

Examining Hinduism

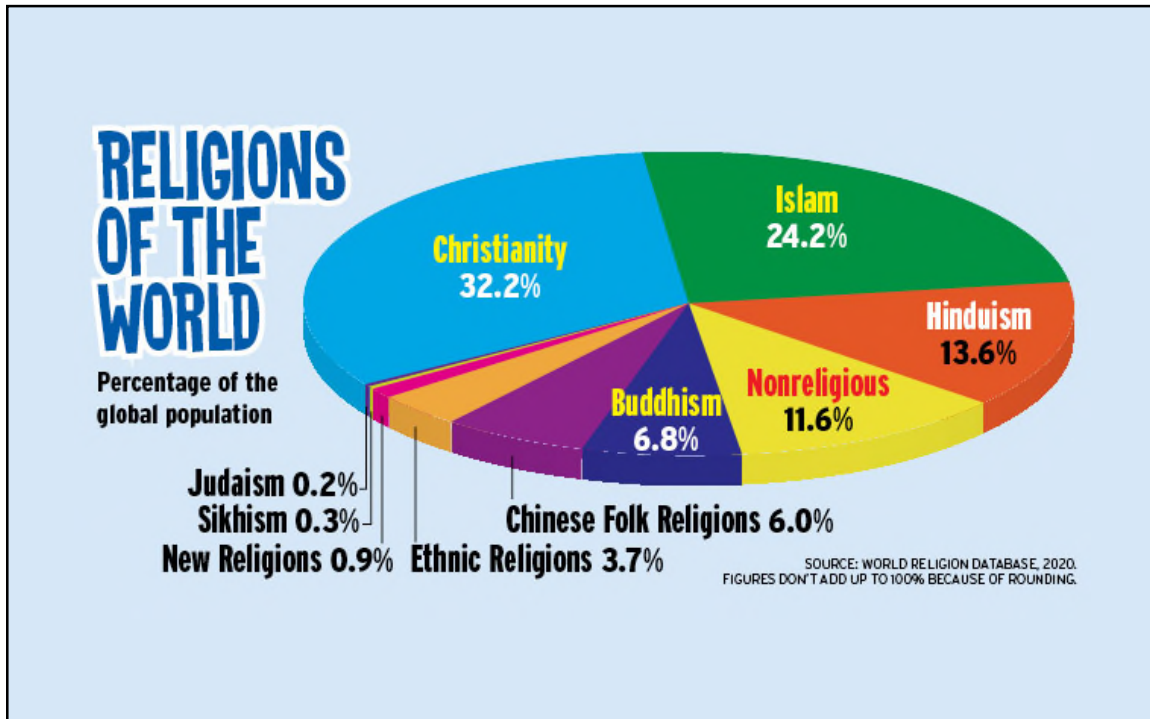
Christian Faith vs. Hinduism

(Is 44:6-8, 24; 45: 5-7; 46:9-10; Acts 4:12)



Hinduism

- “Hinduism” is a term created by Westerners
= the dominant religious & social system of India
- *Hindus* = the followers
- “*dharma*” = “the religion,” “the way”
- 3rd largest in world religions
~ 900 million Hindus
with over one million in USA
- Has ~300 million gods



- Originated in India around 1500 BC (cf. Buddhism ~ 600BC)
- Three forms of Hinduism
 - ✓ *"The way of works"* (1500 BC) — emphasizing rules & rituals by the Brahmins (priests), therefore works
 - ✓ *"The way of knowledge"* (600 BC) — not about works, but to find God deep within oneself
 - ✓ *"The way of devotion"* (AD 800) — focusing on one god or goddess providing salvation or worldly needs

Way of Works	Based on sacrifices and rituals	Brahmanism or Vedic Hinduism
Way of Knowledge	Based on finding God within oneself	Vedantic Hinduism
Way of Devotion	Based on a person's relationship with a single deity	Bhakti Hinduism

- Modern Hinduism combines all three.

- Brahmins = the priests
- Sacred writings
 - ✓ *Shruti* — “heard” from the gods by holy men, including “Vedas” (prayers & rules by the Brahmins)
 - ✓ *Smriti* — less important but better received by most Hindus

- Caste system

Brahmins	Priests
Kshatriyas	Warriors, rulers
Vaishyas	Merchants, landowners
Shudras	Workers

Dalits (outcastes) — 300 millions

Hinduism Major Belief

- No mandatory set of beliefs
- It's virtually impossible to escape reincarnation
- Most Hindus agree on:
 1. *Life is hard and full of suffering*
 2. **Reincarnation** = die and then reborn into someone or something else
 3. **The law of karma** = cause and effect,
your actions in one life will have automatic repercussions in your following lives
- Hinduism in all its forms attempts to find a way out of the seemingly never-ending cycle of reincarnations and to break the bondage of **karma**. Finding solution in one or more gods.

- “**Way of knowledge**” = the most important problem of all human beings is that they have forgotten that they are living in an unreal world
- One true reality = **Brahman** (ultimate reality)
- **Self (atman)** — deep within ourselves, identical with Brahman, then escape from reincarnation, thus nirvana
- Hindu gods — about 300 millions of them
 - ✓ **Brahma** — the creator of the universe (different from Brahman above)
 - ✓ **Vishnu** — the preserver
 - ✓ **Shiva** — the destroyer of the world
- All have female counterpart
- **Avatars** = incarnations



Brahma (the creator, 4-faced god)

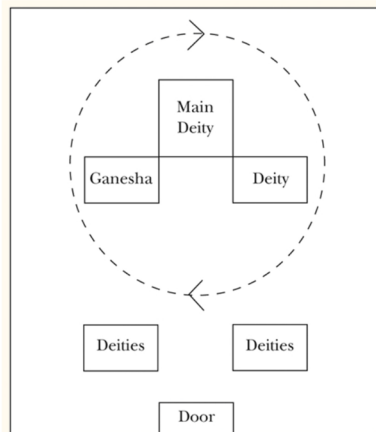


Vishnu (the preserver)



Shiva (the destroyer)

- Worship practices = *puja*
need take only a few minutes. In addition to some minimal recitations, the person officiating (a priest or head of household) will wave some sacred objects, such as camphor lights, before the deity



- ***Ganesha***
= “remover of obstacles”
- Every *puja* begins by worshipping *Ganesha* first.
- Don’t eat cows
- ***Yoga*** (a subgroup of Hinduism. It’s goal is the liberation of the spirit from the body)



Ganesha (remover of obstacles)

How is the Christian faith different from Hinduism?

*** The Christian faith is distinct in 3 major ways
— sovereignty, reality, and exclusivity.**

1. Sovereignty — God is the one & only God

(Is 45:5-6; 46:9-10; cf. Gen 1:1; Deu 6:4)

vs. Hinduism has 330 million gods with contradictory sacred writings

1. Sovereignty — God is the one & only God — Sovereignty
- 2. Reality — God is the one & only God who created all things**
(Is 44:6-8,24; 45:5-7; cf. Ps 19:1; 50:10-11; Ps 147,148; Rom 1:19-20)
(vs. Hinduism's denial of reality & the reality of sin)

1. Sovereignty — God is the one & only God — Sovereignty
2. Reality — God is the one & only God who created all things
- 3. Exclusivity — Jesus Christ is our one & only Savior**
(Ac 4:12)
vs. Hinduism's belief of karma & reincarnation

Life is real;
Sin is real,
Salvation is real.
Jesus Christ is the one & only answer to our sin problem.
He is the only & only answer for our salvation!