

What Hindus Believe

- Definitions of the Hindu faith are as _____ as the individuals who hold to it, and its core beliefs are often buried beneath a vast and intricate maze of _____ ideas.
 - Deities worshiped, beliefs, practices and festivals can vary from region to region, village to village and even family to family.
- Despite the complexities of Hinduism, there are _____ key concepts that most Hindus believe:
 - The path of the Hindu is to _____ into god and escape the cycle of reincarnation.
 - Every soul is a part of the universe and must work out its own _____.

The Ultimate Reality

- The Hindu concept of god is called _____ or ultimate reality.
 - This cosmic force or personhood is said to exist within all things.
- However, a person _____ have a relationship with Brahman, nor can this god-force be humanly grasped or experienced.
 - Hinduism's millions of gods are believed to be _____ of different facets of Brahman

The Self: Atman is Brahman

- Hindus believe in the self, known as the _____.
- The atman is the soul that travels from birth to birth, being _____ along the way through religious practice.
- The central realization in enlightenment is "atman is Brahman": the soul and god are _____

Law of Karma and the Cycle of Samsara

- Hindus view time as _____, evidenced in the concepts of karma and samsara.
 - Karma is the "law of the _____," a system of reward or punishment for one's actions.
 - Consequences are received through _____, a cycle of rebirth more widely known as reincarnation.
- A difficult life is the consequence of _____ karma, while good deeds result in good karma, enabling the soul to be born into a better life and socio-religious standing.

Moksha and the Four Margas

- Roughly equivalent to _____, moksha is liberation from the cycle of rebirth, allowing the soul to merge with god (Brahman) like a drop of water returning to a pool.
- Hindus believe that there are _____ distinct paths or margas to achieving moksha, though which path one chooses is unimportant.
 - Jnana Marg* (The path of knowledge): Discovering that the material world is an

illusion and that one's soul is indeed god through meditation or instruction.

- *Bhakti Marg* (The path of devotion): Finding favor with a chosen deity through personal worship and devotion.
- *Yoga Marg* (The path of discipline): Realizing the energy of god within oneself through exercise and mastery of various postures.
- *Karma Marg* (The path of detachment or selfless service): Performing good works without the hope of reward.

Dharma

- Dharma has been translated as a “born _____” or “way of life.”
- Dharma prescribes the criteria for earning good karma or merit and, therefore, a _____ reincarnation.
 - It varies according to gender, caste group and stage of life, and is responsible for many of the enduring hierarchies in Hindu society.

Varna and Jati

- The concepts of purity and position pervade the social order of Hindu society, affecting worship, relationships and roles.
- Varna classifies a person's _____ within society based on hereditary roots and occupation.
- The system consists of four tiers:
 - *Brahmins* (priests and philosophers)
 - *Kshatriyas* (warriors, rulers and business owners)
 - *Vaishyas* (merchants and agriculturalists)
 - *Shudras* (laborers and servants).

Varna and Jati (Cont.)

- Jati are distinct _____ that are defined by family, inherited religious standing, geographical region and ancestral occupation.
 - One's jati, or caste, cannot be changed within a lifetime.
- While there are four varna, there are _____ jati.

Varna and Jati (Cont.)

- Outside of the four varna are the scheduled castes or outcastes.
- Some are tribal peoples, but the majority are known as _____ due to defiling jobs in society that make them unclean.
 - They call themselves Dalits, which means “_____.”
- Members of the higher castes generally do not interact with the lower castes or outcastes concerning spiritual and religious matters.
- Perceived purity and fear of pollution create major obstacles to the gospel moving freely from person to person and between social tiers in Hindu culture.

Hindu Sacred Texts

- The Vedas
 - The _____ of Hindu scriptures, consisting of four collections of sacred writings containing hymns, prayers and ritual texts.
- The Upanishads
 - Speculative treatises on ultimate reality and mystical ideas about man and the _____.
- The Ramayana
 - One of two major epic tales, consisting of _____ couplets based on the life of Rama, who is said to be the seventh incarnation of the god Vishnu.

Hindu Sacred Texts (Cont.)

- The Mahabharata
 - The second epic tale, consisting of 100,000 verses concerning the deeds of the _____ clans.
- The Bhagavad Gita
 - One section of the epic Mahabharata, the Bhagavad Gita is literally the “Song of the Lord.” It is the _____ read Hindu scripture, consisting of a philosophical dialogue between the warrior Arjuna and the god Krishna.
- The Puranas
 - Historical events combined with myths and legends
- Many of which are in _____

Below is a table comparing what Christians believe (center column) versus what a Hindu believes (right column).

God	• There is one God, alone deserving of all worship. • God is personal, knowable, holy, just and loving; man can have a relationship with Him. • Based on dualism: God and the world are separate and distinct. Both spirit and matter are real.	• Brahman, the one supreme being, is manifested in millions of gods. • Brahman is impersonal, unknowable and without attributes • Promotes monism—one existence or reality—and one belief that all else is an illusion, the result of ignorance.
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Trinity	God is triune: The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are one.	The Trimurthi, a three-headed, single bodied man, represents Brahma, the creator; Vishnu, the preserver; and Shiva, the destroyer.
Incarnation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jesus was fully God and fully man.• The purpose of the incarnation was to redeem sinful man through Jesus' death and resurrection.• Jesus' life and death are evidenced in history	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There have been 10 incarnations of the god Vishnu in various human and animal forms.• The purpose of these incarnations was to save the righteous, destroy the unrighteous and restore the balance between good and evil.• Avatars (incarnations) of various gods and goddesses are rooted in legends.
Rebirth	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New birth (spiritual life) is obtained by grace, through faith in Christ.• The body will be resurrected upon Christ's return to earth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Samsara is the process of reincarnation.• The circumstances of one's birth are the result of the good or bad karma from a previous life.
Justice	God is the moral lawgiver and judge.	Karma is the impersonal system of justice in which good or bad deeds result in good or bad consequences.
Sin	Sin is the violation of God's moral law. It results in a broken relationship with God, guilt and condemnation.	Humankind's "problem" is avidya (ignorance). Associated with this are maya (illusions) and mala (the feeling of individuality).
Forgiveness	Forgiveness is a free gift available through faith in Christ, who paid for our sin through His death on the cross.	Sinful actions call for purification rather than forgiveness. Good works are required to counteract the imbalance of bad deeds.

Salvation	Salvation is deliverance from guilt and sin and the free gift of eternal life, by grace, through faith in Christ.	Moksha is release from the cycle of reincarnation, achieved only after much effort and many lifetimes.
Works	Our good deeds and devotion to God are our expression of thankfulness and worship and the fruit of our new life in Christ.	Our good deeds and devotion to God are means of seeking Moksha along the four traditional paths: knowledge, devotion, discipline and detachment.