

B.O.L.D Answering the Culture Part 2  
Hinduism and Buddhism  
Part 1 - Hinduism

**Firstly: Pray for God's grace in witnessing for His glory, and for mercy on the hearers. Also, for great wisdom in ministering the gospel - Proverbs 8:11.**

Hinduism General Information

No clearly known single founder of Hinduism

It apparently was formed by borrowing from a combination of other belief systems.

There is no official single creed, human founder, agreed upon authority, or uniform belief system or way of practicing Hinduism, but a variation of beliefs and practices within it. This variation is accepted.

Despite the lack of uniformity in Hinduism, there are certain core or common beliefs (like pantheism, polytheism, reincarnation), and certain scriptures of Hinduism:

The beliefs that this universe is all one, and that it is an illusion, go hand in hand with the teaching that there is not distinction between good and evil, and has been associated with Nihilism (a perspective that life has no intrinsic meaning, and which opposes traditional society) and evil acts, such as those of Charles Manson (there's a lot on this in the booklet entitled "The Facts on Hinduism" by John Ankerberg and John Weldon. Charles Manson reportedly asked "If God is One, what is bad?")

Hindu-Related Terms

Pantheism – The teaching that all is god

Monism – The teaching that all is one, in reality, there are no categories, no individuality

Brahman – the ultimate reality which is impersonal, unknowing, and unknowable

Reincarnation – rebirth

Samsara – The cycle of death and rebirth

Maya – Illusion – The belief that the universe and the individual person are not real, but really a part of Brahman

Moksha – The goal of Hinduism, release from maya and samsara which is when you become one with Brahman (who they say is god)

Atman – One's spirit or supposed True Self (which is supposedly one with Brahman)

Karma – a supposed law in which actions in one life affects a future life. If one attains moksha (also known as mukti), they are free from Karma.

Puja – Ceremonial, ritualistic worship done in homes or Hindu temples

Sati: An outlawed Hindu practice where widows would throw themselves into the flames that were burning their deceased husbands so that they could die with them.

Yoga - a discipline with the purpose of being yoked (joined) to Brahma.

### Hindu Scriptures

- The 4 Vedas (Rig Veda (oldest, maybe 1,500-1,200 B.C., despite claims of it being 5,000 or 10,000 years old), Samaveda, Yajurveda, and Artharveda)
- Upanishads or Vedanta
- Puranas
- Mahabharata (of which the Bhagavad Gita, or just "Gita", about Krishna and Arjuna, is a part)
- Ramayana

### General Hinduism Related Truth

**The Caste System:** A hierarchical system linked to the Hindu idea of reincarnation and progress to moksha. It has been used to keep certain people down and elevate others. It is a great source of pride for many Brahmins.

Highest Caste – Brahmins (priests), then Khsatriyas (warriors), then Vaishyas (merchants 7 landowners), then Sudras aka Shudras (servants to the former 3 castes), then Untouchables (outcasts)

- Many Hindus, even "Brahmins", may not be very familiar with a lot of Hinduism, though they may feel a strong attachment to and pride over it for cultural reasons.

The following 3 stories are based on information from an Indian friend. Please verify. You may want to check all references below. They pertain to stories from Hindu literature that demonstrate the immorality and lack of character of their so-called gods. As you read, realize that Shiva, Vishnu, Ganesh, and Parvathy are all supposed to be gods according to Hinduism. These stories might be brought up (with prayer, in wisdom) to Hindus who you might want to question regarding them to exopose the falsehood of their gods, comparing it with the one true God of Scripture Who is perfectly holy, righteous, and just.

SHIVA :

Once all gods came to Shiva and complained that all rishis (sages – authors of the Hindu Vedas) on earth have desires that were unacceptable to gods (reportedly there was unfaithfulness) and asked Shiva to care of it so Shiva calls Vishnu and asks him to take care of it. So Vishnu took the form of a female consort called Mohini and came to all sages and had relations with them to fulfill all of their sensual desires so that they would be satisfied.

Later, the wives complained about what happened, so Shiva took the form of a male consort form called Biravan and came to the wives of the rishis and fulfilled their sensual desires.

When the sages realized what Shiva did one group said : Shiva Shiva, in anger and disapproval at what he had done, but another group said Shiva (only one time) mayam, meaning its Shiva's drama, not having the disapproval.

- Reference: Adhithana Sinthamani, pg. 659

This shows not only immorality of the Hindu gods, but of the rishis, who reportedly are the ones who under inspiration wrote the Vedas. It also brings a wrong concept that fulfilling a sinful desire will end that desire instead of keeping one in bondage to sin.

This shows the infinite gap between false gods and The One True GOD revealed in The Scriptures: **“This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.”** – 1 John 1:5

Ganesh (or Ganesha), aka Vinayagar, the false god with the elephant head:

Ganesh, the son of Shiva, was always desiring Shiva's wife Parvathy aka Shakthi. The story goes that he was created from the dirt from her bathing, so he always was desiring her. As he was watching her take bath and enjoying it, without Shiva realizing that it was the son, Shiva chopped off his head. Parvathy scolded Shiva for cutting off his son's head and so Shiva went in search of a head. Shiva found an elephant and took his head and placed it for his son's head. So, Ganesh remains single to this day waiting for his mother to say Yes.

- Reference: Raman and Sita (Ramayana)

Sita and Rama (Hindu false gods), husband and wife, are considered to be the embodiment of marriage. Hindus reportedly talk so highly of them:

Sita said that Rama looks handsome but has no masculinity and has no capacity to satisfy her, and that he deceives everyone by his beauty, but is not worthy of worship.

She is kidnapped by an evil king called Ravana, and in captivity she starts liking him. She has relations with Ravana. Her husband Rama comes at last to rescue her and she says that she enjoyed the physical relationship with Ravana, but justified it by saying that she was always thinking about Raman in her mind.

- Reference: Ramayana, Utha Kandam, section 117 page 488  
Ramayana, Aiyothiya Kandam, section 30 page 22

Also, Krishna was a womanizer and adulterer who took women's clothing from them. Srimad Bhagavatam 10:22:1-28. Compare: Brahmavaivarta Purana 1:27; Brhaddharma Purana 3:17.

### Scripture

- Genesis 1:1, refutes pantheism,
- Isaiah 14:12-15, and Ezekiel 28:1-10 refute the idea that we are God (also Genesis 3:1-5).
- Isaiah 44:6 refutes polytheism, as does Deuteronomy 4:35 which says, "Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know that the Lord he is God; there is none else beside him.". Also refuting polytheism are Deut. 4:39, 6:4, Isaiah 43:10 (&11), 44:8, 45:6, 21-22.
- The following refutes idols: Isaiah 46:1-10 (also shows The True & Living GOD to be The GOD of prophecy); Psalm 115:1-13 (which shows the promise that God will bless, not only to Israel, but all who fear Him, both small and great).

### Miscellaneous Possible Questions for Hindus and General Witnessing Ideas

Firstly, as stated, Hindus don't all believe and practice the same thing, so first ask questions not so much to make a point, but to get an idea of what they say they believe. Then, based on what they've said, you might want to **ask** some of the following questions, or modified versions of them, maybe in seeking to show them something, after which you can explain Biblical truth leading to The Gospel. You might ask other questions that come to your mind that bring out inconsistencies or other problems with Hinduism. **Listen** to what they say in order to seek to learn what they believe, remembering that the main goal is not so much to refute Hinduism (which may have its place), but to preach the gospel of Jesus. Also, **be aware of a possible language barrier**. Be clear and define terms. For example, **you may speak** of a new birth, and **they may think** you are referring to reincarnation. So, here are some possible questions and points to raise:

The Bible is historical – real events and real people etc. (Israelite Kings, empires like Assyria, Babylon and Rome, etc.). Hinduism is not rooted in history like Scripture is. There are stories that are mythological.

How can it be that there is no absolute truth or way to God, but many ways, but yet there be absolute right and wrong that affects karma? Doesn't belief in karma presume absolute wrong, since bad karma supposedly results from bad actions?

What went wrong in the first place with Brahman that resulted in maya? How did Brahman, or part of Brahman, lose itself in maya necessitating moksha, if it was the ultimate reality?

How did personal beings become part of the illusion when they are supposedly, in reality, part of, or one with, the *impersonal* force of Brahman? How is it that the supposed gods of Hinduism, which are all said to be part of the *impersonal* Brahman, are portrayed (and treated) as *personal* beings?

### Things to Possibly Explain to Hindus

**Explain to the Hindu about the certainty of salvation and forgiveness that a true believer in Jesus Christ can have – 1 John 5:13.** This is such wonderful truth and contrasts with what may seem like the impossible task of achieving moksha even after hundreds of lifetimes.

Explain about the personal, relational nature of The True God of the Bible, and how it is consistent with us being made in His image and the desires of our hearts for personal relationships. Show them John 17:3 where Jesus shows that eternal life is to know The one true God and Jesus Christ. This contrasts with the supposedly unknowable Brahman.

The parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15 demonstrates a broken relationship that sin caused, a relationship (father and son), and forgiveness (idea taken from Christian Research Institute articles entitled Witnessing to Hindus by Dean Halverson and Natun Battacharya). So, this one parable might be helpful in demonstrating more than one beautiful truth of Scripture which is not found in Hinduism.

Jesus said he didn't come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many, even though He created the universe – Matthew 20:28. This is in contrast to the Hindu false gods,

The Bible gives the promise of love, hope, and guaranteed forgiveness for those who believe in Jesus.

There is no reincarnation, but judgment after death – Daniel 12:2, Hebrews 9:27.

Most professing Christians, perhaps around 95%, are not true Christians. Many things done in the name of Christianity over the past 2,000 years were contrary to the teachings of Jesus and Scripture. The real issue is not what did professing Christians do and teach, but what did Jesus do, and what does The Bible teach. A true Christian is not one because of natural birth, but because of a new birth that comes through faith in Jesus when one repents of their sin and believes in Jesus, not their own righteousness.

Explain that although Christianity is exclusive (only those who believe in Jesus can be saved), it is also inclusive in that all are to be invited to come to salvation (John 3:16, Mark 16:15-16, Matthew 11:28-30 – which might include a rest from a quest to escape to be free from the bondage of Karma), Revelation 22:17 which says, **“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”**

**Be Clear on Terms;** The Christian idea of being born again is not reincarnation.

Possible Hindu Objections to Christianity (Please also see other handout)

Claim # 1 of Hindu: Hinduism is the world's oldest religion; the Vedas were written 5,000 years ago. Christianity is only 2,000 years old

Possible Christian Response: Maybe first ask, "How do you define oldest religion? By founder? Oldest oral teaching? Oldest written teaching? or by The true God?" Oldest religion could be defined in different ways. Explain Scripture historically - The eternity of God of The Bible, Genesis (creation around 4,000 B.C., which would be around 6,000 years ago), chapters 1-3, the fig leaf (world's oldest man-made religion) vs. God's covering, Cain's worship vs. Abel's (all around 6,000 B.C.), the calling and covenant with Abraham (around 2,000 - 1,800 B.C., so maybe around 4,000 – 3,800 years ago), to the writing of the first Jewish/Christian Scriptures (Job possibly written around Abraham's time, and Moses (The Torah – first 5 books in the arrangement of The Bible) around 1,400 B.C – 3,400 years ago).

So, this question can be used as a springboard to explain the gospel going back to "the beginning", spoken of in Genesis 1:1 and John 1:1. It can be used to explain the entire narrative of Scripture which points to Jesus, the only savior of the world – the whole "big story" of The Bible. People worshipped The God of the Bible from the earliest of times.

Then, if the person claims that the oldest Hindu scriptures are 5,000 years old, politely put the burden of proof for that claim on him or her. As, for the evidence of this claim. The Rig Veda, which may be the oldest Hindu text, reportedly dates back to around 1,500 B.C. at most, which is after God's revelation to Abraham and probably after Job was written.

Even if the claim were true of being 5,000 years old, this would not prove Hinduism true. There were both true and false religion back to around the time of creation. Additionally, Biblical Christianity worships the same God as does Biblical Judaism – The God of both the Old and New Testaments, which record history going back to the beginning. If they claim that Christianity is only 2,000 years old, explain that he was a fulfillment of prophecies going back as far as around 6,000 B.C. (Genesis 3:15). The New Testament reveals fulfillments recorded in the Hebrew Scriptures, which record history from the beginning – Genesis 1:1.

2. Hindu Claim # 2: All the religions in the world lead to same destination? We are droplets of water joining a stream and finally the ocean.

Possible Christian Response: (refer to Answering the Culture Part 1 – "What Makes You Right and Everyone Wrong (The Exclusive Claims of Christ) "

Claim # 3 of Hinduism: We don't tend to change anybody's religion. Why then are the Christians always trying to change other people's religion?

Possible Christian Response: Refer to Answering the Culture Part 1 – "What Makes You Right and Everyone Wrong (The Exclusive Claims of Christ)". Explain that salvation only through Christ is God's plan, not ours, and that it reflects both His great justice and wrath against sin, as well as His incomparable love. The Bible reveals the terms that God revealed He will accept sinners by in order to save them from eternal judgment. God created the universe and He reveals how to be saved, not us.

Claim #4 of Hinduism: Christ teaching is a reflection of the teaching of Hindu gurus. Jesus came to India in His childhood and learned all the Hindu philosophies and went back to Israel. Christ's teachings are nothing but gems of wisdom by Hindu gurus.

Possible Christian Response: Explain to the person making this claim how when Jesus' teachings are understood in their proper Biblical context, including the context of the entire Old Testament which Jesus quoted from, and which clearly teach that there is only one God, that Jesus' teaching are in complete opposition to the teachings of the gurus.

### Resource

"The Facts on Hinduism" by John Ankerberg and John Weldon, Harvest House Publishers

"Hinduism Objections and Answers" article on the web: <https://carm.org/hinduism-objections-and-answers> (not every teaching of the writers of CARM is recommended, but they do seem to have good information in this and other articles. Always seek discernment.

B.O.L.D Answering the Culture Part 2  
Hinduism and Buddhism  
Part 2 - Buddhism

Buddhism- General Information and History

Siddhartha Gautama: Born around 560 B.C., died around 480 B.C.

Buddhism has popularity in the United States today.

Maybe around 400 million Buddhists – 4<sup>th</sup> largest religion

First formal biography of “Buddha” maybe late first century, around 600 years after his death; before that, oral tradition

His father was chieftain and he lived in a palace.

One day he left the palace and saw suffering: an old man, a leper, a corpse, and an ascetic.

There are many, many sects of Buddhism, the main ones being Theravada, a.k.a. Hinayana – the smaller vehicle, said to be the oldest, Mahayana (Great Vehicle), from which Zen came, and Vajrayana, related to Tibetan Buddhism. There may be thousands of sub-sects. Mahayana saw Theravadan Buddhism as selfish, only seeking one’s own salvation, and professes to be more concerned with helping others to achieve enlightenment.

**Buddhist Teachings/Beliefs**

The Four Noble Truths

1. Life is suffering
2. Craving/desire is the cause of suffering
3. Cessation of desire (which will lead to a cessation of suffering), which is the state of Nirvana
4. The path leading to the cessation of desire – The Middle Path – not seeking extreme asceticism or extreme pleasure through the senses (the eightfold path)

The Eightfold Path

Right understanding (view), right thought (intention), right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration

The Five Precepts

No killing (including animals), no stealing, no illicit sexual activity, no wrong speech (including gossip), no drugs or alcohol



## Illusion

### **Quotes**

“This whole world, a delusion, is nothing but a shadow caused by the mind. There is no world outside the mind.” “Things have no reality in themselves, but are like heat, haze.”  
To Buddha, every definitive thing is illusion.

It is a mistake to regard this world as either a temporal world or as a real one, but ignorant people of this world assume that this is a real world and proceed to act upon that absurd assumption ... a wise man, recognizing the world is but an illusion, does not act as if it were real, so he escapes the suffering.

Reincarnation: The teaching of birth and rebirth

Karma (a.k.a. Kamma): A supposed law that one’s actions govern the future, including actions from past lives.

Nirvana: The goal of Buddhism – enlightenment. It means void, blowing out, or quenching

Pali Canon: Earliest Theravadan scriptures

Bodhisattva: A person who achieves enlightenment, but delays or does not enter it so that he can help others with salvation.

Denial of the Biblical doctrine of human sin and depravity.

“Abandon evil! One can abandon evil! If it were impossible to abandon evil, I would not ask you to do so. But as it can be done, therefore I say, Abandon evil! Cultivate the good! One can cultivate what is good! If it were impossible to cultivate the good I would not ask you to do so. But as it can be done, therefore I say, Cultivate the good! (Anguttara Nikaya, Book of Ones).”

**[Compare this with, “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not.” – Romans 7:18]**

Buddhism teaches that one should cultivate love, and doesn’t recognize our inability to do this apart from Christ (John 15:4-5). “Just as a mother would protect her only child even at the risk of her own life, even so one should cultivate unconditional love to all beings.” (Sutta Nipata, 150).  
It is a mistake to regard this world as either a temporal world or as a real one, but ignorant people of this world assume that this is a real world and proceed to act upon that absurd assumption ... a wise man, recognizing the world is but an illusion, does not act as if it were real, so he escapes the suffering.

Most Buddhists may not believe in an ultimate deity, and Siddhartha reportedly taught that focusing on the subject is not helpful anyway.

Buddhism seeks to deal with the **symptom** of suffering rather than the **source** of suffering, which is sin.

Buddhism teaches that there is no such thing as the soul, but energies.

There is **no savior** in Buddhism. Each one is to pursue salvation, maybe with the help of others.

Buddhists don't have an explanation for the origin of the universe.

Self is an illusion – there is no such thing as the self

### **Major Point**

Siddhartha Gautama never claimed to be God, and there is no record that he claimed divine inspiration for his teachings, **so, he is just a man with thoughts. How can such a human, without divinity or divine revelation know such details on things such as reincarnation, nirvana, karma, etc.? What is the authority of the teachings, outside of a mortal man who did not hear from a higher source?**

Buddha is dead (though they might say he attained Nirvana); Jesus is alive.

He compared his teachings to a raft that ought to be left behind once the other side of the river is reached; but The Word of God endures forever – Isaiah 40:7-8, 1 Peter 1:24-25

A supposed record of Siddhartha's teachings were not written until centuries after his death.

There are very many sects of Buddhism. There have been many changes and variations among Buddhist teachings.

### **Relevant Scripture That Buddhist Teaching is Contrary To**

John 14:6

Questions for Buddhists:

Was Buddha an illusion?

If not, why not?

How did the illusion begin?

Why is the mind treated as real, but everything outside the mind an illusion?

If Buddha taught this, then wasn't everything outside his mind an illusion? Wouldn't that include other people's minds?

If there is no self, then how can there be reincarnation and why the search for Nirvana?

Why even believe such notions if they are not of divine origin?

Question: If Buddha taught that things perceived with our senses are not real (apparently taught at least in some portion of Buddhism), then are we to not assume that Buddha or his teaching is real? If it is absurd to treat this world as being real, then is one absurd if he acts as if Siddhartha's teaching is real?" (The Buddhist teaching is self-refuting.)

This seems similar to the situation where an atheist borrows from and uses the Christian world view in seeking to refute it.

If Buddhists claim to be "open", unlike Christianity, consider the following quote of what Siddhartha reportedly said, "Rely upon yourself; do not depend upon anyone else. Make my teachings your light. Rely upon them. Do not depend any other teaching."

Firstly, this is not inclusive.

Secondly, why depend upon his teaching if everything is an illusion and it's absurd to act upon the assumption that this world is real? Are we not hearing his teaching in this world? Just by hearing such Buddhist teaching, one is using sense of hearing? How can

Again, why rely upon his teachings only and make them my light if he was not divine or divinely inspired?