

Cultural Digestion of a less dominant culture by a more dominant culture is motivated by the desire to assimilate and reduce differences by asserting sameness. As a consequence, the less dominant culture is stripped of its distinctive, traditional cultural practices and values. These are now a component of the dominant culture and become associated with it. Memories of origins are erased and, eventually, the less dominant culture disappears. Examples of Digestion are provided below.

Digestions Completed:

Christmas/Easter was digested from Pagans and are core parts of Christian culture.

Digestions in Progress:

Surya Namaskar => SON Salutation (SON here refers to Son of GOD, rather than SUN)

Yoga ==> Christian Yoga (The term YOGA remains as a Sanskrit Non-Translatable)

Significance of Non-Translatability of Sanskrit

In Chapter 5 of [Being Different](#), the author asserts that “holding on to Sanskrit terms and thereby preserving the complete range of their meanings becomes a way of resisting colonization.” The non-translatability of Sanskrit is important for the non-digestibility of Indian traditions. The word YOGA could not be translated into Exercise, Prayer or Gymnastics. The non-translatability ensures that YOGA is associated with its origin and development in and thus preserves the authentic philosophy and cultural practices surrounding YOGA. Here are some important Non-Translatable Sanskrit words.

BRAHMAN	IS NOT	GOD
<i>Brahman</i> comes from root word 'brih' means to expand. The all-expansive ultimate reality that creates all, lives in all and transcends all.		In Judaism, <i>GOD</i> was seen on Mount Sinai who is creator of universe
BRAHMAN is the cosmos and resides in all of us, unrealized as atman.		In Judeo-Christian sense <i>GOD</i> is separate from the universe.
BRAHMAN is not authoritative or punitive.		<i>GOD</i> is authoritative and punishes those who transgress HIS rules and those who do not follow HIS religion.
ISHWARA, BRAHMAN, DEVTA and BHAGWAN all have different meanings and contexts of use.		They all cannot be replaced by <i>GOD</i> just like UNCLE does not necessarily means chacha, mama etc.

ATMAN	IS NOT	SOUL
In dharmic tradition, the true nature of self or <i>Atman</i> is <i>sat-chit-ananda</i> .		In Christianity, all humans are born as sinners due to original sin by adam&eve. Hence the true self or <i>Soul</i> is <i>sinful</i> .
The true nature of Atman can be realised with <i>sadhana</i> or <i>adhyatma vidya</i>		Only through Jesus can the Soul attain salvation.
Atman is present in plants and animals. Hence nature is as sacred as the self.		Soul is NOT PRESENT in plants and animal. In Bible, GOD gave mankind dominion over plants and animals.
Atman reincarnates. Hence the body is cremated once atman has departed.		Soul DOES NOT reincarnate. Hence in Christianity you get only one body that must be preserved till the 'end of time'.
DHARMA	IS NOT	RELIGION
<i>Dharma</i> comes from Sanskrit word 'dhri' which means 'that which upholds' or 'that without which nothing can stand' or "that which maintains stability and harmony of universe".		<i>Religion</i> is worship of divine that is separate from human, has religious institution/authority and governed. Religious rituals are based on events that happened some time in history. Hence all Abrahmic religions i.e., Judaism, Christianity and Islam are history-centric.
Dharma is conduct, duty, justice, morality, virtue, right and much more. Animals, Plants, Electrons have dharma but no Religion.		No such explanation for Religion. Also, Religion is only for humans.
Dharma is not LAW as law is authoritative.		Western religion believe GOD's law must be obeyed and hence non-followers must be converted or punished.

MURTI	IS NOT	IDOL
Sanskrit word 'Murti' means real, awakened and expressive of divine spirit.		In Christianity, If an object is revered/respected but not worshipped is termed as 'ICON' but if elevated as divine status it is called 'IDOL'. In Orthodox Christianity, icons/images are KISSED, TOUCHED, REVERED, RESPECTED but 'technically' not worshipped. What Christians revere are ICONS while images, murtis, devotional objects were termed IDOLS and not ICONS.
Prana-Pratishtha' pooja is the ritual of infusing the Murtis with prana or divine energy. Its only after prana-pratishtha pooja is offered to Murtis.		No such thing happens with idols.
Visarjan is the ritual of throwing the Murti in holy water to encourage detachment from the Murti ie encourages non-attachment to Murtis.		No such thing happens with idols.
As per Aurobindo, it is not the stone but the divine presence/energy in the Murti to which the prayer is offered		
GURU or RISHI or YOGI	IS NOT	PROPHET or SAINT
Guru is one who guides individual disciple's sadhana.		<i>Saint</i> is one who is dead now and church recognized him enjoying the bliss as promised in Christianity.
Yogis and Rishis devote their lives to attain highest level of consciousness.		Saints/Prophet do not need to meditate or be enlightened. Most <i>Saints</i> were martyrs for spreading Christianity. Prophet is chosen by GOD to communicate with humans.

Some other Sanskrit Non-Translatables are:

Moksha	≠	Salvation
Karma	≠	Suffering
Yajna	≠	Sacrifice
Devta	≠	Pagan God
Kundalini or Shakti	≠	Holy Spirit
Avatar	≠	Jesus
Jati or Varna	≠	Caste
Veda	≠	Bible

Why [Being Different?](#)

In one line, this book is all about 'Reversing the Gaze'. So far European/American Indologists have been studying India and mapping its culture/tradition onto their own framework. In this book author has tried to study 'Abrahamic' tradition from 'Dharmic' point of view and has highlighted the difference between the two. The intention is not to claim one is superior or other but to understand them as DIFFERENT.

Other important chapters and concepts are

- a) Mutual Respect between 'Religions' vs Tolerance.
- b) Difference anxiety.
- c) Why Abrahamic traditions are classified as 'History-Centric' and Dharmic traditions based on 'Embodied Knowledge' or Adhyatma-Vidya
- d) How Yoga can lead to 'Freedom from History-Centrism'.
- e) Why Dharmic traditions are more comfortable with 'Chaos' & Why Abrahamic traditions have urge to set the 'Order'.
- f) Sanskrit & Pan-Asia civilizations, Sanskrit Non-Translatables.

[Rajiv Malhotra's Youtube Channel](#)

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