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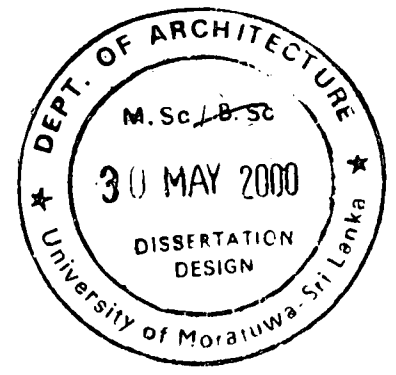
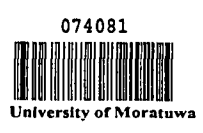
ARCHITECTURE, COLOUR AND RELIGION
SYMBOLIC USE OF COLOUR
IN CATHOLICISM AND HINDUISM

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presented to the University of Moratuwa
for final Examination in M. Sc. (Architecture)
and to the Royal Institute of British Architects
for the RIBA (part II) Examination.

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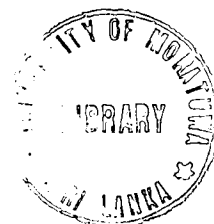
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Abstract

In Latin religion is spelt as *re-ligare* and means a re-link (with God); that is our communication between human and the super human or sacred or simply God.

Ritual is the primary means that makes communication possible between humans and the powers beyond immediate human life - the transcendent. Signs and symbols are used to express his feelings and emotions; thus act as the media for communication. The great symbols in religion are the natural expressions of human thought.

Herbert YPMA claims that, colour is one of the oldest forms of communication known, and we are attracted to it like magpies to a shiny object. Colour is simple and pure.

Therefore colour symbolism too predominates as a universal pattern, and integral link between man and his ritual, a sociological coding which guides his life all the way, a powerful presence, which can never be ignored.

Colour resonates like a raga, musical note, creating mood nuances appropriate to the occasion, causing man to link colour with ritual, laying down certain laws as it were, in the colour vocabulary, to bring the discipline necessary for each occasion.

In other words, colour plays an important part in the relationship of men socially. Colour symbolizes deep emotions of humanity and belief is universal.

Although colour is a basic and vital aspect, which is lacking in our built environment today, it has been much ignored, misunderstood, misused, or not exploited to its full potential.

This study looks in to investigate how color said to be religiously symbolic rather than universally symbolic and how color is generated, nurtured and articulated in the built environment.



PART ONE



CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION



1.1 **The Issue: Significance of colour in Architecture**

"Colour which like music, is vibration, captures that which is most general, and consequently, most elusive in nature; it's inner force".

Paul Ganguin.

The world as we know is surcharged with colour. Nature's own canvas being the riotous of them all, colour projecting moods to keep in tune with changing seasons. Colours and scents are about life itself, the light we see and the air we breathe. They are based on human perception, and mean everything singular to each human being.

To what extent early man was conscious of colours is not known. It is likely, however, that when evolving - homo sapiens man's physiological apertures of colour vision was developed to the same level at which exists today, that early man had the same sensory response to the visual spectrum as man has today. Colour helped to distinguish between friend and foe, between edible and poisonous matter, between safe and treacherous passageways. Colour was not recognised as a separate entity but was taken to be a part of the objects it was associated with. In general, it was a very valuable unrecognised – tool in the fight for survival.¹

Colour was used symbolically throughout the ages from the ancient civilisations to the present day in architecture. The shelters of the primitive people functioned simply to protect them from enemies and coloured images were made to protect them from spiritual powers. It is interesting to note that this use of colour occurs in almost all primitive and ancient cultures of the world and that always strong saturated hues were used; notably red, blue yellow, green, black and white together with the precious metals-silver and gold.

For example, the Astrologically motivated Assyrians stratified their great ziggurats using metal plate and vitrification to assign their stages to the solar system, while the ancient Egyptians assigned hues to the manifestations of a deity system. Perhaps the most spectacular example of an architectural polychromy which is still discernible is found in the ruins of the fabulous temple of Karnak at Thebes. (Fig.01&02) Here, red, yellow, green and blue pigment not

only brought a brilliant decoration to the massiveness of its architectural members but also imbued the temple with a complex and divine significance.

C.L. Wooley describes the 'mountain of god' dated 2300 BC as one of the oldest buildings in history. This ziggurat was built in four stages; the lowest wall was black and represented an ark underworld and the upper walls were red representing the habitable earth. At the very top was the blue tiled shrine with a gilded metal roof, signifying the heavens and the sun.

Likewise ancient Maya and Aztec legends are also replete with reference to the symbolism of colour. Frequently mentioned are yellow, red, white and black in sync with the colours of the main types of maize are grown. Each cardinal direction was associated with a particular deity who helped to support the sky and who was symbolised with a particular colour. The Aztecs, the Maya, the Toltecs and the Zapotecs all had a love of elaborate decoration and bright colours. Comparative studies indicate that the colors favored by the Aztecs in their architecture were also there of the earlier Toltec civilization.

Apart from this series of historical phenomena, modern evidences show striking similarities between the painted treatments of different structures, which display a use of color contrast, that is, hues being juxtaposed and countercharged to control visual emphasis and clarification. (Fig.03&04)

Porte Tom for the most part architectural colour has been approached as a dispensable facet of the creation of the built environment, that is, one which is either ignored or employed as an afterthought. By contrast, our visual perception of the world represents a holistic process; it is an integrated faculty in which each aspect of a special sensation is experienced by us in context with all the other.

Doesburg claims "*Colour is not ornament or decoration, but an organic element of architectural expression.*"(Fig.05) Despite in history and for a few today, most of us are not making use of its power enough. It is therefore felt that ignoring or misusing of colour or not exploiting its full



potential as a vital and positively corrective force would be dangerous to the future well being of the whole mankind.

Built environment is inseparable from day to day lives of people and plays an active role as a medium through which the use of colour can be best exemplified. The meaningful use of colours in buildings not only helps to enrich the quality of our environment but also gives deeper meaning to our lives as well. (Fig.06)

1.2 Importance of the study

It is understood that architects generally think of colour for painted surfaces. The architect or designer selecting from books of paint chips tends to rely on personal preference rather than the colours spatial function or visual and Psychological implications.²

Colour has the ability of affecting human behaviour and the degree of fineness to which it can be controlled is a fact that not architect or a designer can afford to ignore. Therefore it is very important to have a better understanding and knowledge of colour symbolism and its proper application in order to create a more meaningful environment.

There is yet another determinant factor that enhances the importance of such a venture. There are many major religious traditions, that are prevalent throughout world today and has initiated us to exploit the full potential of colour bars to its environment and beings and has paved the way through the historical ages to explore the link between color and the universe.

1.3 Intention of the study

It may be said that the monstrous aberration of the modern world lies in its having secularised the cosmos, retain only its purely scientific aspect and failing to recognise its symbolic sacred aspect.³

This study concerns symbolism in religious ideologies; how colour is used to manifest the ideologies in the respective religions. Religions being many a number in the world,

studying each an every one are a tedious task. Therefore it is intended to limit the scope to two religions, one that has concurred the east and one that has concurred the west; Hinduism and Catholicism. These two have been identified as two religions that has had great influence in man's life world wide.

Thereafter to investigate how color said to be religiously symbolic rather than universally symbolic and how colour is generated, nurtured and articulated in the core of Hinduism and Catholicism.

Illustration of such a phenomenon through photographs and descriptions to convince ones self would not be an easy task, for it is a feeling or an experience that one gets through all his five senses and sixth the intellect. Nevertheless it is a worthwhile attempt.

1.4 Method of study

This study is presented in two folds. Part one educates the reader of colour and religion. Part two concentrate the application of colour symbolism in selected religious ideologies.

Firstly the study examines the social, cultural and psychological attributes of colour and its meanings, associations, subjectivity and moods while outlining the elements of religious symbolism especially the impact of colour symbolism in religious practice.

First part ends with laying the foundation to the study paving the way for the reader to understand the depth of it.

The second part will analyse the philosophical trends in Hinduism and Catholicism pertaining to symbolic use of colour. This will be elaborated with examples in the contemporary world.



Fig.01: Architectural polychromy from the tomb of *Tausert*, Thebes, the sun as the centre of the universe is represented by three ways – as a child (inverted, moved by a pair of arms), as a ram – headed beetle and as a red disc. Worshippers stand on either side. The two triangles represent the black eclipse and blue stream through which the sun passes. (Source: John M. Lundquist, *the temple*)



Fig .02: A vivid cartouche dominates an architectural painting taken from queen *Nofretari's* tomb often glowing with brilliant colour and occasionally covered with gold. (Source: Casson Lionel, *Ancient Egypt*)



Fig.03: The building has been painted as a canvas, with glaring orange stripes of the blue background, gives a feeling of dynamism in an unsympathetic manner. It is neither cheerful nor it is so harsh being blue; but a balance between the two. Also looks rather unstable and stressful. Had it been with a simple geometric pattern or with a single colour scheme, the effect would have been softened.

(Source: *Martina Duttmann, Colour in Townscape*)

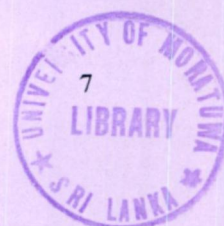




Fig.04: Suddenly when such colours disappears, you actually feel the difference that the stressful atmosphere of the brilliantly coloured building transforms into a cool and calm place with its greish white walls. This would further illustrates the fact that colour does have an impact on buildings.

(Source: Martina Duttmann, *Colour in Townscape*)



Fig .05: Colour often puts in a spontaneous appearance on the urban scene, and it is something to be thankful for whether accident or signal, advertisement or personal record of a fleeting event, the chromatic improvisation has become an indispensable part of the modern city. (Source: Martina Duttmann, *Colour in Townscape*)

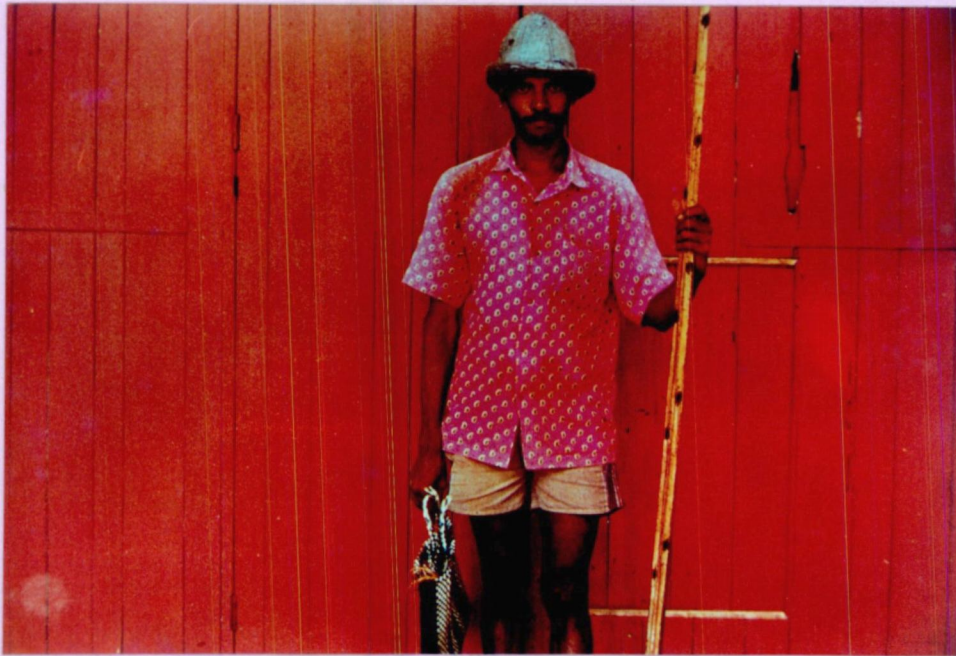
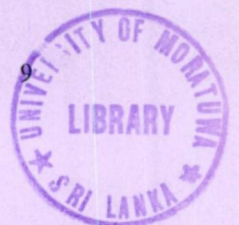


Fig .06: Not only the facades of buildings of the Galle Fort are colourful, but people too, a mix of Sinhalese, Moors and Tamils. (Source: *Serendib July – Aug 1996*)



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CHAPTER TWO
COLOUR



2.1 Colour

The question of the nature of colour has puzzled humans since antiquity and has produced many and varied answers. Leaving the deepest philosophical question aside, the most obvious answer, is that colour is the first and foremost and experience. Colour is one of the natural delights of this world. It is a gift we have received to enhance our perception and add life to it. As an integral part of our perceptual system, colour helps us to establish a desired environment, for sheer physical relief or simply for pleasure and enjoyment.

2.1.1 Colour sense and colour scene

For looking does not teach us anything about the concept of colour.

Martina Duttmann.

Wittgenstein, in his article "Remarks on colour", He asks: How does our conception of a colour relate to their colour, itself? Do we know colours when we know their names? Is colour perception something one can describe in words, colour composition something one can learn by rule? Is there a bridge between the idea of white and the word white?¹ (Fig.07)

The various colours possess emotional expressiveness, i.e. they may appear joyful and vivacious, existing and activating or on the other hand have a quieting effect. Apparently emotional associations also play a role in the effect colours have on us; blue, for instance, suggests the colour of the sky, red that of blood, etc. Substantial associations of this kind have over the centuries taken on symbolic value.

2.2 Psychological effect of colour

"Subtract the mind, and the eye is opened to no purpose" as Echart says, it is with the mind indeed that one sees.

Colour is a subjective sensation caused by light and is not properly a quality, which is inherent in the object itself. It is a sensation conveyed through the medium of energy in the form of light radiation within the visible spectrum. Without an

observer these rays do not constitute colour. It is the eye and brain of the observer, which interprets the meaning of these energy messages and perceive them as a sensation of colour.

There is evidence to suggest that light of different colours entering the eye can indirectly affect the centre of the emotions or the hypothalamus, which in – turn affect the pituitary gland. This master gland controls the centre endocrine system and so control the hormone levels of this system and mood consequence upon them.

Colour for instance, proved to have weight (heavy, light), smell (fresh, enervate), sound (loud, soft) and temperature (warm, cool).²

For example, yellow, orange, red, purple and pink tend to be warm, where as blue and green are cold. However, the shades of each colour of the spectrum can have a temperature which is the opposite to that of its pure colour, a pale yellow, a pale pink or lilac can be cool, whereas a yellow-green can be warm.³ (*Fig.08*)

The emotional value of a colour arises from the psychological effect it has on the human being which is the result of certain inherent expressiveness unique to each colour yet the meaning of colour is based on visual experiences too.

2.3. Meaning of Colour

Studies of basic colour terms indicate that man's first colour –related verbalised concepts may have been light and dark, out of which white and black eventually developed as separate concepts. The first chromatic concept appears to have been red. We can only speculate on the reasons: blood and fire, both highly important aspects of the life of early man.⁴

It is needless to say that in ancient symbolism, colour played an important part in the lives of people. It has a major role in their day-to-day life, the cultural believes, the traditional aspects and the customs of them as well. (*Fig.09*)

Colour plays an important part in the relationship of men socially. According to Pale Russell differing cultures traditionally assign diverse meanings and associations to colours. Red, for instance, is accepted throughout India as an auspicious colour associated with weddings, and love.

In Eastern cultures white is a mourning colour. It symbolises the purity of their beliefs, the death and re-birth of the living beings. The ceremonies related to the death are more religious oriented too to give merit to the dead one.

Indian widows are expected to wear white, suggesting purity and austerity as they cross over the new dimension of their lives. In contrast white represent innocent purity and is worn by brides in Western countries; while in China it is the tradition colour of mourning; black signifies death in the west and in worn for mourning, while in Egypt it represents re-birth.

At the same time red and purple are potent in Japanese magic. The Yezidis of the Caucasus and Armenia cannot stand blue and their worst imprecation is "May you die in blue garments"! Some dislike green for they believe that it is the colour of pus and corruption, but in Islam it is the colour borne by the descendants of Mohammed.

The relationship between colour and architectural form is a tenuous one. The experience of architecture had been extended visually through a deliberate and symbolic use of applied colour. (Fig. 10) For example, the role of colour in the Greek experience of architecture was not simply a capricious decoration; it appeared to respond to an established code of practice. This assigned a palette comprising chalky red, dark brown, pale yellow, bright blue, black and white to specific architectural components.

Climate is said to have considerable effect to do with colour preferences. For instance, a tropical environment is supposed more likely to produce a liking for hot, rich, brilliant colours with strong value contrasts. People who live in temperate or cold climates are said to prefer subdued colours and less contrast.

Islam has sometimes been described as desert a religion with a vast monotonous landscape in the vicinity. Natural landscape is less colourful as the entire is covered with sand and rocks. This has great effect on man, which in turn usage's him to have more colours in the built form. For example in the Nubian north, only rocks and sand were left, but to replace natural beauty, the arts of wall paintings, house decorations and coloured mud relief suddenly flowered in the area. The colourful houses stood on the dull and barren rocks almost as a challenge, as though the people responded to the hostile world of nature by creating another and more beautiful world of there own invention. (Fig.11)

2.4. Associations of colour

Green, for example, can be perceived as violent and exciting, a colour which signals an alert (as in traffic lights), and one which can be associated with envy, disease and decay. On the other hand it can signify calm and peace, having associations with nature and the countryside and a healthy way of living. This wealth of symbolic associations is shared by all the other colours in the spectrum.

Each of us has access to both personal and collective colour associations. Personal colour symbolism influenced by age, gender, mood and personal experience can often be deduced by taking note of our regular choices of non-functional colours, such as those of favourite and frequently worn clothes.

Colours can be used to suggest gentleness and caring, and can be associated with femininity and motherhood. Such associations occur most frequently in the area of packaging, particularly in the promotion of items for the home and for young children. The tendency is to choose pastel shades for such promotions, and designers rely heavily on light pastel pinks, blues and yellows, often with a hint of grey within their basic palette.

It has been generally hypothesised that human personalities are reflected in their chosen colour scheme; an introverted person will be happiest in an environment quiet restraint while an extroverted person will feel most at home in a vivid

dynamic colour scheme. On the other hand their colour preferences may also be conditioned by their social and cultural values, upbringing past experience and associations. (Fig.12)

Another factor to be considered is regional 'personality' and reaction to colour. It has been observed that a red or white car is generally suited to the fiery temperament associated with Mediterranean peoples. While the Stoic, less passionate Germans would usually prefer a black car.⁵

Collective colour associations are more likely to be influenced by cultural conventions and established traditions. Preferences can be expected to differ between one nationality and another. (Fig.13) It is not unusual, for example for the colours of a nation's flag to symbolize the allegiances and aspirations of its predominant cultural group. The presence of red in a flag or a logo might suggest revolution, socialism or a predominantly political party

In Ireland for instance green is the colour of St. Patrick who came to evangelise Ireland in the 5th century. Attempting to explain the Trinity, St. Patrick picked a cloverleaf and explained how three people could be united in God. The cloverleaf became an emblem of Ireland, and green its colour.

Each family of colours has negative or positive associations. Red for instance is not only used as warning signal but to attract as well to repel. Red toadstools, red ladybirds, red poppies are dangerous to eat but red tomatoes, red apples etc are good. The flushed cheeks of man or woman may indicate anger, but they may equally indicate pleasure. Thus the colour red, itself can do more than alert the viewer, the content of the message can only be interpreted when the context of the 'redness' is defined. Equally, yellow can evoke sunshine, cheerfulness radiance and optimism, but the reverse of the same coin represents jealousy, cowardice and deceit.

Green symbolises peace, balance, harmony honesty and prosperity, fertility, regeneration and growth, deeper green evokes tradition reliability and reassurance. The negative side of green has connotations of greed, envy, nausea, poison and corrosion. Blue on its positive side, is connected

with efficiency contemplation, order and loyalty; on its negative side with feelings of depression and detachment, coldness and apathy.

Colour and emotions are greatly interlinked and colour associations are endlessly varied. Some have universal impact some have significances restricted to groups or nations.

2.5. Subjectivity of colour

Subjectivity of colour is far beyond that of what it accentuates transcribing it external realities. It meant to us more than just its aesthetic beauty – for we all like colour. In a full realisation it plays an important part in our daily life.

The earlier tradition of using colour primarily for its signal function to indicate may be status or value, as symbols of his inner life, has been continued even to the present day. There are special signal and warning colours even now; national, school and uniform colours; and colour of the flags of the world, colours for all sorts clubs and societies, political emblems etc. The most obvious example for colour coding is that the code for traffic signals. As red is first in recognition and the easiest colour identify, they use red for 'stop' next is green protection devices, instrument panels in air planes, for control rooms on ships and submarines etc.

Nature provided the perfect colour system with the banana. The outer casing forms a colour code, from green to black, revealing the state of the fruit inside; the most optimistic and friendly shade – yellow – announces that the product is ready to be eaten: the gentle shade of the inner, protective packaging relates to the fruit itself; and the entire object is biodegradable. (Fig.14)

Increasingly vivid yellow is standard for making strike against, stabling or falling hazards. It is painted against, stabling or falling hazards. It is painted on obstructions, low beams, dead ends etc. Yellow and black for standard for traffic read barriers, pedestrian crossings.

Nature has created a danger warning system based on the combination of yellow and black. Some species of bee,

wasp, frog and snake have yellow and black stripes to warn that they are poisonous. In many parts of the world, humans have adopted this warning signal for areas where there is poison, toxic fumes or waste or radiation.⁶

Even the racial groups are colour coded,. For concessions being called 'white', Negroes 'black', Indians 'red', Chinese 'Yellow'.

Colour aids us for instance in identifying one object from another at a glance, as is illustrated when we go to the bookcase to select some familiar volume. It helps us to know whether fruits or vegetables are unripe, ripe or spoiled; whether food is raw, sufficiently cooked, or overdone, whether objects are extremely hot or cold. It guides us in judging many conditions of sickness and of health. It aids us in determining comparative distances. A moment's contemplation in short, is enough to bring to mind numerous ways in which colour serves the human race.

Colour trends are greatly influenced by advertisement whether on television, film, holdings or in magazines. Advertisements are able to exploit colour in various ways: The power of colour imagery, however, is best illustrated in advertising campaigns for cigarettes. The innovator of these campaigns was Benson & Hedges with its use of gold (the colour of the packet) In the various 'disguised packet' advertisements.

Apart from that colour is being used as a visual in the promotion of a company image. For instance, two companies that have been particularly successful in sustaining their identities are Eastman Kodak and Coca – Cola "Kodak Yellow" and "Coca –Cola Red" remain distinctive and immediately identifiable in a wide variety of contexts. (Fig. 14)

Colour is the last decision in the architectural practice. It is used to emphasise the character of a building, to accentuate its form and material, and to elucidate its division.

Colour has also been used as a sign of safety, hygiene or information mostly in industrial designs. So the architects have used the code of for industrial colours (used for making

hazards and identifying equipment) as the colour scheme for the building. (Fig. 16)

It is generally agreed that of all the visual elements in art and design (shape, tone, texture, etc), colour is the element, which more directly affects our emotional records. Our subjective responses to most visual images can evoke a wide variety of non-visual associations, such as those of taste, sound and smell and feelings of like or dislike, tension or relaxation. Common experiences conform that colour can effect our subjective assessment of size, shape weight and distance. Therefore it is not uncommon to exploit colour to enhance a appeal of product as a consumer persuader. It is evidenced by the proliferation of its use in packaging of modern merchandising by today's silent salesmen.

Colour is used symbolically in many ways. But quite apart from such use, there are colours which have a special meaning or which we reserve for definite purpose and occasions. It is evident that there are many situations as previously mentioned, even though we do not realise it, colour influences us subjectively in every happening every where every time.

2.6 Occasional mood of colour

Result of inherent expressiveness colour can articulate, appropriate meaning and mood for particular occasions. That may be sorrowful, delightful, convivial, religious national, political etc. Gold for instance is worn to express jubilation on festival days. (Fig. 17&18)

In Spring time around the festival of *Holi* the tie-dye patterns carry ritual significance. (Fig. 19) Fertility and rebirth are riotously celebrated wearing pastel coloured lehaviya-strips of pale blue and beige, tie-dye with red, on odhinis and turbans. During *Divali* which falls in October or November indigo dyed colours are traditional.

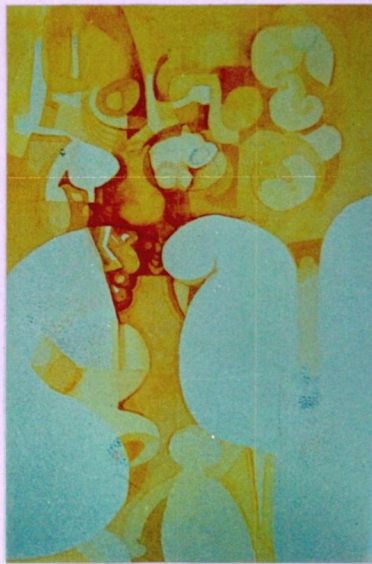


Fig .07: *Pitavana* - Yellow Colour "One meditator, not perceiving forms internally, sees from externally – Yellow; of yellow colour, of yellow hue, like the *Kannikara* flower or yellow silk from *Benares* – and having overcome them, he is aware 'I know, I see'."

Majjhima Nikaya

(Source: *The vision of Dhamma*. Drawing by Bhikku Sumedha)

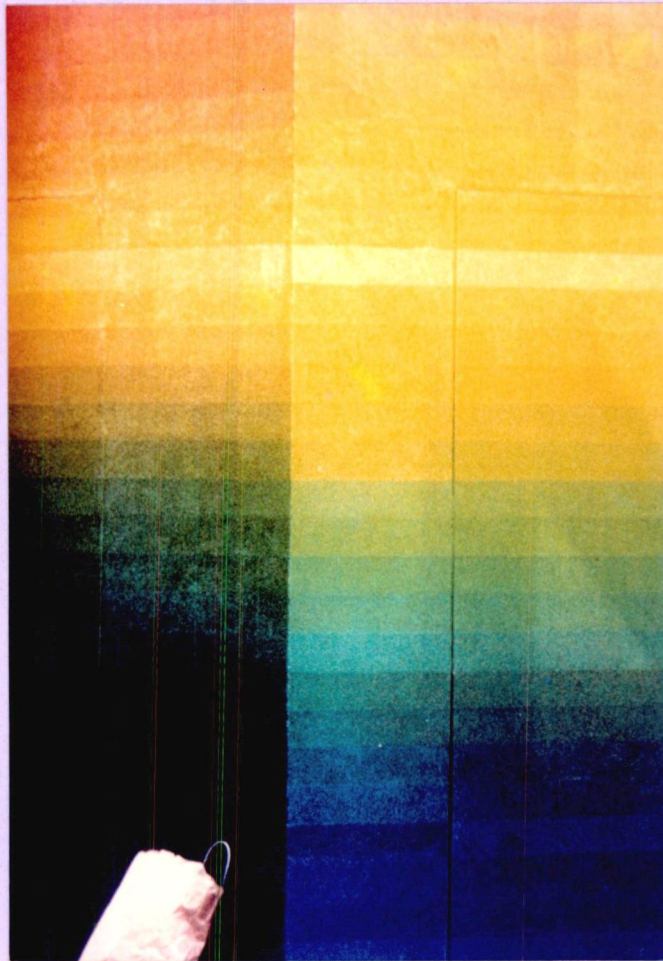


Fig. 08: A Rainbow of colour, painted on the side of a theatre.
(Source: *Time-life Bools Colour*)



Fig. 09: Self-decoration that exists among the tribal communities is a form of identification. Particular styles enabling members of the same community to recognize one another – body painting should be considered a kind of clothing – each tribal group also had a special colour.
(Source: Duly Collin *The House of Mankind*)



Fig. 10: Coloured runic shapes have been applied to a house in decorative celebration. (Source: Innes Miranda *Ethnic Style*)

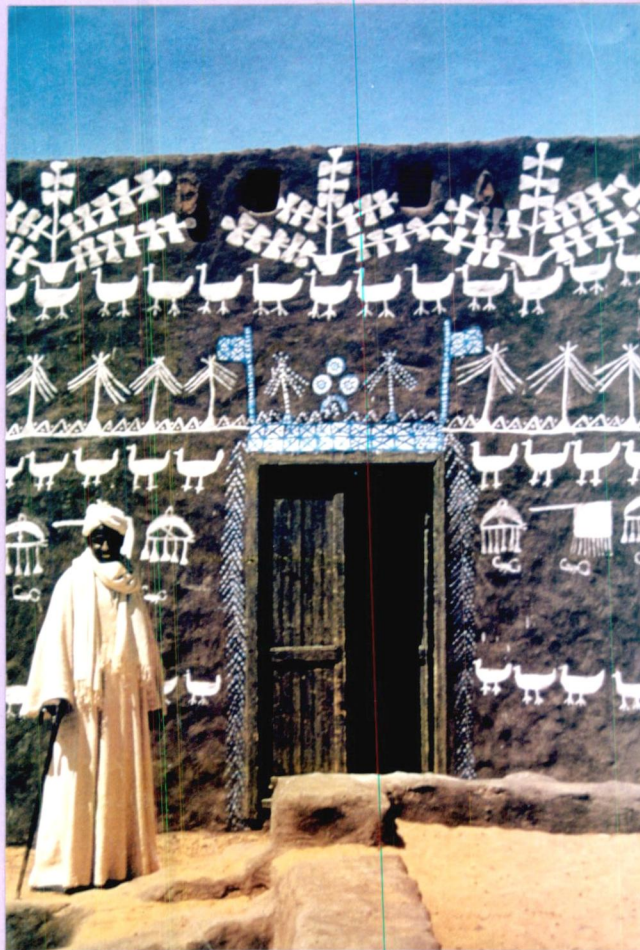


Fig. 11: Lively painting on the inner wall of a courtyard house of the Kenuzi community, North Nubia. Colour is also added to the mud-walled exterior, as well as the richly draped interior. (Source: Duly Collin *The House of Mankind*)



Fig.12: Khaki men in summer colour. The British Army in India used coarse, drab cotton cloth of this colour way back in the mid – 1800's, and that's how khaki found its way into common English usage. It comes from the *Urdu* word meaning dust coloured. (From the Persian *Khakh*: dust). Today the glamour of military uniform is perfectly matched by casual Bermudas as well as elegant summer suits. (Source: *Sunday Observer* May 07, 2000)



Fig.13: Green as a colour is popular among the Islamic world. The green banners decorated with inscriptions from Koran. (Source: *Lloyd, Barbara The Colours of India*)



Fig.14: Fauna and flora provides a perfect colour system.



Fig.15: Lively streets: what red does for London. London is a city dominated by red. The busses fill the streets with it; the countless billboards and advertising signs add their touches of it.

(Source: Martina, Duttmann *Colour in Townscape*)



Fig.16: The colour composition isolates machine parts, obscures their true scale, uncovers a hidden romantic element in the functional, and changes the work atmosphere.

(Source: *Martina, Duttmann Colour in Townscape*)



Fig.17: Four little girls, gaily flaunting the pink of their Sunday dresses, make their way to church. (Source: *Time - life books Colour*)



Fig.18: Coloured saris and blouses worn by Tamil women stand out, particularly at festive events. (Source: McGilvray Dennis *Symbolic Heat*)



Fig.19: Teenagers in Hyderabad, their skin and clothing coloured brightly pink, have been celebrating the *Holi* festival, showering each other with brilliant powdered cerise dye.

(Source: Lloyd, Barbara *The Colours of India*)

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CHAPTER THREE
RELIGION



3.1 **Man and his Religion**

As far back as we can go, even before the earliest written records, there is evidence that religion was a key aspect of life. The mystery of birth and death, the challenge of life itself, has always moved mankind to reach out to something-someone - beyond, in search of meaning. No one, it has been said, can understand mankind without, understanding the faiths of humanity.¹

That is religion? There have been many definitions. Some have simply described it as 'belief in spiritual beings'. Others have terms of beliefs or a description of practices.

For example anthropologists describe religious beliefs and practices as they find them in living communities. Religion helps to unite people in a shared experience and explanation of life. It provides a pattern of human behaviour, often in response to the hazards of life.

At the same time sociologists stress the social dimension of religious ideas. Religion provides an agreed way of looking at the world. It gives the individual a sense of purpose and meanings.

Luis Barragan one of the modern architects argue that it is impossible to understand art and the glory of its history without avowing religious spirituality and the mythical roots..... without the one or the other there would be no Egyptian pyramids or those of ancient Mexico. Would the Greek temples and Gothic cathedrals have existed. Would the marvels of the Renaissance and the Borogui have come about? And in another field, would the ritual dances of so – called primitive cultures have developed? Would we have the geirs of the inexhaustible artistic treasure of world wide popular sensitivity? Without the desire for God, our planet would be a sorry wasteland of ugliness. "The irrational logic harboured in myths and in all religious experience has been the fountainhead of artistic process of all times and in all places."²

It is very well known there are three parts in three parts in every religion, philosophy, mythology and ritual. Philosophy is the essence of every religion, mythology explains it by

means of stories and fables, and ritual gives to that philosophy a still more concrete form.

3.2 Ritual as a means of Communication

Ritual is the primary means that makes communication possible between humans and the powers beyond immediate human life – the transcendent.³

Ritual is commonly defined as something pertaining to religious activities. A deeper look into ritual to behaviours will tell us that a ritual is a sequence of activities or motions that follows a certain organized hierarchy.

Rituals concerned with the fundamentals of human existence – birth, marriage, death and the ancestors, the powers of good and evil – nourish the awareness of the hidden dimensions of life. The works of art created for ritual use is not to measure by aesthetic criteria, nor valued by acquisition. They are essentially functional. They constitute a language, dense, precise and subtle, dealing with abstract forces.

James Fernandez says ritual actions in relationship to particular structures are helpful in our understanding of the past. These structures play in the overall Architectonics of the culture. The ritual procession too, represented a method of territorial demarcation, which was vital to the preservation of a culture.

However the ritual part may be necessary in every religion because most of the people cannot understand abstract spiritual things until they grow much spiritually. Myths and symbols are used to express his feelings and emotions thus act as the media for communication. Myths and Symbols are, therefore, of great help as tools of learning.

3.2.1 Myths

Myths describe the ascent through ritual and meditation to realization of spiritual identity. Myths take many forms depending on the culture in which they are found. But their function is always that of pin pointing vital issues and values

in the life of the society concern. They often dramatise those profound issues of life and death, of how man came in to been and of what is life is really about, of how he should conduct himself as a citizen or husband as a creature of god or as a farmer, and so on.⁴

Myths are not scientific or sociological theories about these issues. They are the outcome of the way a nation or group has pondered the great questions. Their function is not merely to provide a theory of life, which can be taken or left at, will; they serve to compel a response from man.

Furthermore, one problem in our understanding of myths lies in the fact that western religions-Judaism, Catholicism and Islam-are very concern with history. They have founders and see their history as God's own doing. This strong emphasis upon actual events defers from the Eastern approach to the religion, which emphasises the consciousness of the individual. Hinduism and Buddhism possess a different approach to history, and hence also to science.

In the west, history and science have come to function as a framework within which religious experiences are found and interpreted, and won consequence of this is that myths have been stripped of their power to evoke human responses to religious ideas.

3.2.2 Symbols

Religious symbols help believers to understand their faith in quite profound ways. Like myths, they serve to unite the intellect and emotions for the task of discipleship. The power of symbols lies in this ability to unite fellow-believers in to a community. It provides a focal point of faith and action, while also making possible a degree of personal understanding, which those out side may not share.⁵

According to *Swami Vivekananda* everything in the universe maybe looked upon as a symbol and there must be some natural association between such symbols ad human mind.

Apart from this symbols also integrate the social and personal dimensions of religion, enabling an individual to

certain commonly –held beliefs while giving him freedom to read his own private meaning into them. (Fig.20)

For instance the cross of Christ, the sacred book of Muslim, the sacred cow of Hindus, or the silent, seated Buddha-all these command the allegiance of millions of religious men and women. If such symbols are attacked desecrated, and intense reaction felt by the faithful, which shows us how deeply symbols are embedded emotional life of believers.

3.3 Distinguishing the symbols from signs

Signs refer to signals or communication with a single meaning and are used to denote something-an object, a situation, and an event specifically and univocally, which don't under such circumstances carry any additional associations. On the other hand, symbols have several meaning they can be exotic meanings and are used to connote meanings in addition to those, which they may depict. Though signs are distinct from symbols, a sign may be symbols as well. (Fig.21&22)

Furthermore, signs exist effectively in the present; they denote here and now. Symbols exist in the past, the present, and may imply the future. In which case symbols are timeless, though being non-specific over time. (Fig.23&24)

Their meanings may change, gaining or losing in force or effectiveness, and taking on new levels of connotations. Signs are understood by all concerned, but meaning of symbols can be concealed or forgotten or vary from one group to another.

It can be seen, therefore, that people may develop a symbol system that includes virtually all their experiences of the present and embraces their history; where myths are symbols of unknowable past. Though these myths and legends lore and customs of a society and its values maybe transmitted, communicated, repeated and learned.⁶

3.4 Colour Symbols

Religious colour symbols also share these general characteristics, but are often even more intensely powerful, because they enshrine and express the highest values and relationship of life. Colour symbols serve as triggers of commitment in religions. They enshrine the teachings and express them in a tangible way.

In many primitive societies the shared aspect of colour symbols are important as a unifying principle of life. Blood, for example maybe symbolic of life, strength, fatherhood, or of the family and kinship group itself. In Catholicism it expresses life poured out in death, the self-sacrificial love of Christ who died for human sin. It may even be true that colour red can easily serve as a symbol of danger because of its deeper biological association with life and death.

Various traditions within Islam give two complimentary accounts about the colour symbolism of the *Kaabah* in Mecca. In the first of these, a tent from among the tents in paradise is lowered into the earth, fitting exactly the space into which the *Kaabah* was constructed. In various traditions the tent is put into place by the Angel Gabriel, other angles, or by God himself. The tent is fastened with four pegs of gold, symbolizing universal nature in its four-fold division. The ropes of the tent were of silken thread as fire as hair, and were violet in colour representing the emanations of the light of the soul. The tent's central pillar was of red hyacinth. Red was taken be a combination of white (the dimension of Darkness), this symbolizing the divine, which intermingles the duality of light and darkness.⁷

3.5 Archetypical Signs

The creator of the world did not fashion these things directly from himself but copied them from archetypes outside himself.

Carl Jung.

Furthermore Carl Jung claims that what are called instincts are psychological urges, and are perceived by the senses. There are also manifest themselves in fantasies and often

reveal their presence only by symbolic images. These are what are called archetypes.

The archetype is a tendency to form representations that can vary a great deal in detail without losing their basic pattern. There is inherited representation and on that ground, the idea of the archetype as a mere superstition can be dismissed. Archetypes are representations that originate in our consciousness and we should understand them, and not be bewildered and astonished when they present in our consciousness.

Ritual for instance, develops a symbolic language of vertical and horizontal lines, dots and circles. In the art of ritual every form, every action, every surrounding circumstance or event, is correlated. Forms and names 'encircle' as it were, their source, interlinked at their creative point of origin. The source itself is unnameable, pre-logical and pre-formal – 'an archetype of the archetypes'.⁸



Fig. 20: The profound symbolism of *Dogon* dwellings is seldom explicit. These granaries contain chambers for the eight seed types given by God, each also symbolizing the organs of the spirit of water. (Source: Oliver, Paul *Dwellings*)



Fig. 21: The sun sign – determined by the sun's place in the zodiac at the of ones birth – is the astrological designation almost everyone knows, symbolized by the four basic elements of nature are earth, air, fire and water, and the world is ringed by zodiacal signs. Each sign is associated with an element, beginning with the designation of Aries as a fire sign and continuing in turn counterclockwise around the Zodiac. For example, the fire signs Aries, Leo, and Sagittarians are described as enthusiastic, spirited, and impulsive.

(Source: Time – life Books *Cosmic Connections*)

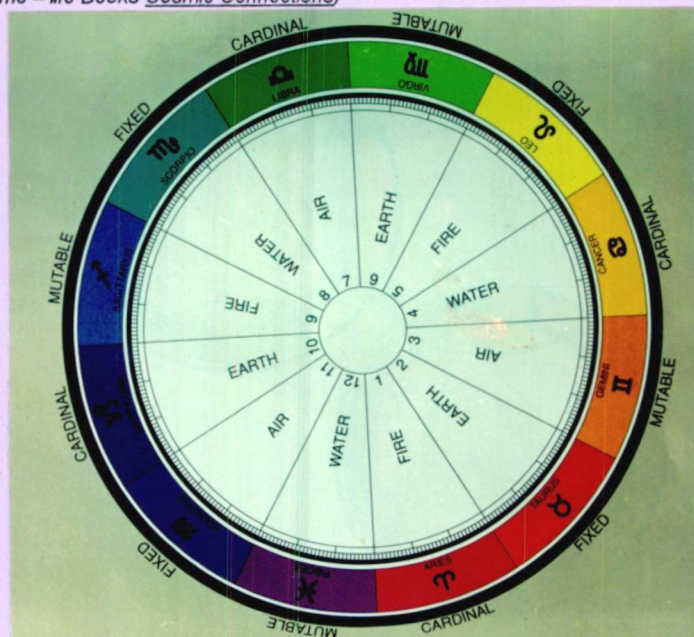


Fig. 22: Each zodiacal sign has a distinct meaning that outlines a range of moods and behaviors within the individual. The essence of each sign is said to be reflected by in the colors that from a colour wheel around the chart. Scorpio, for instance, is deemed an intensely emotional sign, and Scorpios are thought to be interested in things that are deep, dark, or hidden. The signs color is blue – green, the color of deep water, symbolizing those things that one concealed beneath the surface.

(Source: Time – life Books *Cosmic Connections*)

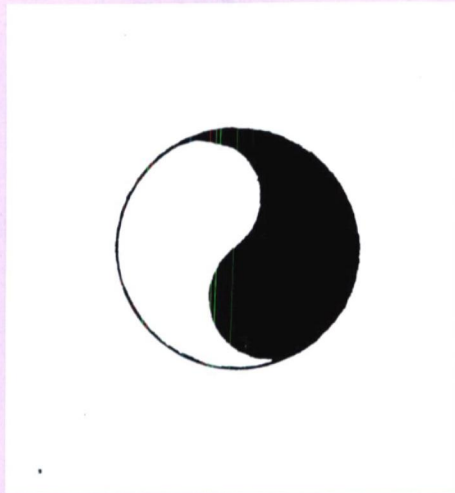


Fig. 23: In Korea's traditional religion, *Sinkyō* Yin and Yang represent the interdependent female and male, negative and positive forces of life, non – being and being. The Yin is negative, passive, weak and destructive. The Yang is positive, active, strong and constructive. Our individuality comes from these opposites. The Yin is the female, mother, soft, dark, wet. The Yang is male, father, strong hand, bright.

(Source: *The World's Religions*)



Fig. 24: In the primal religions of North America, also reflect upon the two-ness of life and nature. North American natives symbolize this by a divided cycle. Nature, presents itself in pairs : dark and light, cold and hot, male and female, good and bad and so on, these are not contradictory but complementary. But the two due always seen as aspects of the one: the circle. They are different, but they appear to us in balance, in harmony, the over – riding virtue. We find contentment not by conflict, but by coming to terms.

(Source: *The World's Religions*)



Fig. 25: *Painted Prayer*, when the occasion demands, as before a religious ceremony or festival, the women have a mental picture and execute the motif swiftly. In doing so, the women goes on to translate that mental picture into a visible and objective image. But god is the theme of all art.

(Source: *India*, February 1996)

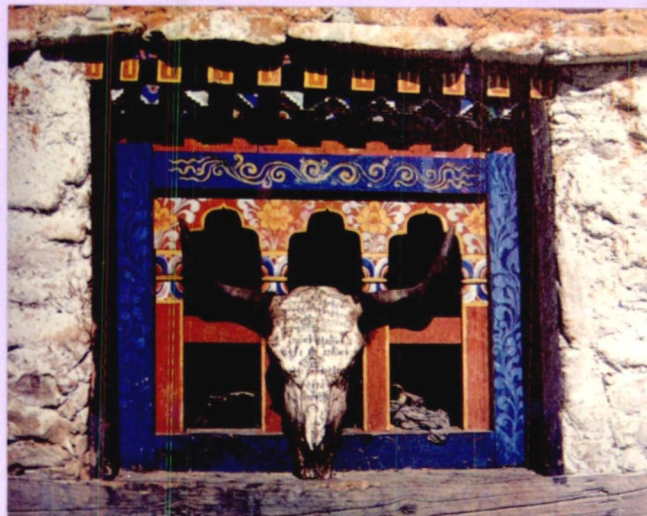


Fig. 26: Imprinted yuk skull guards a *chorten* window.

(Source: Geoffery, *Eu South Asia*)

"For the religious man, the symbolism is not something arbitrary or gratutions, but it is the perception of a mysterious reality which manifests it self under various aspects"

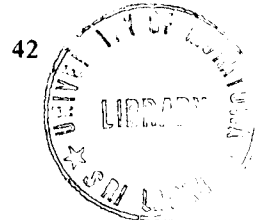
Albert J. La Mothe



Fig. 27: Tibetan Buddhism is personified by this *Gelugpu* monk or yellow hat.
(Source: Geoffery, *Eu South Asia*)

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PART TWO



CHAPTER FOUR
COLOUR AND CATHOLICISM



*the third day he rose again from the dead
 he ascended into heaven,
 and sitteth there at the right hand of the Father
 from thence he shall come to judge the living and the dead,*

- c) *I believe in the Holy spirit*
- d) *the Holy Catholic church,
 the communion of saints*
- e) *the forgiveness of sins,
 the resurrection of the body
 and life everlasting.*

The first theme, which shows that the first symbolic object of belief for the Catholic is God. God is the creator of life and the father of human beings. (Fig 29)

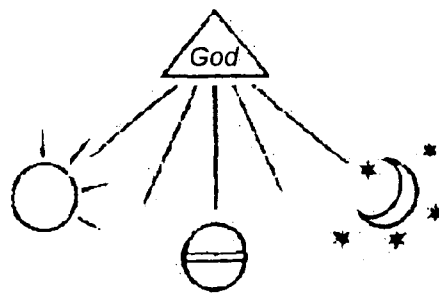
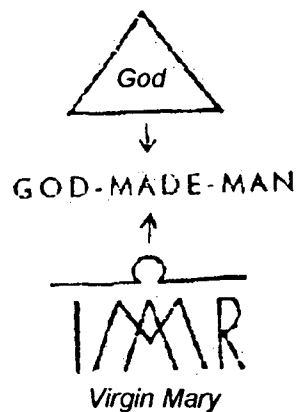


Fig. 29:
 (source: Teaching the Catholic Catechism)

The second theme, namely, that on Jesus Christ, is developed surprising as it may sound, not so much in the form of a doctrinal formulation as in the form of a narrative or story. (Fig 30)



Virgin Mary
 Fig. 30:
 (source: Teaching the Catholic Catechism)

The third theme expressed in the statement ' I believe in the Holy spirit' contains within it the basis of the Christian version of spirituality or personality – upliftment. (Fig31)

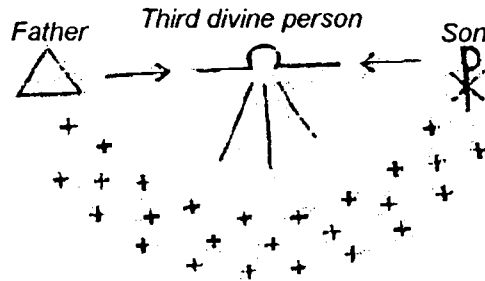


Fig.31:

(source: Teaching the Catholic Catechism)

The fourth theme expressed in two statements, " (I believe) in the Holy church, the communion of saints" shows what the community of Catholics is in its most noble form. (Fig 32)

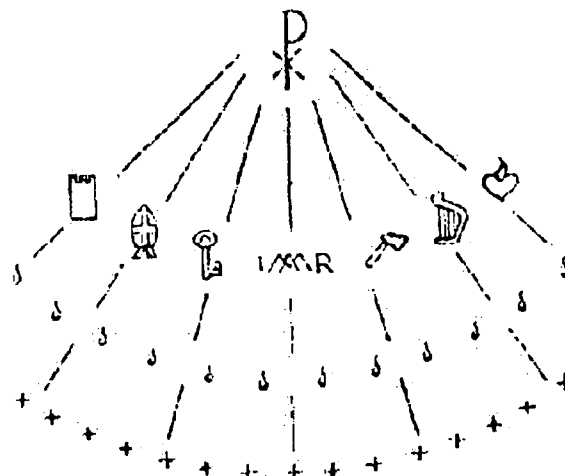


Fig.32

(source: Teaching the Catholic Catechism)

The community of Catholics is "holy because it is sanctity – oriented; it is 'Catholic' because it is not restricted to one race and so, universal. It is the "communion of saints" because it is the Community of those who have given up evil².

The last theme expressed aspects of salvation related to life's fulfillment. Salvation entails the liberation and reconciliation of the human race, the forgiveness of sins, and justification by grace.

Faith is necessary for salvation. The matter of faith is what God has revealed and through His Church teaches us to believe. The motive is the truthfulness of God.

4.2 The Adoration of God – Liturgy

The liturgy may be termed Catholic ritual in action together with faith and hope. The worship that the church offers to God.

Originally, the Greek word *leitourgia* denoted a voluntary work – political, technical or religious that was performed for the people as a whole.

The second Vatican council took a more descriptive approach and gave practical definition for liturgy.

In the Liturgy, by means of signs perceptible to the senses, human sanctification is signified and brought about in ways proper to each of these signs; in the Liturgy, the whole public worship is performed by the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ.

4.2.1 The Liturgical Year – Significance of Colour

The liturgical year of Catholics consists of several seasons, Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter and ordinary time. As Sunday dominated the week, Easter is the central theme of Catholicism as it is the celebration of resurrection, so Easter was preeminent to the year as a whole. The calendar year and the months have practically no significance to the liturgical year.

Color plays a symbolic meaning in every season in liturgy and actualizes the mystery of salvation through secret signs. They suggest the Mystery or the feast or signify the sentiment of the special occasion for which the mass is celebrated. (Fig. 33)

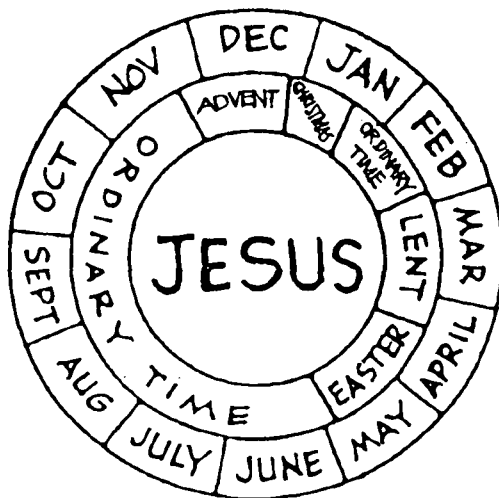


Fig. 33:

(source: Teaching of Catholic Catechism)

Advent begins the liturgical year on the fourth Sunday before the Christmas to prepare Catholics ascetically and liturgically for the birth of the Lord. Advent means 'coming' or 'arrival'. Liturgical color for this season is violet / purple, signifying the preparation for Christmas in repentance and penitential in spirit, and also reflects the joy of anticipation.

On the 3rd Sunday of Advent Pink is used for the vestments and altar ornaments and symbolizes the anticipatory joy in a time of penance.

In the Christmas season there are three chief feasts, called Christmas itself, the feast of Epiphany of Christ and, the feast of Baptism of divine savior.

On the Christmas day Catholics celebrates the birth of the divine savior. The color for this feast is white and gold. The meaning assigned to each color is as follows: white – for integrity of life; gold – for highest celebration or great solemnity.

On the feast of the Epiphany, they rejoice that Christ, the king of the world, has made himself known to all people. On the feast of Baptism of Jesus Christ – Catholics celebrates the joy of rebirth of the faith and it means the person passes from the death of sin into life. The liturgical color for these feasts is white, again signifying the integrity of life and joy of festivity.

During the ordinary time of the year, Catholics observe the vitality of the life of faith. Green is the color for ordinary time and liturgically means hope and the growth of life of faith.

Lent is a penitential season of prayer starting with Ash Wednesday and continuing until Holy Saturday. It extends for a period of forty days, including Passion Sunday, Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. It predisposes them to receive more of the graces Christ had earned through His passion and Death.

Everyone receives a sprinkling of blessed ashes on Ash Wednesday. The liturgical color for this day is violet / purple again symbolizing the penance and the penitential character of the day.

On the fourth Sunday of Lent, Pink is used – to celebrate the anticipatory joy in a time of penance.

Passion Sunday, the first day of Holy week of the Catholics, is better known as Palm Sunday. Marked by contrast, the liturgy begins with triumphal joy during the blessing and procession of the palm, reacting Christ's entry into Jerusalem. Red is the traditional color for Passion Sunday, signifying the passion, of the Jesus Christ and symbolic color of sacrifice and the impact of that sacrifice.

On Maundy Thursday Catholics celebrates the anniversary of Last Supper, at which Christ instituted the Eucharist, the mass and the priesthood. Liturgical color for this day is white – for the new life and the new commandment of love Jesus gave his apostles.

Good Friday now called the Friday of the Passion and Death of Lord. It commemorates our redemption by Christ who surrendered himself totally to His Father's will by suffering death for us. Red is used for Good Friday, highlighting the sacrifice of Christ for men.

On Good Friday in earlier times it was regard as the victory over the power of darkness and the traditional color for this day was black. But today it may be used only in Masses for the dead.

The feast of Easter is the greatest of all feasts in the year. They celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. 'The Third day he rose again from dead' (5th Article of the creed.) By his resurrection, Jesus has been glorified.

The liturgical colors for Easter Sunday are Gold and White. Gold is for the highest celebration of victory over death or great solemnity of Resurrection. White is symbolic of the new life born out of death. On the day of Pentecost the Catholics celebrated the completion of Christ's work through coming of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles that gave birth to the church.

When the day of Pentecost had come they were all together in one place..... And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and vesting on each one of them. And they were all filled with Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongue.

(Acts 2:1-4)

Red is the color of Pentecost, reflects the impact both of Christ sacrifice and his promise of Holy Spirit.

Throughout the Bible, fire has served as a symbol of the presence of God. From the seraph with the flaming sword at the entrance to the Garden of Eden, to the burning bush from which the Lord called Moses and the pillar of fire with which God led His people out of Egypt in the Exodus, to the flames of a thousand sacrifices on the temple altars in Jerusalem, and finally to the tongues of flame which crowned the heads of Christ's faithful followers on the day of Pentecost, fire has always served God's people as a reminder that we have "God with us"³.

The color blue and white are often associated with the Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ. It seems she is most often pictured in that color in religious art, and liturgically also that is her hue – symbolic of a as the source of Christ's life⁴.

Blue is one of the "Quiet colors", and as such it seems to fit the personality of the Virgin Mary as we meet her in the Holy Scriptures. The characteristics of Jesus Christ's mother most often noted are her humility and her obedience – expressing her unique role as mother of God.

4.3 .The Analysis of Selected Examples

Following are selected examples from contemporary architectural sites, which enhances the discussion of philosophical trends in Catholicism pertaining the symbolic use of colour.



Fig.34: The idea of the temple as the house of God, a specific place in which the divine spirit resides, is common to all religions. Catholicism received it from a long tradition going back into the remote past. In this detail from an altar by Crivelli, the Modonna della Rordine, late 15th century, St. Jerome is shown holding a model of the temple of Jerusalem from which the golden rays of divinity are radiating.

(Source: John M. Lundquist *The Temple*)

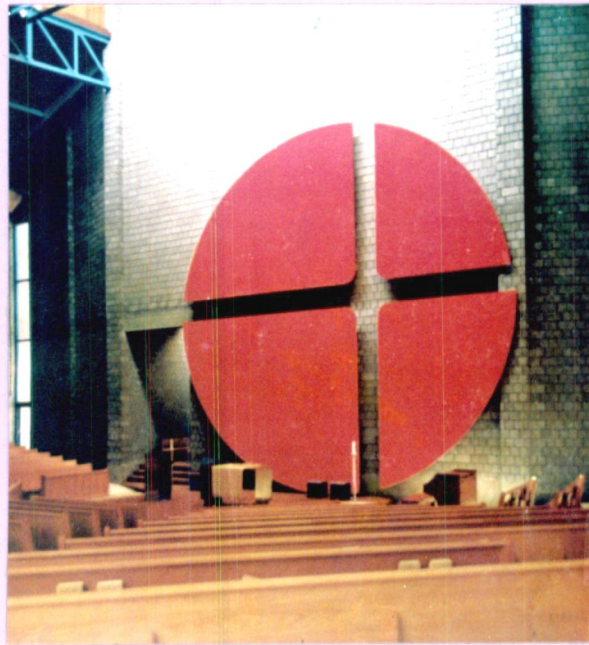


Fig.35: In the case of the Catholic churches, the central focus being the Alter, and gives special attention to the participation of the people in the service. This Alter – is simply a reflection of all faiths in Catholicism. Red colour symbolizes the presence of God, the Jesus Christ and his sacrifice and his promise of Holy Spirit.



Fig.36: &37: The white washed walls provide the backdrop to the cross of black – A white is for the new life born out of death while black symbolizing the victory of Jesus Christ over the darkness.
 (Source: Herbert YPMA *Mexican Contemporary / Pacific Islands*)

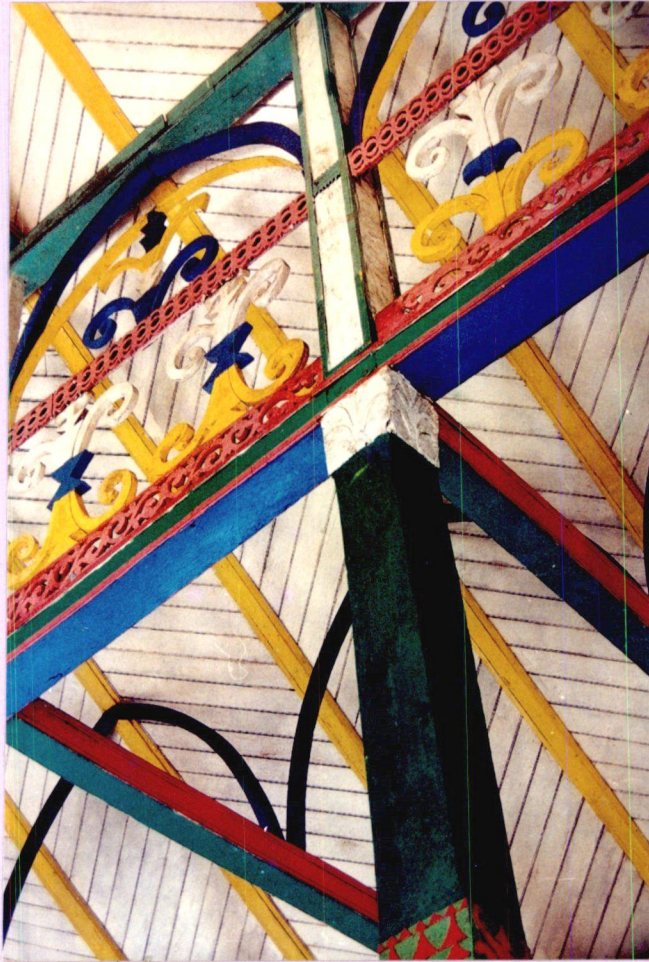


Fig. 38: A church on the island of *Mauke* in Pacific, have contributed an interesting new layer to the colourful culture of the Catholicism. Load bearing columns and beams, which are painted in aqua blues, yellows, hot pinks and vivid green, signify the every seasons of liturgical year.

(Source: Herbert YPMA *Pacific Islands*)

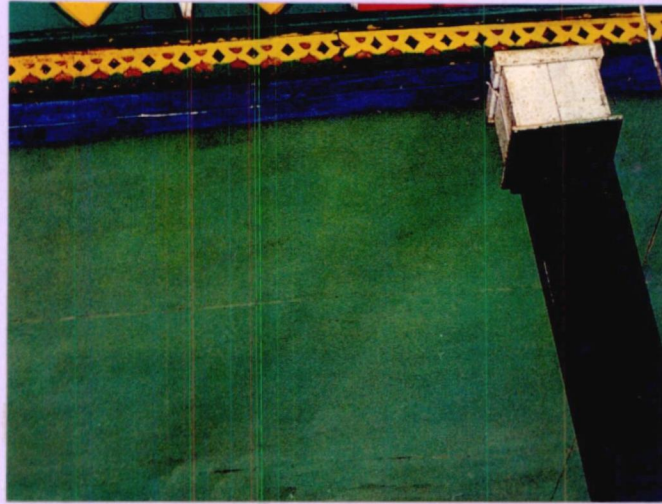


Fig. 39: In the catholic world, green has a deep significance. Green is for hope in life. This predominant green compilation of church interior, help believers to understand their growth of life of faith in profound way and the strong communal sense of colour creates a uniform impression. (Source: Herbert YPMA *Pacific Islands*)

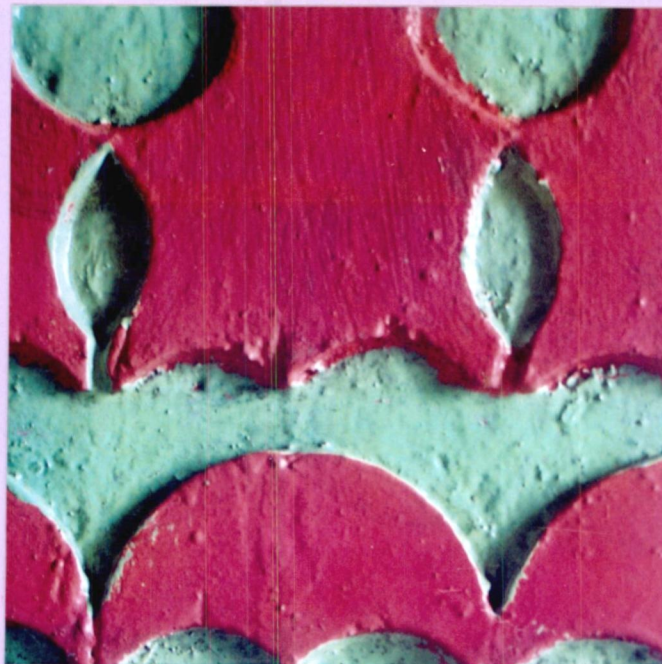


Fig. 40: A carved pillar of the *Mauke* Island Church is painted with combination of red and green – denotes life's fulfilment of Catholics, which, means the growth of faith in presence of the God. (Source: Herbert YPMA *Pacific Islands*)

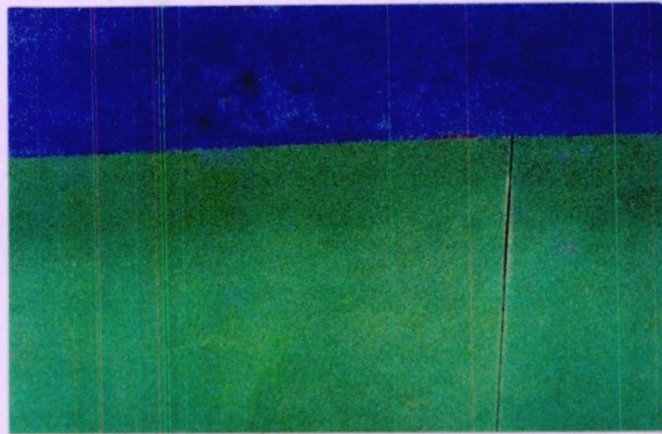


Fig. 41: This interior wall of *Mauke Island Church*, symbolizes the vitality of faith in the presence of humility of mother Mary.
(Source: *Herbert YPMA Pacific Islands*)

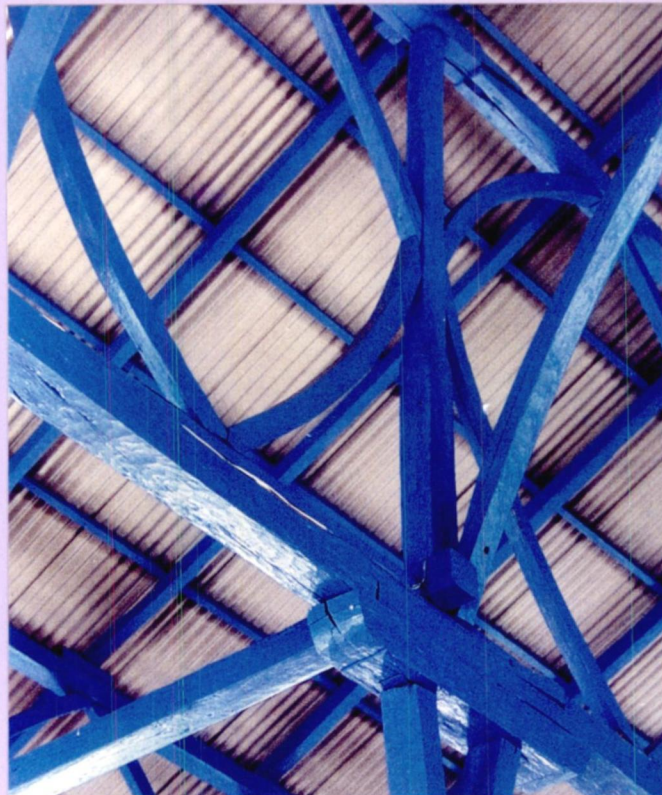


Fig. 42: Church is anything but make quite a strong visual impression. This interior of *Coral Church at Cook Islands*, followed significant cultural and historical precedent. White painted roof cladding supported by impressive blue coloured interwoven timber structure define an abstract sky served as a symbol of the presence of vergin Mary. Express the highest values of her humility and her obedience and quiet and unassuming manner of her life.
(Source: *Herbert YPMA Pacific Islands*)

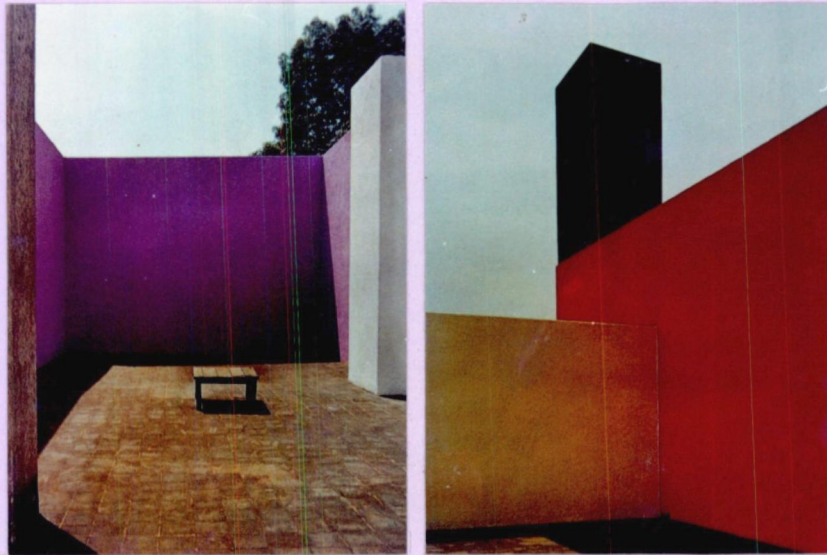


Fig.43&44: *Luis Barragan House and Studio*
– People envisage his buildings as endless stretches of candy- coloured pink or bright yellows. In fact, Barragan gave much thought to the questions of which colour to use and where to apply. This high terracotta – red – purple walls define the space of an abstract roof, is an open invitation to contemplation and penitential in spirit.

“Mythology and Religion were central to Barragan’s view on architecture ”.
(Source: RISPA RAUL Barragan)



Fig. 45&46: In a quiet corner of the library, beneath a yellow painting, the colour of great solemnity. Barragan would pray several times a day at this 'minimal altar'.
(Source: *RISPA RAUL Barragan*)

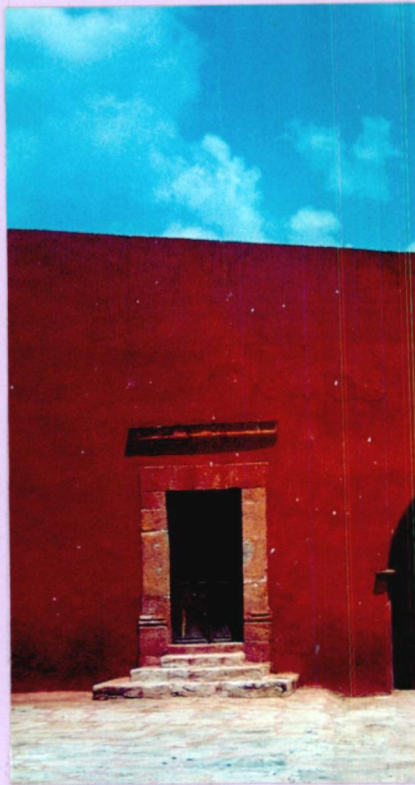
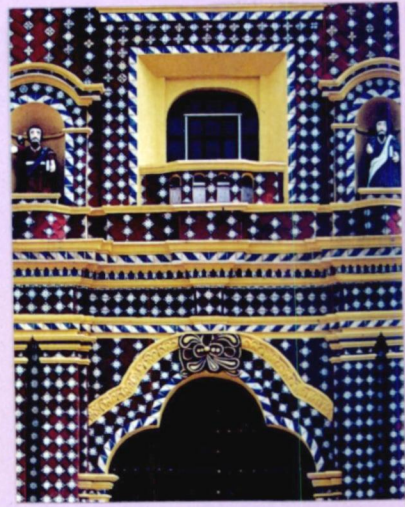
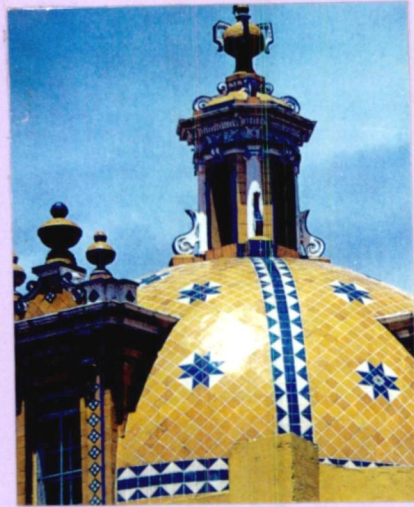


Fig. 47, 48, 49 & 50:

Barragan says that being a Catholic, I have frequently visited with reverence the now empty monumental monastic buildings that we inherited from the powerful religious faith and architectural genius of our colonial ancestors, and I have always been deeply moved by the peace and well – being experienced in those uninhabited cloisters and solitary courts. How I have wished that these feelings may leave their mark on my work.

(Source: Herbert YPMP . Mexican Contemporary)

Chapel for the capnehinas

While Barragan was a devout catholic who incorporated Catholic symbols into his own house also designed a number of religious projects for many this is his greatest architectural achievement, the culmination's of his ideas, impressions, feelings and memories.



Fig.51: Detail of the Alter - is simply a reflection of holiness – used basic liturgical colours. Red for Holy chest, and gold express jubilation.

(Source: *RISPA RAUL Barragan*)



Fig.52: Side view from the lattice in the transept of the faithful
(Source: *RISPA RAUL Barragan*)



Fig.53: Unusual free standing cross of Mexican pink, symbolizes the anticipatory joy of the time of penance of nuns life.
(Source: *RISPA RAUL Barragan*)

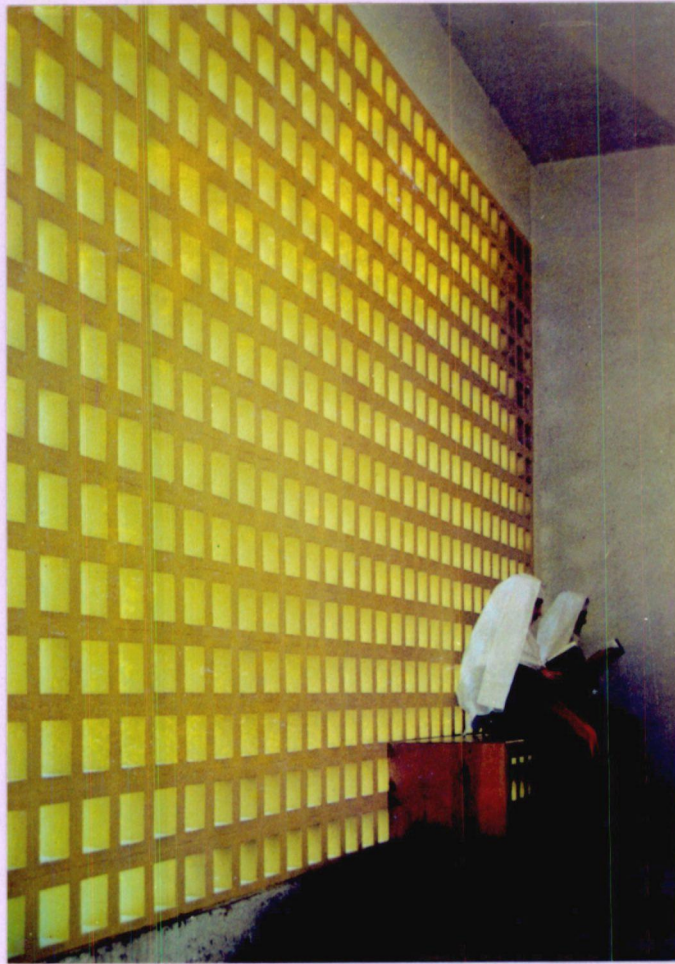


Fig.54: Yellow latticework and walls with clear-cut volumes. Reached an insurmountable degree of lyricism and refinement.
(Source: *RISPA RAUL Barrágan*)

References:

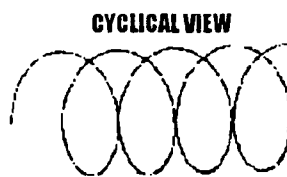
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CHAPTER FIVE
COLOUR AND HINDUISM



5.1 Philosophical trends of Hinduism pertaining symbolic use of colour

The Hindu concept of time, the world, and history differs significantly from the Catholic concept. The Eastern view, on the other hand, regards the present universe as unending, filled with countless worlds. Everything that happens has happened before and will happen again. Human history is but an infinitesimal blinking of an eye in a universal, constantly changing, never-ending cycle of birth and rebirth. (Fig. 55)



*Fig. 55: The Hindu view sees an endless universe born and re-born
(source: Religions of world)*

Hindus conceive of time as countless eternal laps around a track on which each person is locked into a cycle of birth and rebirth called *Samsara*. The universe itself is trapped in this cycle.

Hindus believe that all forms of existence, including this present world and everything in it, are momentary and impermanent; they refer to them as *Maya*.

The only true, eternal reality is Brahman or world soul. So the goal of every Hindu is to break free of this imperfect world and achieve blissful union with *Brahman*. (Fig 56)



*Fig. 56: Brahman – World soul or Cosmic force
(source: Religions of world)*

Brahman is neutral and impersonal - the origin, the cause and the basis of all existence. In it are to be found

- Pure being (*sat*);
- Pure intelligence (*cit*);
- Pure delight (*ananda*);

Drop of this ocean becomes separated from the ocean and resides as an individual soul within a living thing. Although technically this is not a soul - an individual *atman*. (Fig. 57)

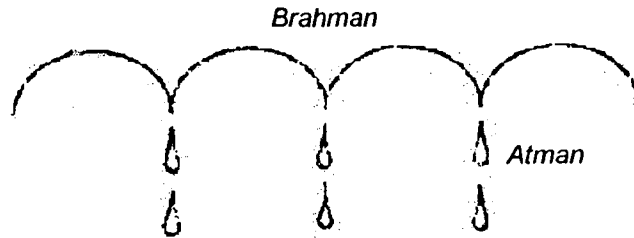


Fig.57:
(source: Religions of world)

Once separated, the *atman* is trapped in the dreaded cycle of birth and rebirth into which all living things are locked. Trapped in the cycle of *Samsara*, the *atman* can be *reborn* into another form in the next life cycle. The *atman* is reborn into higher or lower case, depends on the *Karma* which has been earned in the previous existence.

There are three kinds of *Karmas*:

- The *Parabhadha Karma*. One brings with him at birth, heredity, sex. For the Hindu, being a woman is a handicap, for the woman is considered as an impure being –the female sex is a consequence of evil actions in a former existence.
- The *Sankita Karama*, acquired in this existence through the good or bad use of birth *Karma*.
- Finally, the *Karma* –in – process which one may or may not acquire according to one's present disposition, the *Agami Karma*.

From Hindus escape from *Samsara*, they experience release from limitations and difficulties of earthly existence. Any evidence of personal identity or selfhood is destroyed when the *atman* of living persons merge with world soul. This union called *Moksha*, is sometimes referred to as annihilation or 'blowing out the candle of self. The achieve *Moksha* is the highest goal and most difficult to attain. (Fig. 58)

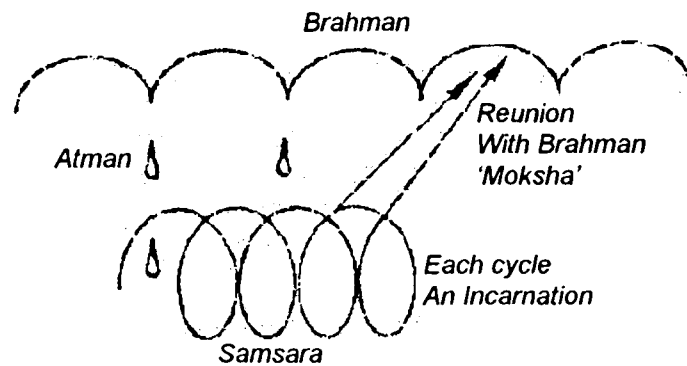


Fig.58:
(source: Religions of world)

5.2 The paths of salvation / Methods of Realisation.

The dynamic aspect of law of Karma for Hindus; the great goal is *Moksha*. Although the goal is the same each one has to take a different path according to the tendencies of his mind. The most widely accepted methods of self – realisation are generally known as *Yogas*.

There are four *Yogas* along which it may be reached; the path of action, *Karma Yoga*; the path of knowledge of the contemplation, *Jnana Yoga*; path of meditation; *Raja Yoga*; the path of loving adoration; *Bakti Yoga*. The scope of all these *yogas* is one and same – to remove ignorance and allow the atman to restore its original nature.

5.3 Adoration of God - Bakti Yoga

This aspect of the Hindu religion greatly resembles illuminative way of Catholic contemplation¹. At first glance, the way of action may seem the clearest and surest.

*Salvation is a gift
It cannot be merited.....
He gives it.....*

Bhagavat Gita

Bakti is the science of higher love. *Bakti yoga* does not say, "Give up", it only says "Love; Love the highest" Love is the natural impetus of union in the human heart; and though itself a great cause of misery, properly directed towards proper object, it brings deliverance².

The object of *Bakti* is God and Hinduism has assimilated 330 millions Gods. A person not only may select which god will receive love and adoration, but also may select the most appealing way. Because the worship is often emotional and colourful, *Bakti yoga* is favourite of masses; they often portray the chosen god in gaudy rituals and specific colours

5.3.1 Hindu pantheon of gods- Significance of colour

Bakti Yoga calls for total devotion love and faith to one of the gods in the pantheon. Hindu gods are depicted by particular colors. It has been their tradition to use these colors extended to and enfolded in the daily life.

The gods of the Vedic period

AGNI <i>The life force of nature The god of fire and sacrifice</i>	INDRA <i>The sky – God and God of war.</i>	VARUNA <i>Preserver of Cosmic Order Power of punish and reward</i>
RED	BLACK	BLUE

Chief of the *vedic* gods is *Varuna* who is the preserver of the cosmic order, God *Varuna* is traditionally represented by colour blue.

Agni is the God of fire and sacrifice -- the one who unites earth; heaven and the atmosphere in between. Red is the colour of *Agni* and is seen as life force within nature. The *RigVeda* hails him as the one who 'restores life to all beings'. 'The all is reborn through you!'

Indra is the god most frequently invoked in the *Veda* and many stories. He is depicted as sky - God and with his thunderbolt he was able to suppress the dragon that sought to stem the flow of the waters. Air and ether is transparent and colourless. Black, according to Hindu philosophy, means absence of colour.

The *Vedic* pantheon, gave place to another hierarchy of divinities, which reflect the non – Aryan elements in the religion. At the head of the other array of divine forms stands

a divine triad, 'Trimuti', who share the activities of *Ishvara*, the one supreme god who symbolises *Brahman*:

- The power to create belongs to *Brahma*
- Preservation is in the power of *Vishnu*
- *Shiva* is the great destroyer

The later Gods and Goddesses

<p>BRAHMA <i>The Creator.</i> <i>The Lord of all creatures. He is above and beyond worship.</i></p> <p>RED</p>	<p>VISHNU <i>The Preserver.</i> <i>The controller of human fate. He draws near to mankind in ten incarnations. He is generally kind.</i></p> <p>BLUE</p>	<p>SHIVA <i>The Destroyer.</i> <i>The source both good and evil. The destroyer of life and also one who recreates new life.</i></p> <p>WHITE</p>
<p>SARASVATI <i>Consort of Brahma.</i> <i>The Goddess of knowledge; learning and truth.</i></p> <p>WHITE</p>	<p>LAKSHMI <i>Wife of Vishnu.</i> <i>The Goddess of fortune and beauty.</i></p> <p>RED</p>	<p>SAKTI <i>Consort of Shiva.</i> <i>The Great mother.</i></p> <p>RED</p>

Brahma, despite his function as creator and he remains fairly abstract. His function is to bring multiplicity into being in place of a primal unity. Red is the colour of *Brama* and symbolises energy, force, movement, passion that activates and excites.

Red is the *Brama's* female counterpart is *Sarasvati*, the energy that comes from him, the symbol of knowledge and of "the waters of truth". She is invariably represented as rising out of a white lotus.

*"The lotus belongs to this world and the world below and the world above, to earth, water and light. It enacts the transmutation from earth to air, from mud to perfume, from darkness to lustrous colours"*³

In the Hindu Creation myth, *Vishnu* is principle, which maintains the balance between the lives – processes of the universe and negative and disruptive forces. *Brahma*, the creator, is seated on a lotus that springs from the naval of *Vishnu*.

His role as 'preserver' explains *Vishnu's* incarnations to redeem humankind. His *avatars*, 'descents', are usually: ten in number; and most important of all, *Krishna*.

Krishna's legends answer many deep social and spiritual needs. Love is the vital force of *Vishnuism*.⁴ In the Hindu tradition there is some connection between love and color blue, thus god *Vishnu* and *Krishna* are featured blue.

*"Blue is the colour of Krishna and Vishnu. Blue is worn by a woman going to see her lover at night"*⁵

Lakshmi, his female counterpart the symbol of beauty and good fortune, represented as rising of a red lotus. She is also worshiped as *Kamala*, meaning 'red lotus' symbolising good fortune and prosperity.

Shiva is the great destroyer, his female counterpart is *Sakti*. Hindu call it *Siva – sakti*: the pairing of the male god *Siva*, who sustains the structure of the world, with his wife or female aspect *Sakti*, who provides the divine energy necessary to make things actually happen.

According to Hindu theology, the cosmos is given form and consciousness by the male principle, but given energy and substance by the female principle. The male aspect of the universe is passive and cool. While the female aspect is active and hot. White and red often symbolize the polarity of male and female, *Shiva* and *Sakti*, form and energy, stasis and change, coolness and heat.

5.3.2 Division of Human Society

According to *Sankhya* philosophy, nature is composed of three forces *sattya*, *Rajas*, *Tamas*. Vivekananda believes that these three elements in varying degrees, are reflected in every individual.

Tamas represents inactivity or darkness, *Rajas* activity and *Sattava*, the equilibrium of the two. The Karma of a person depends upon the dominance of any one of these qualities. He also believes that " there are grades of manifestation in living beings;

Sub conscious - mechanical unerring
Conscious - Knowing, erring
Super conscious - institutional, unerring, and these are
illustrated in animal man and God.

The colours representing the three elements are specified in the '*suetasuata Upanishad*' as black for *tamas*, red for *rajas* and white for the cohesive force *sattava*. The three – fold forces are reflected in ritual as the three phases of universal becoming.

5.4 .The Analysis of Selected Examples

Following are selected examples from contemporary architectural sites, which enhances the discussion of philosophical trends in Hinduism pertaining the symbolic use of colour.



Fig.59: *The temple at Mylapore India. It is an inspiring sight a magnificent structure embellished with colorful statues of Hindu deities. (Source: Eu, Geoffrey South Asia)*



Fig.60: *Hindu temple at Kew Road Colombo. A close-up view of a Rajagopurum tower suggests the richness and complexity of Hindu mythology and iconography through vivid colors. (Source: Serendib, May-June '94)*

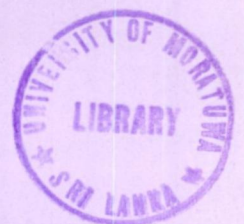




Fig.61: A red village goddess displays the marks of her ambivalent personality. Her crimson colour connotes "heat" and anger. (Source: Mc Gilvray, Dennis, *Symbolic Heat*)



Fig.62: Although ultimately the soul and the universe are one, to ordinary Hindus the focus of worship is a complex hierarchy of gods. Gods are called into stone or metal images or plaster painted in bright bold colours and housed in temples. However in the countryside and in urban neighborhoods, local deities – particularly temperamental, hot, wears red, the hottest colour and potentially angry goddesses – are considered more important to health and prosperity. (Source: *Serendib*, May-June '94)



Fig.63: *Tantric sixty – four Yogini temple, Udipur.* In a Metaphysical sense, black symbolized the absorption of all colours. It represents potential or fullness, the colour of god Varuna. Black is generally used in Hindus, for protection. Lampblack applied round a girls eyes or a black dot on a girls cheek are safeguards against hazards or evil. Black applied to an object may nullify a curse, or subdue an enemy or evil.

(Source: Lloyd, Barbara *The Colours of India*)



Fig.64&65: Massive stone walls of the Vishnu temple in Tamilnadu. White and red temple walls symbolize the balance of form and energy, male and female *shiva sakti*. The foundation myths of many temples in *Tamilnadu* also reveal the events involving milk and blood are symbolically associated with the establishment of their sanctity. (Source: *Mc Gilvray, Dennis, Symbolic Heat*)



Fig.66: A Hindu god set in the wall of a Trincomalee temple, exuding a signified and serene atmosphere. (Source: *Serendib*, Sep-Oct '94)

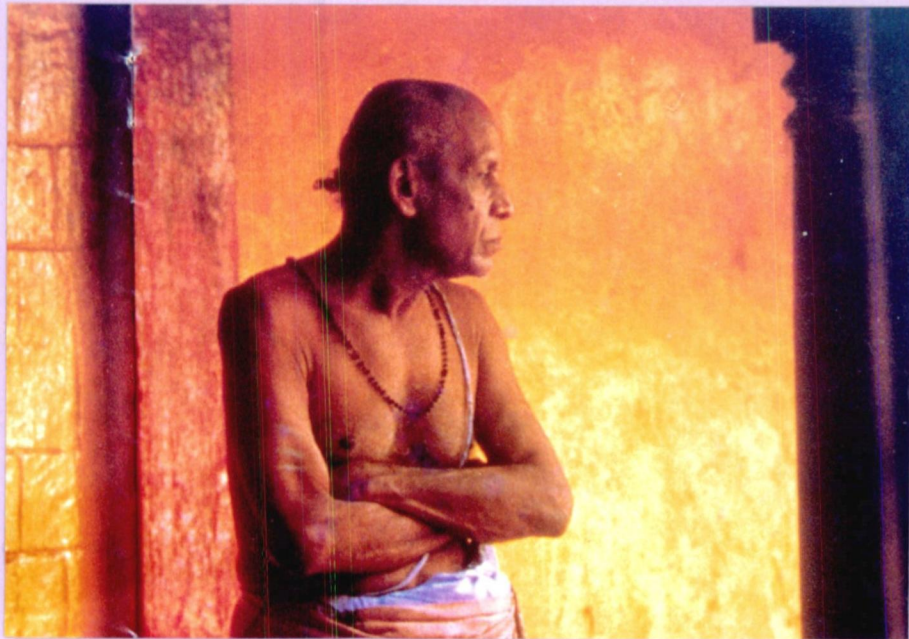


Fig.67: Color is an integral part of the visual excitement of Hindu temples. Visitors often point vivid and surprising combination of color surrounding them on buildings, discarding sometimes even shocking. (Source: *Serendib*, Nov-Dec '92)



Fig.68: Unseen Gods inhabits the temples that men built for them, and their presence can be shown only conventionally. Here the god's presence is signed by particular colors.

(Source: *Serendib*, Nov-Dec '92)



Fig.69: *Temple courtyard, Jodhpur.* Blue has a deep significance in Hindu creation myths. Blue is the colour of Vishnu and Krishna the divine lover, expressing the souls yearning for the absolute, ecstasy leading to spiritual opening.
(Source: Lloyd, Barbara *The Colours of India*)



Fig.70: The ancient red coloured painted doors Hemis monastery – Ladakh. Red is the colour of Brama and symbolized energy, force, the passion that activities and excites. The red – ochre robe worn by thousands of men dicants and sashus is the sign of renunciation, the universal application of a red mark, Hindu, on the forehead is the outward token of psycho energies.

(Source: Lloyd, Barbara *The Colours of India*)

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DISCUSSION



A close observation of the various religions will reveal the fact that each religion is the result of the experience of a great teacher. The Buddha and Christ experienced certain truths and preached them to the world. Hindus also have their *Rishis* and *Sagas* who have experienced certain truths.

In every exact science like physics and chemistry there is a common basis applicable to all situations. Has religion any such scientific basis? Religion, in most cases is said to be based upon faith and belief that tries to protect/save its followers in one way or the other.

Following table reviews the symbolic use of colour in each religion that was discussed in the study.

	CATHOLICISM	HINDUISM
<i>The Supreme Being</i>	<i>Catholics believe in one God. God is the creator of life and the father of human beings, and in Jesus Christ his only son who was conceived by holy spirit- Christian version of spirituality or personality upliftment.</i>	<i>Hinduism has assimilated 330 million Gods. The most prominent Gods are Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. Krishna was a loving, compassionate incarnation of the Supreme Being. Each Hindu is free to believe in a favorite God or Gods.</i>
<i>The Adoration to God</i>	<u><i>Liturgy</i></u> <i>This means Christian love in action together with faith and hope. The worship that the Church offer to God.</i>	<u><i>Bakti Yoga</i></u> <i>This calls for total devotion love an faith to one of the Gods in the pantheon.</i>
<i>Significance of colour</i>	<i>Colour plays a symbolic meaning in every season of the liturgical year. They suggest the mystery or the feast or signify the sentiment of the each occasion.</i>	<i>Hindu Gods are depicted by particular colours. Bakti Yoga is favorite of masses thy often portray the chosen God in gaudy rituals and specific colours.</i>

Table 1

Finally colour depiction in religions under study revealed that the meaning or the resemblance of colour was somewhat similar. Below given are the findings of the study.

	CATHOLICISM	HINDUISM
<i>Black</i>	<i>Darkness. Dead</i>	<i>Absence of all colours. Tamas - inactivity or darkness</i>
<i>White</i>	<i>Integrity of life of faith, new life born out of death, source of life.</i>	<i>Destruction of life, recreating new life passivity and coolness Sattava – cohesive force, equilibrium</i>
<i>Red</i>	<i>Presence of God, sacrifice, fire and zeal</i>	<i>The creator , creation fire and sacrifice Energy and hot. Rajas-activity</i>
<i>Blue</i>	<i>Humanity, obedience and love</i>	<i>Love, kindness, human fate and human beings</i>

Table 2

The symbolic use of colour in each religion takes paramount importance; A comparative discussion on the to religions under study shows that the followers of these beliefs are closely knitted with the symbolism of colour in various events and circumstances of their lives. The best example for this is see in Catholic liturgy. The liturgical cycle in fact is woven round the significant events of a human being and rituals and symbolic use of colour in such celebration of worship take and important place. The followers of these religions are accustomed to these symbolisms of colour in their lines of worship. And the tendency is to go for this more and more. Colour makes a very powerful visual in fact and hence undoubtedly adds to the ritualistic experience of the devotee whether it is Catholic or Hindu.

The Philosophical and Theoretical could be make touchable only by making it colourfully appealing to the senses. Consequently the visual experience becomes a human spiritual experience. The broad framework of the Liturgical year in Catholic church has kept the use of colour in its religion in fact where as Hindus have been more liberal on this issue.

However it should be noted that Hinduism has no founder and no prophet. It has no particular eclectically or institutional structure, nor a set creed. The emphasis is on the way of living rather than on a way of thought. Radhakrishnan once remarked; 'Hinduism is more a culture than a creed.'

Therefore, Hindu culture has been more liberal with the use of gaudy and brighter combination of colours. Apart from architectural use, it has been their tradition to use colours extended to and enfolded the daily life.

Indeed, the popular pattern of Hot/Cold dualism is carried directly into ordinary thinking about men versus women in Hindu society. White and red is the focal colours of this concept in Hindu society. A person's identity is strongly linked to the social categories of caste ethnic group and religious affiliation. These symbolic marks of group identity are often created with the use of colorful and aromatic substances, or with substances, which convey "heating" and "cooling" qualities

For example, Hindu weddings, express the male/ female gender symbolism through color. The groom wears "cool white" and the bride wears red, the "Hottest" color. The color of everyday clothing also reflects gender symbolism. Men prefer white, which is cool and austere, while women especially during their child bearing years, indulge in vivid colors associated with activity and fecundity.

Today, the above observations in the study have deviated among Hindus and a collection of fashion colours have come into being.

It is worthy to note that even though the Hindus have differed in practice the Catholics have respectfully obeyed the colour resemblance to date. In conclusion, we all observe how the visual experience in Religion makes a lasting contribution to the building up of the spiritual in man.

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