

MISSIONS IN A HINDU CONTEXT

Belief System in Hinduism and Concepts in Hinduism

<u>Belief System in Hinduism</u>	<u>Concepts in Hinduism</u>
<p>SRUTI (What is Heard- Revelation)</p> <p>Veda means Knowledge or wisdom</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Rig-Veda</i> - the Prayer book • <i>Sama-Veda</i> - the Song book • <i>Yajur-Veda</i> - the Ritual book • <i>Atharvana-Veda</i> - the book of sacred spells <p><i>Each Veda has -Four main parts</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mantras</i>- hymns /praises to Vedic gods • <i>Brahmanas</i>- commentary on Mantras, • <i>Aranyakas</i>- appendices to the Brahmanas • <i>Upanishaths</i>- embedded in the Aranyakas <p>(<i>Upanishaths</i>- like ‘New Testament’ in the Bible)</p> <p>SMRITI (What is Remembered-Tradition)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Itihasa means ‘thus verily happened’ Mahabharata & Ramayana, epic format, poetry • Puranas (means ancient) • Manu Smriti – Manu, the Lawgiver 	<p>Moksha/Mukthi - Salvation</p> <p>Deliverance of the soul from *The bondage of body' and *The universe of time and space'</p> <p>- Both governed by the law of karma.</p> <p>Karma is</p> <p>*an action under the influence of passions and undesirable emotions.</p> <p>*It binds every creature in the endless cycle of rebirths.</p> <p>Samsara: Cycle of births and rebirths (the transmigration of soul)</p> <p><i>Samsara</i> means ‘going through’ or ‘wandering’</p> <p><i>Karma</i> means ‘action’or ‘work.’</p> <p>Brahman (God) - the Ultimate Reality</p> <p>* This transmigration of soul goes on till ‘the cycle of Karma’ is broken.</p> <p>*The soul is then ‘identified/dissolved/ absorbed with God’</p>
	<p>Union with God: Three ways for Salvation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Karma Marga</i> (union through Rituals) - <i>Bhakti Marga</i> (union through Devotion) - <i>Jnana Marga</i> (union through Knowledge)

Points of convergence and divergence between Hinduism and Christianity

Convergence	Divergence
<p>Salvation</p> <p>Believes in Ultimate Reality/God</p> <p>Believes in Immortality</p>	<p>Salvation:</p> <p><i>Hinduism:</i> Need to work-out your own salvation It is through good works/rituals (merit) only</p> <p><i>Christianity:</i> Salvation is a gift of God through grace (Eph. 2:8) Salvation comes from God Concept of repentance (Mark 1:15) and final judgment (Heb. 9:27)</p>
<p>Atonement:</p> <p>Atonement through sacrifices</p> <p>Animal Sacrifices: Bible (OT) Practiced it</p>	<p>Atonement: <i>Hinduism:</i> Self-Atonement</p> <p><i>Christianity:</i> Atonement through Christ only (the lamb of God - the perfect sacrifice – (Heb. 9:26-30)</p>

Points of convergence and divergence between Hinduism and Christianity

<p>Rebirth: There is concept of rebirth Bible: Born-Again</p> <p>Hindu Dharma of Caste: All Humans are the members of one organic body with different functions</p> <p>Guru: Religious Teacher in Hinduism (Rabbi in Judaism)</p> <p>Meditation: Meditation (Yoga) means spiritual union with God</p>	<p>Rebirth: <i>Hinduism:</i> Law of Karma; many cycles of births and rebirths; Transmigration of soul into different forms (plants, animals). <i>Christianity:</i> Born-Again: Spiritual rebirth – in this life only and one-time experience. (John 3:3) Resurrected body at the second coming of Christ (I Cor 15:3-4 & 20-22)</p> <p>Union with God <i>Hinduism:</i> Humans ‘become’ God <i>Christianity:</i> Humans ‘become like’ God (Rom 8:29)</p> <p>Church, the body of Christ <i>Hinduism:</i> No head or controller <i>Christianity:</i> Christ is the Head (Eph. 1:22)</p> <p>Guru: Christ not only a Teacher, He is Son of God (John 3:16); the Savior-(John 4:42); the Way, the Truth and the Life (John 14:6);</p> <p>Meditation: <i>Hinduism:</i> Aim: To alter the mode of human consciousness through the control of body and mind in order to liberate the soul. <i>Christianity:</i> Aim: Not Self-concentration but to surrender to ‘the Word’ in order to serve God (Josh. 1:8, Ps. 1:2-3).</p>
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The strength of Christianity in relation to Hinduism

- The concept of grace
- The concept of eternal life
- The personal relationship with God through Christ
- The close fellowship with the community of believers
- Holy Spirit as the guide for daily life

Conclusion:

The goal of the study is first to establish the connections we can make between Hinduism and Christianity through convergences. These contact points can further lead to a sensitive dialogue of the divergences between them. In this way we can present the claims of Christ.

In considering mission in a Hindu context, the most significant aspect of Christianity is to be emphasized, that is the concept of grace (Unmerited favor), where Hinduism focuses on salvation achieved through moral perfection, which is an unrealistic and unattainable ideal.

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