

Hinduism, Buddhism, and Christianity

Important Words and Facts of Hinduism

Hindu – the name comes from the Indus river in India. The people who lived there were named Hindu, so their religion also became named Hindu.

When Hinduism began – about 1500 B.C.

Number of Hindus in the world – about 700 million. Most are in India, but also some in Southeast Asia, East and South Africa, and places where Hindus have moved.

Ganges River – the Hindu’s holy river in India.

Reincarnation – the belief that we are born and die many times, in cycles.

Caste – an order, structure, of Hindu people. The better people on top are named Brahmans, the priests. The worst people are on the bottom, named untouchables. Your caste level determines your job, where you live, who you can marry, etc.

Holy Books

Hindus use four Vedas. Veda means “wisdom” or “spiritual understanding.” These Vedas have songs, teaching, prayers, and magic spells. They also use another book named the Bhagavad-Gita, which explains how Hindus should live.

Who do Hindus say is God?

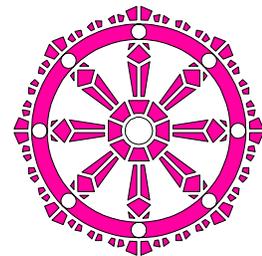
Hindus have many gods, about 280 million! Each person or family chooses the ones that seem best for them. Temples, altars, shrines for the gods are everywhere. Their priests do many prayers, sacrifices, and other kinds of worship to these different gods. But they believe there is one spirit through all the gods, named Brahma. You are god, too. The Brahma spirit is in everything that lives, so you are god. Meditation is a way that you learn to understand and experience your connection with god.

There are three more popular gods that the Hindus worship. Vishnu is the chief god who takes care of the world. Shiva is the god who destroys. Devi is a goddess with much power. What did God say about worshiping other gods? Read Exodus 20:2-6 (89). What did Paul say one time about people worshiping many gods? Read Acts 17:22-31 (1392).

Wheel of Life

Hindus believe in reincarnation. They say people are born and die many, many times. You can be born next time better or worse, depending on how good you live. Your “good and bad points” are named karma. If you do good, you earn a better birth next time. If you do evil, you earn a worse birth. The goal of Hindu life is to get better with each life until you are so good you don’t need to be born again. Then you are only spirit joined to the Brahma spirit. This would be their idea of salvation. What does the Bible say? Read Hebrews 9:27 (1513).

Hindus also say the universe has a cycle. Every 4,320,000,000 years, Brahma destroys the universe and creates it again.



Wheel of Good Life

Important Words and Facts of Buddhism

Buddha – a man in India, born around 563 B.C., who rejected Hinduism and created his own way of religious life. The word Buddha means “enlightened” (understanding).

Number of Buddhists in the world – about 200 million. Most are in Asia – China, Japan, India, Thailand, etc.

Nirvana – a Buddhist’s goal. Usually means leaving everything physical and losing all desires. This is their idea of heaven.



Four Noble Truths

Buddha said there are four truths. He said the main problem in the world is suffering. These are his statements and how he thinks we can escape suffering.

1. Life is suffering.
2. People suffer because they don’t know what is real, and they are attached to the wrong things.
3. If you learn what is real and break those attachments, then suffering will end.
4. The way to stop suffering is to follow the Noble Eightfold Path, which is right views, right intention (goal), right speech, right action, right livelihood (work/job), right effort, right-mindedness, and right contemplation (meditation).

Teachings

Buddhism is a religion about study and teaching. Buddhists do not think about worship, sin, salvation, heaven or hell. Buddhism teaches how to live and think right.

Buddhism says that the world is full of suffering. People suffer because they are thinking about physical things. The solution is to avoid physical things and meditate (think) about how your soul is part of the one consciousness (mind or soul) in the universe. Another way to say this is the way to solve suffering is to realize that I am god.

Buddhists don’t really believe in any god. They think there is a power, a life-force, a mind or a soul, in all the universe. We are part of that life-force. If you fully realize that, then when you die, you join that life-force forever. If you don’t realize that, then you are reincarnated (born, live, and die again and again), like Hindus believe.

What does the Bible say? What causes suffering? Read Romans 5:12 (1415).

Is suffering wrong in every way, or does God have a purpose for suffering? Read Romans 5:3-5 (1415), 8:17 (1418).

Did God avoid suffering? Read Isaiah 53:3-9 (928) and think about Good Friday.

Is there a solution for suffering? Read Revelation 21:3-4 (1561).