



# How to pray for Hindus

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Often Christians are uncertain how their faith is different from another and are unable to point out the differences. One common misunderstanding is that every individual has a personal view of God, and through the different religions we all end up seeking the one and only God. A close view on the central beliefs of different religions though, will prove such understanding as fundamentally wrong.

The following can serve as basic guidelines to the differences between central beliefs within Christianity and Hinduism. This will enable Christians to clearly share their belief in the Lord Jesus Christ with Hindus and to pray for their salvation.

## Hinduism globally at a glance

- The number of Hindus around the world is projected to rise from about 1.1 billion in 2015 to nearly 1.4 billion in 2050. (As a percentage of the world population, Hindus will remain fairly stable at 15%.)
- India is home to 94% of the world's Hindus.
- While the top-three countries with the largest number of Hindus are India, Nepal and Bangladesh, the first two are the only countries with a Hindu-majority population.
- In 2018 India's Hindus make up about 80% of India's total population of 1.4 billion (or 1.12 billion).
- By 2050 India will become the most populous country with 1.66 billion people.
- The number of Hindus in North America is estimated to rise from about 2.5 million in 2010 to nearly six million by 2050.

*Sources: Pew Research Center, Times of India*

## 1. The different beliefs within Hinduism

Hinduism can be difficult to define because of the large number of varying belief systems. Some of the different versions of such contrary beliefs are; monotheism (belief in the existence of one God, or in the oneness of God), polytheism (believing in many gods), tritheism (a belief that there are three equally powerful gods who form a triad), pantheism (literally means "god is all" and "all is god"), henotheism (meaning devotion to a single god while accepting the existence of other gods) – even non-theism (absence of the belief in both the existence and non-existence of a deity) and atheism (an absence of belief in the existence of gods).

### Pray

- For Hindus worldwide, that a hunger and thirst will come in their hearts to search for a deeper truth than the ones they believe in currently.
- Ask that God will supernaturally answer them in their search and that many would turn to follow Jesus Christ as the one and only Truth and Way to the Father in heaven.

## 2. The leading belief systems

Some of the leading belief systems within Hinduism generally are (1) polytheism (a belief in many gods, even millions of them), (2) pantheism (the belief that everything is God and (3) monism (a belief that all reality is "One", a single divine essence and whatever is not one such as the physical creation, is an illusion).

As Christians we believe in only God, the Father, who is the Source of all things and for whom we have life. We have one Lord, Jesus Christ, through and by whom all things are, and through and by whom we ourselves exist (1 Corinthians 8:6, Amp). He is One God and Father of us all, who is above all [Sovereign over all], pervading all and living in us all (Ephesians 4:6, Amp). For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word (Christ) and the Holy Spirit and these three are one (1 John 5:7, NKJV).

### Pray

- That in their search to know 'god', Hindus will come to understand the triune God of heaven (Father, Son and Holy Spirit).
- That they will come to understand that God has given them eternal life and that this life is in His Son. That the only way to obtain this life is through the Son of God, Jesus Christ (1 John 4:11-12).

## 3. Schools of philosophy within Hinduism

Hinduism has six general systems or schools of philosophy. These are often classified into three groups due to certain similarities, although they do not agree philosophically; Nyaya/Vaisesika, Samkhya/Yoga and Purva-Mimamsa/Vedanta. Vedanta has had the most overall influence. Vedanta means “culmination” or “essence” of the Vedas. It is a principal branch of Hindu philosophy. For some, it is a form of Jnana Yoga (one of at least four basic yoga practices in Hinduism; [the others are: Raja Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Karma Yoga]). This is a form of yoga which involves an individual seeking "the path of intellectual analysis or the discrimination of truth and reality. As for others, Vedanta encompasses all four the yogas.

As Christians, we are not seeking God with our mind to understand and analyse Him, but with our hearts and through the Spirit, to be awakened to His glory and especially His love. Jesus said; I am the Way and the Truth and the Life; no one comes to the Father except through Me (John 14:6). He also prayed that the Father would sanctify us by the Truth; and this truth is His Word (John 17:17). The essence of the truth revealed by Jesus Christ is the spirit of all prophecy (Revelation 19:10, Amp).

### Pray

- That Hindus will understand that Jesus Christ is the only WAY to truth and reality.
- Ask that many would start exploring the Bible and that their hearts and minds would be opened to the revelation of Jesus Christ.

## 4. The most dominant school within Hinduism

The most dominant of the three schools of Vedanta (see Oct. 17th), is the *advaita* or the *non-dual* school. This monistic belief teaches that there is only one impersonal god called Brahman. The illusion is the entire

physical universe we see around us, all the people and even the millions of gods and goddesses of Hinduism, including Brahman, Vishnu, Shiva and Krishna.

As Christians we believe in a triune God, for there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word (Christ) and the Holy Spirit and these three are one (1 John.5:7, NKJV). With this God we have a personal relationship, for we are His children and He is our Father (Isaiah 64:8, Matthew 6:9, 1 Corinthians 1:3), who covers us with His grace (unmerited favour) and peace.

### **Pray**

- That Hindus will become hungry and thirsty to have a personal relationship with the living God in heaven.
- Ask for supernatural intervention, so many would come across the truth of Jesus Christ and our Father in heaven, be it through the Internet, Christian witness or other ways.

## **5. What is the goal of Hinduism?**

Hinduism teaches that Brahman exists 'beneath' this illusory universe, in and underneath the material creation. This explains the goal of Hinduism – that – through various practices, to go inward in one's consciousness to mystically discover that one's true nature is one essence with god or Brahman. They believe man in his true inner nature is the absolute god.

As Christians we have the mind of Christ (the Messiah), but we never become or are God (1 Corinthians 2:16). But, the Father predestined us from the beginning to be moulded into the image of His Son [and share inwardly His likeness] (Romans 8:29, Amp) and not to become God ourselves. Just as we have borne the image of man, so shall we also bear the image of the Man (Christ) of heaven (1 Corinthians 15:49, Amp). Jesus is the sole expression of the glory of God and He is the perfect imprint and very image of God's nature (Hebrews 1:3).

### **Pray**

- For Hindus to see that Jesus Christ is the sole expression of the glory of God and that we were created to be transformed into His image, never to be God Himself.
- Ask for them to have a revelation of the greatness of God and that He alone is to be worshipped, for none can ever compare to Him!

## **6. The god of war within Hinduism**

The Hindu teaching on their deity Indra, the god of war: the man who knows this god loses nothing whatever he does. Even if he kills his mother or father, steals, procures an abortion, or whatever evil he does, he does not flinch if he knows this god. Their teaching on the Hindu deity Krishna, the incarnation of Vishnu: even if a devotee commits the most abominable actions, he is to be considered saintly because he is properly situated spiritually.

As Christians we believe that it is God's will that by doing good we should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men. That we should show proper respect to everyone; love the brotherhood of believers, fear God and honour our leaders (1 Peter 2:15, 17). Also, that God watches over the ways of our heart and we know that for all these things, God will bring us to judgement (Ecclesiastes 11:9).

### **Pray**

- That God will awaken in the hearts of Hindus the understanding of right and wrong (Romans 2:15).
- Ask that compassion will touch them in all their ways and that they will start to search for the deeper meaning of love and compassion.
- Ask for encounters with the love of the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ in their everyday life to lead them to choose Life.

## **7. The goddess of nature & death within Hinduism**

The Hindu teaching on their deity Kali, goddess of nature and death and inspiration for the murderous dacoit and Thagna cults: she is a repugnant creature with a skeletal body, spread with snakes and skulls. Blood drenched, she is girded with severed hands; her earrings are corpses. A severed head is held in one hand, a sword in the other. A consummate blood drinker, she wears a garland of skulls. But still her worshippers are legion, for she is also the Divine Mother. The appearance of Christ as described in Rev.1, is so the contrary to this picture.

Christian belief: the whole life and testimony of Christ is one of unselfish sacrifice, suffering and obedience even unto death to set people free so they can be reconciled to God. God reaches out to creation to put right what is wrong, not creation and man trying (unable forever), to please God. Those who accept this free gift of salvation, no longer have to appease God when they sin, they only need to confess their sin towards Him and stop sinning. There is one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time (1 Timothy 2:5-6).

### **Pray**

- That Hindus will have a revelation of the love of God and the free gift of Life forevermore.
- Ask that their eyes will start to see the glory and life of God and that a hunger and thirst to search out the Creator of the universe will come.
- Pray that God will reveal Himself to millions of Hindus seeking the truth.

## **8. The role of Hindu deities**

The Hindu deities, both good and evil, are alleged to be highly advanced entities who will either bless or curse one's life based on the quality of one's relationship to them. Hindu literature is so vast, conflicting and capable of so many interpretations that it is impossible to define Hinduism in an absolute sense. Its literature does not reveal one absolute truth, but a mass of conflicting speculative philosophy conditioned by the interpretations and mystical experiences of its writers. Since there are thousands of gurus, not to mention an estimated 30 million deities, the choices become endless.

As Christians we believe that we need not do anything to obtain God's favour, for He loved us so much that He gave His Son to die on Calvary to cover every sin and evil we would ever do. He did this for everyone ever to be born, regardless that they might never choose to follow or accept this gift from Him. This is one of the most central beliefs of Christianity. The whole of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation is a symphony repeating this truth in different ways.

### **Pray**

- For Hindus to realise the confusion and contradiction of their doctrines and teachings.
- Continue to cry out to God for a hunger and thirst after God to come in their hearts.
- Pray that they will come to know the one and only God who both created and love us.

## **Prepare your heart to intercede**

When we pray for people from another religion, we ask the Lord to stir our hearts with passion to intercede for the salvation of people in that religion, so none would perish (2 Peter 3:9). Many of the things they believe sound similar to what we believe as Christians, but it is definitely not the same. Christianity is the only religion where God has come and given His life so others (who do not deserve it), can have eternal life as a FREE gift. Most religions require the appeasing of gods and doing good works to obtain power, money, favour or salvation. Then still there is a chance that it might just not be enough.

### **Pray**

- That God will give you the gift of intercession and compassion to pray for the nations of the world who are still in desperate need of the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- Ask for the church to be awakened to the urgency of the times and seasons and that many would go into the harvest fields of the world, giving their lives for the sake of Christ, for those living in darkness.