters as well..."
- Bengal had a khichadi of religious beliefs, idol worship & meat & tobacco consumption among its Brahmins. No geographical uniformity for a caste's status.
- "From the start then, the British were in for disorientation; they had to shape policy when they could barely grasp whom they were serving." classic 'lack of legibility' problem from seeing like a state.
- most British didn't interact with ppl; relied on intermediaries; got half-knowledge.
- Governed through paper work, rather than open face-to-face interactions.
- Petitions: absence of meaningful dialogue with Indians.
- The corporate character of British authority puzzled Bengalis ... no king.
- Had to behave more like 'settler bureaucrats' from omit varna.
- Hastings cast a European gaze upon Indian society. wanted to resurrect original principles to help manage a complex society.
- What was Hindu law? There was no such thing. Things were context dependent.

- "For most Hindus did not live by lawbooks (shastras) in a language few could read."
- The law was "dynamic territory".
- "if the law resided in books, 'only the learned' would know them; handed down orally, 'everyone is fully informed'."
- "...the British sought order, while those living in India already possessed a familiar, evolving system; from their perch, they already had order."
- "Indeed, it wasn't even the case that justice was dispensed at all times by the same memorities. For Indians 'lived in several penal jurisdictions': of king, village, caste, guild and so on - no one asserted a monopoly."
- Hastings → "texts referred to by a minority of Hindus were repackaged as the 'law' of its totality; legal traditions limited to scholarly Brahmins were now deployed as the primary means to read 'Hindu law' in 1800."
- there were similar "centralized Peshwa-era innovations", that faced resistance.

- "to truly recognize laws among Hindus, the British would have had to draw on invisible norms."
- Nathaniel B. Halket's 'A code of Gentoo Laws' (1776)
- First natives would adjust a bit & British judges did overly emphasize Sanskrit verse.
- post-Hastings age: British attitudes changed, and examine native participation.
- while many judges relied on pandits, who put the text in context, more began to interpret & apply 'Hindu law' themselves.
- Hindu law applied to Sikhs & Jains for many years.
- "Eventually, then, 'Hindu law' became less about Hindus, more about white men & their apprehensions."
- Purushottam Agarwal: "the British did not cut the cloth to fit the body but cut the body to fit the cloth."
- "The British had gone astray, legislating before they were acquainted with the real state of things."
- "only when the Company's attitude stiffened ... did Hindus turn militant in their opposition."

- Bajirao II. Maratha satraps against him. First takes British support. Then fights against them with the satraps ... and loses. Caught & exiled.
- Got a good pension. Even started lending to the British after a while.
- "Innately, British imperialism also in India saw also the rise of a Brahmin collaborator class, serving & aiding the conquerors."
- Southern kingdoms employed mobile Brahmin professionals
- 1650s Madras - Brahmin officials wielding extraordinary influence.
- GIC put Brahmins in executive posts.
- "Company Raj also enabled a Brahmin Raj."
- Brahmins supplied a majority of shersistras (head clerks) in the revenue offices. (mid 17th century)
- "For if the 'native, soldiery' spilled blood in battle, men of priesthood showed a matching clerical 'devotion' - all for 'a strange race' sitting in the seat of the rulers!"
- "The wonder would not last though: In time, Brahmins would become leading promoters of nationalism in India."
- It is a British narrative that "the Hindu religion was 'orthodox & universal', till it was 'raided' by 'the armies of Mahomedanism' - an early voicing of what is the cornerstone of Hindu nationalist history today."
- Image: 1847, Hindu priest blessing the British flag.
- British viewed as new rajas - Brahmin presence in Company offices - knack for survival.
- 1780s - King from Tanjore - despite having backing by chief people, had to get his status approved through Brahmin Shastras. When he 'didn't show enough knowledge of Hindu law', it was reason enough for the company to depose him.
- Brahmins may be induced to sanction any wish of the British'; it was possible to find in 'Hindu law' whatever suited the needs of power."
- On the flip side, kings used the Britishers' half-baked understanding of Hindu law to their advantage.

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- "... where Hindus and various forms of self-conception, sometimes in tension with one another, the government's approach empowered religion as an overarching, unifying principle."
- * This guy uses 'EIC', British, govt-interchangeably!
 - ALSO keeps going back & forth time-wise.
 - "The British intended enumerative exercises to help them 'see' India better; they ended up enabling Indians to see themselves in novel forms"
 - "Now, though, Hindu thinkers could focus more & more on what made them a single grouping; to construct unity despite diversity."

Chpt 4: An Indian Renaissance

- Serfoji II of Tanjore (1800) knew his english literature.
- "Hindu prince surrounded by the outward appurtenances of European modernity."
- on Serfoji: "passed his life in a course of rational amusement & study."
- "But another device to craft legitimacy was supporting the temple & its patronage networks, much like the British would do with Jagannath in Orissa."
- "...he was enacting a 'traditional' Hindu expression of kingship, anchored in religion and dynastic glory."
- Serfoji inaugurated the 'Tanjore Renaissance' & the 'Tanjore Enlightenment'.
- Institutions for Vedic studies & those for European education. Serfoji himself taught in Tamil, Marathi, Telugu, Persian and English.
- "these rules were relaxed; orphans & disabled children were admitted; & food & board provided to all in need of it." (abt educational institutions).
- embedded facts in folklore. e.g. "what planes revolve around the sun?"
"You know the cosmology of the Puranas. Listen! I shall tell you a cosmology and geography different from that one." Went on to explain copernican ideas in the play.
- similarly, another poem from this court mixed biblical narrative with bones & muscles in the body, 90 species of trees in the Tamil countryside, lists of insects, varieties of rice cultivated in the region ...
- The Sarasvati Mahal library.
Western languages, Indian manuscripts, European music. Collection of a single productive mind.
- "knowledge accumulated was intended for as wide a dissemination as possible."
- went about human anatomy. Didn't shy away from dissecting a human body.

- Botany too. Plants from China & America.
- Did this while maintaining & building temples.
- "This meant that all at once, ~~serfoji~~^{serfoji was as} a 'good' Hindu, voiding deracination but equally he was at ease with the modern world, dominated by the West & its ideas."
- "Serfoji's example demonstrates how Indians were capable of identifying 'progress' without becoming anglicized inside out."
- Little was carried forward after he died in 1832.

- F.W. Ellis (1777 - 1819) also innovated like ~~serfoji~~. He was a company official who produced a Tamil text "The Legend of the Cow-Pox" where cowpox pustules (for inoculation) were one of the sacred produces from the cow.
- "Eighteenth- & early nineteenth-century officials, on the other hand, were keen not so much to Christianize India - their appetite to know the country stemmed more from wanting to better rule it."
- Richard Drayton quote: "Service to the cause of knowledge lent dignity to an enterprise which might have appeared otherwise as mere plodding and opaque."
- White officials launched a romance with ancient India and its mysteries.
- "It was through British inquiries that Ashoka was recentered not just as one of India's most distinguished rulers, but as a global luminary, his influence as a patron of Buddhism felt as far as China."
- William Jones - Sanskrit doctor from Greek history was Chandragupta, Ashoka's grandfather. "Placed the country's past in a rational time frame & chronology."
- Jones translated Mahavirji into English.
- Also poetry: he 'discovered the poems of Pindar, and Platoo of the East'.
- Kalidasa - oriental Shakespeare.
- H.T. Colebrooke (1765-1837) ... was able to say that the Vedic religion preceded Buddhism, and that Hinduism as it later evolved was no reversion, but the novel Puranic system.

- but Wilson was convinced that there was no need to journey beyond Sanskrit to know India.
- "While Sanskrit mattered, Wilson's statement is also to argue that Europe might only be unravelled via Latin, casting aside regional languages and their historical and religious material."
- translators also censured according to Victorian values.
- Hindus in dialogue with the British took part in & influenced Orientalism.
- Indeed, in what was an unforeseen byproduct of modern Orientalism, European researchers contributed to a steady ballooning of Indian confidence.
- James Tod (1782-1835), ... built up glamorous image of Rajputs in India's north-western deserts as warriors, seeing in them a spirited people, rising throughout history to defend faith & freedom.
- Ended up making Hindus proud of their ancestors. Accelerated the formation of modern identities & the Hindu self-image.
- "and just as Scindia creatively wed modern ideas to tradition as a prince, his countrymen would strategically seize on Orientalist learning to assert political individuality as a people."
- The Bhagavad Gita satisfied the Enlightenment-era trend too of finding monotheism in the East.
It received acclaim in the West as a window into uncorrupted Hindu spiritual thinking.
- Of the world's great scriptures, only the Gita is set on a battlefield. Why must Arjun fight.
→ becomes ammunition for Hindu elites fighting the Raj.
- By 1918, officials would be describing the Gita as a text-book for the mental training of revolutionaries in the country.
- Twenty-century groups actively venerated the Gita as a totem of Hindu nationalism, and as a text to surmount differences of sect and caste.
- "Western inquiries into their past would allow Hindus to slowly attempt telling their own story, and in forms and ways that put them on the road to asserting nationality."

- Berasts in late-eighteenth century had vidyalayam. But taught stuff like "South Pole was one perch of the tortoise & Hindus reckoned more the weight of the world." In the post-Enlightenment world, Puranic material was about as reliable as in knowing the world as Greek mythology. The EIC funded these Hindu colleges though.
- The EIC discussed pros & cons of modern education for natives. They may not react if they have modern education.
- "Through the first half of the nineteenth century, then, the British oscillated between promoting 'traditional' learning & introducing Western ideas, struggling to master the two."
- "If on the British side, powerful interests wished to use Sanskrit, impart western ideas to elites through this medium & leave them to filter down, influential 'natives' wanted direct access to English."
- Many natives equated mastery over English to progress. They would pay for English. Indians picked up English but without imbibing seriously western ideas. Hopes of employment. Company retirees also ran language centres sometimes.
- "The jibe that English education produced an army of clerks was incorrect; it would generate 'political leaders, professional men, and intellectuals' - not unlike Setoji."
- Macaulay wanted "A class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect."
- British wanted native intermediaries to pass on the new knowledge. There was a class of English-speaking natives that transmitted new knowledge in native language.
- These people didn't mindlessly mimic the West. They aspired to an Indian modernity.
- many missionary schools that taught English. & Natives not concerned about conversions. Soon Hindus were using their new-found skills to defend their religion.
- Native students accepted education minus direct religious baggage.

- "Hindus, that is, desired enlightenment, but rejected the offer of Christian enlightenment."
- different things served different purpose.
- "The two occupied separate compartments, and one could continue to value the Puranas as religious tradition while accepting contradictory scientific information in other respects"
- "By the end of the nineteenth century, in fact, Hindus would actively consume works by Western thinkers who marshalled science and reason in attacking Christian scripture."
- Max Muller (1823-1900) wrote of the Vedas as the root of Hinduism.
- "Or as a colleague wrote to Muller, 'Your work will form a new era in the efforts for the conversion of India ... by enabling us to compare that early false religion [of the Vedas] with the true!'"
- third element in the remaking of Hinduism in the nineteenth century, next to Orientalism and modern education: spectacular conflict with missionaries.

Chpt 5 : For God and Country

- Maharaja Duleep Singh (1838-93), leader of the Sikhs, converted to the Christian faith.
- on conversions - "it would be a victory to eclipse even the glories of Plassey."
- Duleep Singh eventually returned to Sikhism. He was placed in circumstances that made him convert in the first place.
- the British thought that there was no chance of Duleep Singh's restoration; he was severed from his land, his subjects and culture.
- Dalhousie ~1850 (governor general) conceived of the British empire as a means to disseminate the holy word also.
- "Dalhousie, of course, did his best to push this vision until his term ended in 1856. And then the country responded: within a year of his departure, India erupted in revolt."
- "Empire was no longer about men doing politics. It became a holy mission entrusted to the British, and it was the Company's duty to spread the Christian message - even if whole kingdoms fell in the course of this august pursuit."
- In early 1700s, the company men - fixated on profits - were not enthusiastic about complicating commerce with religion.
- Many interest groups wanted Britain to export Protestant Christianity as well.
- "What the country needed was purpose. 'Civilising' its eastern subjects fit the bill - and the Bible, carried not far behind the Company's guns, offered the apparatus."
- Self image of the west as natural leaders.
- "demonstrable piety became a currency for social mobility."
- "Even as the British were remaking India, then, India would catalyse a fresh impression of Britishness."
- Charles Grant (1746-1823). Proposed government support for Christian missionaries.

- Grant was one first to use the term 'Hindooism'
- wanted the British to push a reformation of the morale if they wanted to govern India.
- Grant's proposal did not fly. Lord Cornwallis in 1793 → "to meddle with their religion would jeopardize security." Company's security rested on native troops.
- company men were Christians but not Christian enough to let faith dictate matters of state. Politics prevailed over faith.
- Grant, however, worked on his cause for another two decades.
- "Even as orientalists sang of the glories of ancient India, its philosophies and (Sanskrit) literature, this parallel crop of men were producing material that was 'awful' in its ethnocentric bigotry, casting Hindus as a class of infant-murdering, wife-burning debauchees, in desperate need of reform."
- Grant tried to escalate the matter in Parliament in 1793 with help from William Wilberforce - celebrated for his campaign against slavery & who proclaimed Hinduism a 'grand abomination' but EIC's charter was renewed without the so-called 'pious clause'.
- Victorian Britain was more urban and had a bigger working class. Evangelical Christianity.
- rise of a 'religious public': a large segment of laypeople interested in faith, and keen to serve.
- The EIC let a fair amount of evangelical activity pass.
- Vellore ~ 1806 - rumours that redesigned uniforms were a scheme for mass conversions.
- 1813 charter renewal - public support for the 'pious clause'. Govt in Britain still suspicious of freelance missionaries. Got enough petitions.
- 1813: clause on religious and moral improvement. British public was signing these petitions because they were reading journals & travelogues with exaggerations on how barbaric Hindus were.
- Colougue & coloured picture of India.
- Claudius Buchanan: wrote abt Sati
- "Such writing was oriented towards a broad goal: a change in company policy, making full use of the power of shame."

- "The appeal of this literature is clear: it entertained and shocked, but most importantly, underlined the belief that the British - with the Bible - were obliged to lift up the world."
- "The author too was aware that he was catering to demand."
- Exaggerations and fictional writing on supposedly normal local customs.
- "... Christianizing India was not equated with liberating India; vassals of British they were, and as such they would continue - only now in the good books of god."
- "the 'Bengal officer' warned that missionaries would attract only low castes; the church would grow associated with degradation, not moral upliftment."
- Both sides of the debate portrayed extremes. Either overzealous & exotic or romanticized focus on texts & ideas.
- "This was either a spiritual, otherworldly, philosophical faith, pinned to writings in Sanskrit; or it was, at the other extreme, a wild raft of superstitions, devil-worshipping cults."
- "But now, itself faced with harassment, Hinduism would acquire a new, defensive avatar."
- "Debate would begin among 'natives' on 'true' Hinduism and mass 'corruption'. They too would jettison the amorphous spectrum, reimagining faith as a defensible monolith; as a fortified Protestant Hinduism."
- Increased reading population in Britain: "Illustrations began to appear in missionally publications, to sustain the reader's animation."
- "Given that the CMS journal was a market leader - printing 4,00,000 copies annually by 1824. - its hold on the British imagination cannot be overstated."
- "Missionary writings were not an exercise in academic comparison but a venture to expand the 'religious public': the economic and political backbone for evangelicism."
- "A subcontinent, with a formidable range of customs and beliefs, much debate and disagreement, was reduced, in this way, to an inventory of violent but arresting stereotypes. Again."

- "But perhaps the most damaging of this literary surge was James Mill's three-volume *The History of British India* (1817) - 'judging history' the country it decried."
- There was a pilgrim tax in early 1800s. Earned good revenue for the EIC. Didn't sit right with the evangelicals. 1833 order to terminate pilgrim tax. People on ground were still paying correc years after this order. Tried to convince - not endearing idolatry.
- The mood in Britain had changed. EIC men were expected to support evangelical activities and not partake in local Hindu customs. How EIC men behaved came down to who was on ground.
- 1840: Pilgrim tax terminated in Bengal. Bombay and Madras followed suit.
- "Or as one company man remarked to a subordinate, 'every act' they were obliged to perform in connection with Hindu temples made them liable, as Christians, to the charge of idolatry."
- "Understandably, wrath towards missionaries was on the ascendancy in Hindu circles, especially among high-caste groups."
- "Remarkably, even at this late date, dislike for Protestant reverends stemmed from the insistence that Christianity was the only path to god. The whole of the Hindu world was built on duality."
- missionaries had become a threat. native resistance.
- "soon, Hindu-missionary debate, in fact became grand spectacles, watched by heaps of people. Bombay was the scene of many such events."
- interestingly, Wilson held this debate in Marathi, and took great efforts to master Puranic material.
- Pure Brahmin converts boosted British morale.
- "The idea that people converted for money, to escape their inferior station or from other opportunistic motives did not explain high-status converts."
- Just like race didn't vanish when one brown man joined white missionary church, caste stayed too - Brahmin Christians.
- Critique of British rule: "to civilize 'natives' that is, those 'natives' would constantly have to be projected as uncivilized."

- "Pandurang's criticism of company rule, in fact, marks the context within which the religious entanglements between Hindus and missionaries were occurring. It was symptomatic of a new dynamic in India: the political fight between 'native' and colonizer."
- Indians picked up the language of political rights and justice.
- 1857 rebellion. "...the cartridges were mostly the match that lit the fire; powder had been accumulating for years."
- "Faith became a means to articulate a variety of concerns."
- When the EIC charter was abrogated in 1858, Queen Victoria guaranteed religious non-interference.

Chpt 6 : Native writers

- Raja Ram Mohan Roy to Lord Minto in 1807: appeal that wasn't the company milder than the regime they replaced.
- Ram Mohan Roy → Bengali, Brahmin family in bureaucratic service, knew Persian and Arabic, knew Sanskrit & absorbed Brahmins' sacred texts. English rich moneylender.
- "... this polymath quality would allow the Bengali to cultivate not only education but also a new vision for Hindu society."
- Roy's mother tried to disinherit him. From a young age he was asking difficult questions of his family on custom & faith.
- First Indian to be internationally known while he was still alive. 'the first global Indian'.
- Roy's intellectual journey is fascinating. "... belonged to a class of Anglophone Indians who did not view British rule as a disaster." Also defended Hinduism from missionaries. were known for his anti-Sati stance.
- "over time, Roy also reinterpreted scripture, constructing a Hindu theologic for reform, while calling out missionary hypocrisy. Indeed, when white men hit Hindus with the charge of idolatry, Roy accepted it but also returned the favour by highlighting corruptions in the Christian religion. Orientalists lamented Hinduism's decline from ancient glory; Roy sniffed above Christianity's loss of original purity."
- "... all religions, he seemed to suggest, suffered from insincere custodians."
- "... institutionalized faith had no divine authority."
- His was a radical take on the idea of religion itself.
- possible that his ideas emerged from his Persianate education. Bhakti saints from the early-modern period also articulated similar ideas.
- His reform agenda for Hinduism began in the mid-1810s.
- Made use of one power of the printing press.
- wrote in Bengali to appeal to a wider audience. (Persian was the language of the elite)
- Roy took the "prevailing orientalist wisdom that true Hinduism could be located only in its ancient, authentic Sanskrit texts."
- "Just as evangelicals in Britain nurtured a 'religious public',

that is, reformers like Roy were cultivating one in India: a class that in time would also glaze their Hindu identity with nationalism."

* "The goal, then, was twofold: to teach Hindus that their religion, as it existed, was not actually their religion; and to persuade Europeans - as exemplified by James Mill and William Ward, whose notorious works appeared in the same year - that they had misjudged Hinduism."

- move towards regimentation.
- "Modern Hinduism was not, then, as some argue, a synthetic British construct. It was nevertheless a fresh incarnation, necessitated by political and social crises - ..."
- "The Sanskrit corpus, as we know it, is capacious enough that, with a bit of flexibility, evidence for everything might be discovered in it."
- Roy framed Hinduism as a uniform, non-idolatrous monotheism.
- Curation bias: lines from Upanishads to "honest & tidy profile for Hinduism."
- Roy personified himself as the torchbearer for renovation.
- Roy, "like Protestants, placed scripture over 'custom and accumulated tradition.'"
- tried to explain Hinduism's decline from purity - blamed Brahmins
- wanted to go from corrupted version of religion to pure morality of the Vedas.
- Image / idol worship as a subordinate practice.
- "Deep-cleaned, scripturalist Hinduism that could withstand western censure."
- the ancient Hindu alternative to Christianity rendered conversion redundant.
- "where Roy ended, then, was in identifying a formula to encode Hinduism in modern, western eyes - the English-speaking intelligentsia especially found his Upanishads-based framing attractive."
- 1840, teenager in Kathiawar, no knowledge of English
- Dayanand Saraswati - yet another 'father of India'
- Starts having doubts when a mouse eats away the prasad for Gita.

- Dayananda ran away from his wedding
- And ran away a second time - fully apart from his family.
- Saraswati was more like a sanyasi.
- made efforts to be presentable much later. 1570s.
- Dayananda learnt from cutting experience.
- Disappointed when he dissected a body & found the heart / head / neck to be nothing like what was described in sanskrit books.
- was against idolatry too.
- met a blind sanyasi in Matruva. "... the old man played a central role in turning Dayananda away from a personal quest for answers, into a ~~secular~~ preacher addressing the world."
- propagate 'the vedic religion'.
- "but what is interesting is that this view emerged not from any direct exposure to the British or familiarity with orientalist scholarship; it came from a deep and genuine disillusionment with the world as it was, and Puranic Hinduism's inadequacy to supply solutions."
- Similar people - Ramaiah, Mahima Swami
- As time passed, Dayananda did not hesitate to borrow from Roy's school of reform.
- learnt Hindi, began printing pamphlets
- The core of Dayanand's view of Hinduism was the Vedas. Dismissed the Puranas.
- Against idol worship & miracle stories in other religions too.
- "He realised also that besides restoring 'pure' Hinduism among Hindus, he would have to also preserve it actively from encroachment by non-Hindus."
- Urban elites were more receptive to new ideas & fresh interpretations of old ones.
- "Dayananda clung to his view that the Vedas were the source of everything."
- "He began identifying causes with the potential to unite Hindus, otherwise fragmented into caste & sects."
- e.g. Reverence for the cow.
- Dayanand's gyaanajeev lived on, Brahmo Samaj faded.
- "... Hindu reform receded as Sanaj workers instead channelled energy towards puncturing the hopes of rival faiths; it became a defensive enterprise, evincing a 'patriotic antagonism towards competitors'."

- Early 1900s: Shuddhi/purification schemes - for re-converting people from Christianity or Islam.
- The Arya Samaj → Hindu evangelical movement.
- Dayanand "became the grandfather of a mass-based Hindu nationalism."
- Caste was a problem - Hindus internally divided.

- Jyotirao Phule, born 1827, Mali caste
- Marathi school first. In his teens, went to a Christian mission school that taught in English.
- That was the seed for "modern - India's great anti-caste ideologies."
- "Phule's life, in fact, exemplifies one of those little discussed consequences of colonialism in India: the political mobilization of subordinate castes, which successfully utilized British rule to bargain for just treatment from their traditional superiors."
- Phule "learnt from missionaries but adapted their strategies to his own anti-caste activism."
- Jyotirao taught his wife, Savitribai, started a girls' school that was open to all castes.
- Disowned by their family.
- Later had to make separate classes/sections for upper & lower castes.
- Savitribai - childless, educated woman who rejected domesticity - often pelted with stones & dung as she walked to work.
- Used British criminal law to their advantage, which did not discriminate between castes.
- Social liberation seemed more urgent to Phule.
- "Caste was foundational to Hindus because their society was 'order-oriented' rather than 'justice-oriented'."
- Phule's writing themes - education as passport to wisdom.
- Argued that Sudras alone were India's true 'natives'. Framed it as Aryans (Brahmins) v/s India's natives (Sudras).
- British India - governance was usually outsourced to Brahmins.
- "To attain social justice, Phule was willing to subordinate political liberty."

- Had founded the Satyashodak Samaj.
- The strongest thrust for Phule remained education.
- "As the twentieth century approached, Hinduism & Hindus were in a state of flux. Many felt that pressure for change, both to resist colonialism and to forge a nation."
- Ray: Hinduism as a coherent world religion before western audiences.
- Dayananda: emergent Hindu nationalism; action in service of the cow and in opposition to Muslims and missionaries.
- Phule: anti-caste activism
- "But what of the great mass of ordinary Hindus? Many found Ray's presentation attractive, even if, without irony, they continued to patronize temples and Puranic beliefs. With Dayananda, they saw practical value in a muscular identity, even if violence was discomforting. As for Phule: caste was simply too entrenched. For the most part, Hindus would, therefore, pay this mahatma homilies, cordially ignoring his scalding radicalism. The advent of a nationalized Hindu identity, then, was riddled with inconsistencies."

Chpt 7 : Drawing Blood

- 1908 : mill worker strike "the loyalty of the native component of the police in doubt."
- Tilak was jailed on charges of sedition.
- British feared an increasingly aggressive Indian nationalism.
- Tilak edited 'Kesari' . articles advocating aggressive Russian methods of agitation.
- If patriotism were the cause , even bloodshed was admissible.
- When Tilak's verdict announced , riots .
- Spent many years in Burma prison.
- When he was released in 1914 , had a big following.
- But Tilak died in 1920 , at the peak of his influence .

- Ramdas Swami . meet boldness with boldness and villainy with villainy . many ppl in early 1900s drew parallels between their own time & the age of Ramdas .
- Ramdas promoted one cult of power .
- fusing of politics with religion : Islamic might v/s Hindu resistance
- Chhatrapati Shivaji (1630-80) - militant Hinduism .
- But many leading marathas had refused to recognize Sivaji . could not appropriate the sultante model . In 1674 organized a grand classical coronation rite .
- Framed himself as an idealised Kshatriya monarch rather than a rebel .
- reimagined the very basis of politics .
- "But as the founder of a new political entity & a consciously Hindu kingship , Islamic power was undesirable ; the new space he was creating was 'accessible to all' , sure , but would be 'governed by Hindus' — a development which in due course offered Hindu nationalists a genealogy for their creed ."

- Tilak's generation used "Shivaji" for resistance against the British.
- Congress was too moderate for Tilak.
- Tilak felt that Indians could force a better bargain. He was done with petitions seeking seats in legal bodies.
- Ganesh Chaturthi → Ganesh venerated by both Brahmins and non-Brahmins.
About kindling public energy.
- Annual commemoration of Shivaji.
Used were worship for mass mobilization. To arouse a nationalist feeling.
- Raja Ravi Varma mass produced prints of Shivaji's portrait.
- After Tilak jailed for sedition.
- Tilak wanted to cultivate a Hindu nationalism.
- To count as Hindu: "acknowledge Vedic supremacy; accept that there are multiple paths to god; and that god did not open only one door to mankind through a single prophet or messenger but appeared in hosts of forms;"
- Unlike Arya Samaj, open to incorporate features from local & rival traditions.
- "... Hinduness was reinforced by emphasizing not what Hindus were but what they were not: Christian and Muslim."
- Hindu consolidation → Hindu nationalism
- Compared British rule with 'fanatical persecution' under Islamic powers.
- "If India was seized from Hindus, its proprietorship must also return in time to Hindus exclusively."

- Tilak was against mandatory primary education for girls; opposed increasing age of marriage for girls.
- This was okay earlier, but by 1920 the mood had changed. More ppl stood for women's rights.
- In his later life, Tilak went from being communalistic to having a greater national outlook.
- But, Hindu Rashtra was more important to him than social reform.

- Brahmins v/s Non-Brahmins. Brahmins used to supply administrative talents. They wielded extraordinary clout among Hindus.
- Tilak was uncomfortable with recruitment of Dalits.
- Non-Brahmin leaders viewed Tilak's nationalism with suspicion. Brahmins replacing white men?
- Brahmins were hardly a unity in Maharashtra Chitpavans v/s Deshastha
- Tilak: Freedom first, then do social reform
- Some others → can't wait for social reforms.
- Shahi of Kolhapur denied Kshatriya rank - 50% reservations too non-Brahmins in response.
- Tilak's death - looks like Hindutva is coming apart.
- Non-Brahmin v/s conservative Brahmin classes.
- Hindu majoritarianism prevails.
- "reject the Brahmin who sees himself as a Brahmin; accept only the one who merges with the rest of us as a Hindu!"

- Savarkar. Attempted escape from a British vessel near Marseilles.
- Born in a family of Chitpavan Brahmins - "inherited memories of lost greatness from the age of the Peshwas..."
- Tilak helped Savarkar move to London.
- Savarkar never ended up training as a barrister.
- Wrote 3 books between 1906 & 1910
- Wrote a revisionist text on the 1857 revolt → framed it as a war of independence.
- Savarkar wanted to fight fire with fire.
- Soon arrested in London. 50 yrs sentence. Andaman.
- 1921: expressed regret.
- 1924: British decided to release him. Meant to stay in Rathnagiri.
- Savarkar was a sharp critic of Gandhi; "and in this regard, the colonial government saw in him a useful instrument."
- Puzzling that Savarkar would become a proponent of Hindu Nationalism.
- Savarkar of his twenties believed in a nationhood that welcomed all Indians.

- India belonged to 'whoever is born there'.
- Savarkar was a different man in his forties.
- According to him, Hinduness not synonymous with Hinduism.
- Definition: India must be one's fatherland & holy land.
→ muslims and christians excluded by this definition.
- "he would tell the story Hindus needed to hear to enthrone Hinduism and seize power."
- "exposure to Islam did catalyse the making of a Hindu identity. However, this was neither 'intense' nor national."
- While India's leading professional historian of the day understandably dismissed Savarkar's work as a 'chauvinistic song', its emotional appeal was nevertheless remarkable."
- Savarkar viewed caste as the greatest practical hurdle to Hindu consolidation.
- Brahmin who identified as a "Hindu".
- Between 1930-35 organized many feasts where members of all caste dined together.
- didn't try to accommodate modern values in scriptures. Just discarded the scriptures in those cases.
- Social reform would happen in the long term. Having a shared enemy was the short term prop.
- "Hatred separates as well as unites."
- 1937 → became head of Hindu Mahasabha
- "the Mahasabha would fight not only the secular nationalism of the Congress but also Muslims."
- Savarkar's dislike of muslims.
 - wardens in Andaman jail
 - "Tolerance was weakness, no matter how it was romanticized; when surrounded by intolerant faiths."
 - Keeping Hindus' numerical strength.
- 1936: Travancore maharaja granted Dalits temple entry to prevent conversion and neutralise the missionary threat
- Formation of the Muslim League in 1906 also exacerbated things (want of Hindu majority).
- Muslims of Bengal and Malabar were very different though (from one another). The Muslim league also built its identity on the myth of a monolithic Muslim category.

- Savarkar thought that historically Hindus had been too tolerant.
 - Was irritated when the press considered Congress & the League as India's main parties.
 - Quit India movement - all major Congress leaders jailed. Savarkar allied with Britain. He supported Nazi Germany in WWII. Some Mahatma anecdotes - to treat Muslims like Jews.
-
- 1947 - Indian independence. British left a visible legacy. Partition. Hindu nationalists never forgave Congress for letting the League win.
 - Savarkar spent his last years watched by the Indian government.
 - Died frustrated.
 - "Hindus' innate diversity stood in the way of crafting one identity, one vision and one purpose."
 - "For the power of an idea is that it can germinate and flourish long after its original agents are dead."

Epilogue : What is Hinduism ?

- W.H. Findlay : movements to reform Hinduism a proof of Christianity's success. Re-imagining it as a worthy rival of Christianity. "wishful thinking, but some truth."
- Number of Christian converts never too high, still advent of European power made Christianity a concern.
- Western ideal presented religion as fixed - books, monothelism. Ram Mohan Roy framed Hinduism in a way that was more suitable for western audiences.
- Aimes Nandy : "the ultimate violence which colonialism does to its victims is that it creates a culture in which the ruled are constantly tempted to fight their rulers within the psychological limits set by the latter."
- But while Roy found a new structure for Hinduism, he used the process to criticize Christianity.
- "selective appropriation to meet contingencies of the age."
- But it is simplistic to say that modern Hinduism is 'invented.' Assumes that Hinduism could never re-incarnate itself.
- Hindu identity forming before Europeans arrived.
- "European rule,..., only ripened what already existed in a foetal shape, its conception the product of a different set of encounters."
- Pre-Islamic era - Shivas, Vaishnavas, Sages had something in common when contrasted with Jains & Buddhists.
- "assertion of such unity became necessary only when the context presented itself."
- Hinduism shaped by currents as history.
- u with Islamic power, even if it was Muslim commentators who initially lumped diverse non-Muslim into the 'Hindu' category, the latter appropriated one tag, owning it for themselves - because they recognized value here."
- Fifteenth century : Rabir's writings actively identify Muslims & Hindus as separate types.
- Dayanand Saraswati: path of reform with little western exposure.

- "Communities in general are not concrete bloc; they are 'social formations continuously engaged in self-recreation.'
- Vaishnava Travancore rajas. 18th century - found value in Persianate culture - sought titles from a Muslim emperor.
- 'Return to the Vedas' met orientalist European approval.
- Phule: modern Hinduism was a response to the West, part a strategy to entrench Brahmin control.
- The term Hindu used to differentiate from Muslims, but also Dalits (even until early 1900s).
- "... with the British enumerating communities, size began to matter, in fixing who had the strongest claim on the state's resources - and with the rise of nationalism, on the country itself - value emerged in the idea of asserting 'majority'."
- several anti-caste reforms (one way to stop ppl from converting).