

# SYNCRETIC RELIGION

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Humanity is perpetually in progress towards aggregation, interconnectivity, and synthesis. We call this "culture"- but the aforementioned are the working parts of how culture *becomes*. Religion has always been at the root of this because it is the main source of values; Values must be shared between people if they are to reconcile their differences and be compatible. This need for reconciliation is precisely why and how religions and by extension, cultures are mixed and formed- This is called "syncretism". The major threat to such syncretization is the tribalism of human behaviour and the intrinsic fear that comes with having to re-evaluate one's beliefs/knowledge about the world.

The globalization of our species has been in effect for much longer than most believe; It simply appears to us as a recent phenomenon because our personal lives are much more impacted than they were before. The exponential rate of technology is to thank for this- It has brought us closer together than ever before, and will continue to do so in ways we can not yet conceptualize.

Problems occur when many people with different cultures must suddenly co-exist, and it is safe to say that our era is seeing the greatest test to our ability to do so. The question for any leader who must pre-occupy themselves with the integration of diverse cultures whose values often clash, is the following: Which values are universal and shared by all?

Whether such leaders are aware of it or not, it is clear that they are asking themselves a deeply religious question; At the heart of this question is a philosophical challenge. First, humanity must agree on what it believes about the nature of reality; Who or what created existence? Is there a God or many Gods? The answers to these questions do not matter if we are to stick to getting people to believe one thing or another. This is because belief is unstable when individuals are free to believe what they wish. The alternative of forcing people to believe something requires much too much destruction and the same instability remains regardless. This being said, it is better to find something for humanity to *know*, rather than to believe.

**We are most likely on the verge of or currently in the process of syncretizing a religion. This comes as an effect of globalization.**

Science attempts to know what existence is and how it came to be, but its method excludes the ability to resolve the problem of infinite regress- hence, anything it discovers about our physics does not satisfy humanity's need for absolute knowledge here. Culturally speaking, we are seeing a mixture of various religious practices, drug experiments, and esoteric ideas- a new age of exploration is attempting to find the answers we need to survive the chaos that comes with globalization. This might lead us somewhere, but we can not be sure. Finally, people are also attempting to form a new syncretic religion at the level of politics- This is what

has been coined as "wokeness". Simply stated, politics are not equipped, designed for, or meant to establish a universal system of values- they only regulated them.

In short, science, religion, culture, and politics have exhausted their abilities to create structures by which to live peacefully, and they all require a new universal system of values to render them all compatible. Especially religion- the structural integrity of the concept of "religion" is much too inadequate, small, or weak to handle the absorption of many seemingly contradictory values. A return to philosophy and meditation is the only viable way forward- nothing is better equipped to understand the fundamental questions and provide at the very least, sufficient answers. The window for this to occur is now, while enough people are rejecting religion and are at the same time, in great need of it. These people are on a spiritual quest that could lead the world to a more basic and stable religion like that of Shintoism.

The question: *Is there a God? If so, is there one God or many Gods?*

Diving into these questions, it might be useful to know that there are some challenges that are not actually problematic to begin with, and have become so only due to misperception.

### **Atheism and Deism are both compatible.**

At the heart of any question surrounding Gods is the brute fact that all ideas rely on the need for an absolute truth: infinity. The atheists revert to an infinity of existence to negate there being any need for God. Most deists could agree to this very same infinity as being equivocal to God. "I think therefore I am" points to existence being shared by all as a non-disputable fact. Where the true divergence lies is whether this existence has conscious awareness and omnipotence.

### **Monotheism is polytheistic and polytheism is monotheistic.**

The Judeo-Christian and monotheistic religions of the west believe there to be only one God, yet display many signs of belief in the opposite. In Christianity, God is a trinity. The virgin Mary is treated like a Goddess, the angels and saints possess supernatural powers- what are all these ideas if not other Gods, whether they are called this or not? In Islam, a strictly monotheistic religion holds on to the angels, saints, and prophets as almost divine. A better argument if this one is not sufficient, however, is their belief in Satan. A supernatural force, separate from God.

In the Eastern religions, as polytheistic as they are, most are founded on the idea that such Gods are only the plural representation of one force, energy, or God. This resonates monotheistically, perhaps even more than "monotheism" itself. Hinduism for example, already accepts the monism of the West because it understands it- generally, polytheism comes with an a priori acceptance of any God, plural or not. The inverse is not true though.

So why is it that the monotheistic religions officially reject the idea that "monotheism" and "polytheism" really have no distinctive difference? It can hardly be a coincidence that the

world's main monotheistic religions share the same God with different interpretations of his ethics and commands. The need for syncretization in Europe and the middle-east reflects this. Adding any polytheistic religions to the monotheistic ideal would just have undermined the stability sought after. This is no longer the case, however. We see Jews and Christians practicing Buddhism, effectively inviting the eastern traditions into the west. Many of the world's countries have religious freedom, allowing people to play with the idea of many Gods, religions, and practices.

The key aspect needed for a syncretic religion to thrive though, is an understanding of our relationship to reality, regardless of one's mono or polytheistic position; Today, such an understanding has become intellectually based due to modernization. These intellectual "translations" of previously symbolic representations of the key aspects of reality are necessary to leverage the common mind into the subjective and personal journey into "being". Such a state of being includes the understanding and dissolution of these mono and poly differentiations, which could ultimately lead to stability and peace.