

Part 3, Paper 94, The Melchizedek in the Orient, Midwayer Commission

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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Melchizedek teachings, universal God, spiritual chain reaction, Brahmin challenge, Vedas consolidation, caste system, reincarnation concept, Taoism fusion, Lao Tzu philosophy, Confucius morality, Buddhism arrival, ancestor worship, Tibetan Buddhism, compassion emphasis, spiritual evolution

SPEAKERS

Sarah, John

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Sarah 00:00

Ready to explore some deep roots of faith. We're driving into this surprisingly intertwined history of well, spirituality itself in Asia should be fascinating, particularly India and China. Just to narrow things down a bit, and I have a feeling we might just unearth some aha moments about well, the very essence of belief.

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John 00:17

It's like tracing, almost like a whisper, okay, across continents and seeing how this one idea, you know, this concept, as bold as it is ancient, could reshape the spiritual landscape of two major civilizations.

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Sarah 00:32

I'm ready. Let's go on this journey. Let's do it all right. So for this deep dive, we're drawing from excerpts of the Melchizedek teachings in the Orient. That's paper 94 from the Urantia Book, and we're gonna explore how a figure named Melchizedek impacted both India and China. But before we get ahead of ourselves, Melchizedek, who was this guy? You might recall a brief mention of him in the Bible, but this text really presents him as a pivotal player on the world stage. Yeah,

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John 00:57

and it's interesting because you have to imagine a time long before Abraham, you know, back when different gods and rituals were just the norm, like that was just how it was. And then Melchizedek emerges, almost like a Prophet from, you know, from the mists of time, with a

radical message for the time. Like, really radical, okay, Lay it on me. There's one, just one universal god, okay? And you can access this God through faith. That's it. Just faith. Okay?

S Sarah 01:24

So no, no complex ceremonies, no need for these intermediaries, nope.

J John 01:27

Just pure, direct faith.

S Sarah 01:30

That's a game changer, right?

J John 01:31

Yeah. Now picture this passionate missionaries carrying this message far and wide, I mean, across ancient Africa, Eurasia, they're planting these seeds of a whole new way of understanding what the Divine is.

S Sarah 01:45

Yeah, it's like a spiritual Chain Reaction across history.

J John 01:48

So what happens when those teachings reach India, which, even back then, was a melting pot of cultures and beliefs, right?

S Sarah 01:55

Absolutely. But you have to understand India, at the time was still kind of being shaped by the arrival of the arian andites, okay, this group that had migrated from, you know, the north and west, and they brought with them a rich polytheistic system, worshiping a multitude of gods, of course, but their beliefs were still evolving. They were blending with existing traditions. It's like, you know, it's a process. Then bam,

J John 02:19

here comes Melchizedek. Enter melchizedek's followers shaking things up with this radical idea of one God. Talk

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Sarah 02:26

about a clash of ideologies, though. Oh yeah, you're talking about the Brahmins, right? Yeah, the powerful priestly class of India facing a direct challenge to everything they've built. Absolutely. This wasn't just some abstract theological debate. This was about the very structure of their society. It's a huge deal. So how do they react to this new and it seems like, on the surface, a simple message, this salvation through faith, see to the

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John 02:51

Brahmins. This wasn't simple at all. It really wasn't. It was a threat, a threat to their entire system, everything they knew, their rituals, their sacrifices, the power structure they'd carefully built. Imagine you've spent your entire life basing your authority, your entire understanding of the universe on this complex system, and then suddenly someone comes along and says, Nope, none of that matters. All you need is this. That's what those Melchizedek teachings represented to the Brahmins.

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Sarah 03:19

So instead of embracing this new perspective, they doubled down on their own. It's like our way or

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John 03:25

the highway precisely. They went to extraordinary lengths to, you know, to consolidate their power and really codify their belief system. They gathered their ancient hymns, teachings, everything into what we now know as the Vedas, right, including the

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Sarah 03:39

Rig Veda, which is one of the oldest surviving religious texts in the world, exactly,

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John 03:42

and it really is a fascinating glimpse into that ancient Indian psyche.

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Sarah 03:47

But this consolidation, it came at a cost, didn't it? Things started to shift away from that personal experience with the Divine and towards something I don't know, more rigid. That's

J John 03:56

right, the Vedas, while containing really beautiful poetry, profound insights, they became increasingly associated with complex rituals, and crucially, the caste system, right? And this system initially meant to, you know, maintain social order, tragically morph into a tool for oppression and division. And

S Sarah 04:16

it's around this time that the concept of reincarnation takes root, too, this idea that we're trapped in an endless cycle of death and rebirth, often determined by our actions in previous lives. I mean, how did this new concept reshape the spiritual landscape?

J John 04:29

Instead of offering this, you know, this hope and liberation, reincarnation within this system became intertwined with the rigidity of the caste system, just this cycle of suffering and striving to be reborn into a higher caste. It's a far cry from the message of hope and direct connection to the divine that those early Melchizedek missionaries brought to India. It

S Sarah 04:48

almost feels like this tragic missed opportunity. Did the Brahmins ever realize how close they were to a concept that resonated with those early teachings of one God?

J John 04:58

Ironically, they did come close. Close, they even developed the concept of Brahman, okay, an ultimate, all encompassing reality, this force behind everything. However, there's a crucial difference. They made Brahman impersonal, impersonal, yeah, like this ultimate reality became an abstract force, you know, completely removed from individual lives, okay, rather than this personal, loving God that you could actually connect with. So while

S Sarah 05:22

they were circling this idea of a single, unifying force, they kind of missed the essence of that direct personal relationship with the divine, the very heart of melchizedek's message. It makes you wonder how differently would India's spiritual landscape have unfolded if that connection had been made. But while all this is happening in India, these teachings are already taking root elsewhere. Let's shift gears geographically for a moment. Journey eastward to China. How do these ancient ideas land in a culture steeped in ancestor worship and this reverence for the natural world?



J John 05:58

It's fascinating, isn't it? See even before those melchizedekian whispers arrived, the seeds of monotheism had already been planted in China, and it was long ago, way back, long before the time of Abraham actually. Okay, remember singlington from our earlier deep dives? Oh, right, right. He journeyed eastward advocating for the worship of one God, Shang T, right, the God of heaven,

S Sarah 06:20

singlington, his efforts eventually led to the early form of Taoism, if I'm remembering correctly Exactly. It's incredible how these ancient figures just keep popping up in these unexpected corners of history. So you're saying that those early Melchizedek teachings found fertile ground in China because this idea of one God wasn't entirely foreign. Exactly

J John 06:40

those echoes of this singular, all encompassing divine force. Yeah, they really resonated deeply with the existing beliefs in China. And remember the Indian concept of Brahman? Yeah, that impersonal, ultimate reality that also found its way into Chinese thought. It's like further shaping this evolution of spiritual ideas in the region. So now

S Sarah 07:00

you have this intriguing mix brewing in China. You've got this ancient reverence for Shang T whispers of melchizedeks, one God, the philosophical concept of Brahman. How did everyday people reconcile these different ideas? That's

J John 07:12

where things get really interesting. You start to see this fusion of beliefs manifested in the form of early Taoism. It incorporated elements of ancestor worship, a deep respect for the natural order, these lingering threads of monotheism.

S Sarah 07:25

It's like a spiritual tapestry woven from all these diverse threads, each one contributing to the richness of this overall design. But didn't this blending of beliefs also lead to, you know, disagreements and interpretations? What about those more superstitious practices that kind of emerged in these later forms of Taoism.

J John 07:44

You're right. It wasn't always a harmonious blend this desire to understand the universe, to find meaning, escape suffering. It sometimes led people down different paths. And as Taoism

evolved, some branches incorporated more elaborate rituals and practices, while others maintain this simpler, more nature centered approach. But before we, you know, delve deeper into that, it's important to remember the context. Here. We're talking sixth century BC China, a period marked by this intellectual and philosophical flourishing. This is the era of Lao tz and Confucius. Huge. Think about the impact they had on Chinese culture.

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Sarah 08:19

Lao Tse, the enigmatic sage who penned the Tao titching and Confucius, whose teachings on morality and social harmony still resonate today, absolutely. I mean, their ideas were revolutionary for their time, but are we saying that they were directly influenced by those ancient teachings about one God? It doesn't seem obvious at first glance. It's

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John 08:39

more nuanced than a direct lineage. Remember how Lao Si speaks of the Tao the way, right? He describes it as this eternal, ever present force underpinning all of creation. Doesn't this sound familiar?

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Sarah 08:51

It does sound strikingly similar to those early concepts of a singular, all encompassing God, you know, the very source of existence itself. It's as if those ancient whispers found a new voice in Lao Tzu's philosophy, exactly.

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John 09:05

And consider how Lao tzi emphasizes aligning oneself with the Tao, living in harmony with the natural order. It's about surrendering to a force greater than yourself, right? A concept that you know resonates the idea of surrendering to the will of a single god.

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Sarah 09:19

It's fascinating how these echoes of ancient beliefs can just reverberate through time, resurfacing in these different forms, different expressions. But what about Confucius? I mean, his teachings focus heavily on morality, social order, fulfilling your duty in this life. How does that connect to the idea of one God?

J

John 09:36

While Confucius might not have spoken about a personal God in the same way, as you know, those early Melchizedek teachings, his philosophy was deeply rooted in the concept of this universal moral order, what he called The Way of Heaven, right? He believed that this inherent

order and this moral compass woven into the fabric of existence, it should be reflected in every aspect of human society, from in. Visual conduct to, you know, even governance.

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Sarah 10:02

So even though he may not have explicitly preached about a single deity, his entire worldview stem from this idea that there's this overarching moral framework governing the universe, and that framework that order, it suggests something bigger than ourselves at play. Wouldn't she say precisely?

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John 10:18

And here's where it gets really intriguing. Even though both Lao tz and Confucius had this immense impact on Chinese culture, there was still this void, like this longing for something more. Their teachings insightful as they were, they couldn't fully address that deeply human need for spiritual connection, for a personal relationship with the divine,

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Sarah 10:39

because ultimately, they lacked that personal, knowable God that melchizedek's teachings hinted

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John 10:44

at. You've hit the nail on the head. And it's into this spiritual landscape that a new force arrives, Bud but remember, Buddhism had already undergone its own evolution. It's this fascinating journey from its origins in India to its arrival on Chinese shores. By the

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Sarah 10:59

time Buddhism arrives in China, it's not just a set of teachings. It's almost become this cultural phenomenon in its own right. Did the Chinese embrace it right away? Or was it a slow burn?

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John 11:08

It's more like Buddhism slipped into the existing cultural fabric of China almost seamlessly. You see, Buddhism offered something that resonated deeply with the Chinese worldview, this path to alleviate suffering,

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Sarah 11:20

which, let's face it, as something we all grapple with, no matter what century we're living in. But wasn't there still a strong emphasis on ancestor worship in China? How did that mesh with

Buddh beliefs? That's

J John 11:30

where the adaptability of Buddhism comes into play. Instead of demanding this complete overhaul of existing beliefs, Buddhism in China found a way to coexist and even complement those traditions, it's like it added another layer to their spiritual understanding.

S Sarah 11:45

So instead of rejecting ancestor reverence, they incorporated it

J John 11:49

precisely. People could still honor their ancestors, but now they had this additional avenue for seeking solace and jicens through Buddhist teachings and practices. It was a spiritual Win Win, fascinating.

S Sarah 11:59

But as Buddhism continued to spread, it wasn't without its own internal debates and interpretations. Didn't things get a little complicated with different branches emphasizing different paths. What was that about a great road and a lesser road?

J John 12:12

You're right. Buddhism wasn't a monolith. Remember how we talked about the Brahmins in India getting caught up in rituals? Well, despite the Buddha's emphasis on simplicity and direct experience, as Buddhism interacted with other cultures, some branches, particularly in Tibet, began incorporating more elaborate rituals and hierarchies. Tibet

S Sarah 12:31

now that's a fascinating case study. You've got this blend of Buddhist teachings, ancient Tibetan shamanism, even whispers of Hinduism and Christianity finding their way in what did this unique cocktail of belief look like in practice?

J John 12:44

Imagine this. You've got monks and monasteries, vibrant rituals filled with chanting, colorful prayer flags and mandalas, these intricate geometric designs representing the cosmos. They developed a complex system of spiritual lineages with Lamas or teachers guiding their students towards enlightenment.

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Sarah 13:01

It sounds like Tibetan Buddhism took on a life of its own. It did, and at

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John 13:05

the heart of it all was this profound reverence for compassion, for alleviating suffering, not just for oneself, but for all beings. This emphasis on compassion became a defining characteristic of Tibetan Buddhism. But remember, there was also that other path, the lesser Road, what's known as Theravada Buddhism, mostly prevalent in Southeast Asia. Right,

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Sarah 13:25

this branch stayed closer to the Buddha's original teachings, right, more focused on individual enlightenment through meditation and mindfulness, exactly,

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John 13:32

while Tibetan Buddhism, the great road, or Mahayana, expanded to embrace this wider view of compassion and helping all beings achieve enlightenment. Theravada Buddhism maintained its emphasis on personal liberation from suffering through self cultivation.

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Sarah 13:46

So from those early whispers of one God carried by melchizedek's followers, we see these incredible branches of belief emerge and spread across Asia. It makes you wonder, what would Melchizedek think of it? All this evolution of his core message into these rich, diverse expressions of faith.

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John 14:03

It's a question worth pondering, isn't it? Perhaps he'd be fascinated by how his simple yet powerful message of one God, accessible through faith, resonated across cultures and took on new forms, reflecting the diverse spiritual yearnings of humanity. This

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Sarah 14:15

deep dive reminds us that the search for truth, for meaning, for connection with something greater than ourselves is an ongoing journey, one filled with unexpected twists, fascinating intersections and endless possibilities. And on that note, I think we've reached the end of another deep dive, but hey, the conversation doesn't have to stop here. Keep exploring, keep

questioning, because who knows what other aha moments await as we continue to delve deeper into the mysteries of history, culture and faith until next time keep those thinking caps on.