

Impressum

Ashutosh Vardhana:
Some things which Christians want to know about Hindus
(in preparation)

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EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

This booklet is now in preparation. At present the page contains only some of the questions, in random order, but none of the answers.

If you are aware of any questions often asked by non-Hindus, please send them to me, so that I can take them into consideration while working on this booklet.

If you would formulate differently the questions already listed on the site, please send me your formulations. Thank you.

**Ashutosh Vardhana:
Some things
which Christians want to know
about Hindus
(in preparation)**

or:

**Ashutosh Vardhana:
A Christian questions a Hindu.
100 questions and answers**

We have brought to the top the few questions which have so far been answered, to make them more visible - so far only one.

- What is the significance of the symbol OM? Is it a name of God, or Brahman? Or what is it? What does it mean? (Answer done)
- Lord Rama and the Festival of his birth (Ram Naumi)

Some of the questions to be answered

1. How do you cope with so many gods?
2. If you believe in more than one god, can these gods really be God?
3. Do you pray to animals and trees (elephants, monkeys, cows)?
4. What happens to Hindus when they die?
5. Why are many Hindus vegetarians?
6. Why are cows sacred?
7. Do you believe in heaven and paradise?
8. Christians believe in the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ. Isn't it hard in a religion in which there is no forgiveness of sins? Perhaps you would be better off as Christians.
9. What is Karma?
10. Do you believe in free will?
11. Do you believe in a personal God?
12. Isn't a personal god much more real and satisfactory for human beings than an impersonal god?
13. Christians hope to go to heaven when their life is ended. What is the expectation of Hindus?
14. Isn't reincarnation a rather absurd idea?
15. I have been told that Hindus can pick and choose the God they worship (something like 'ishtha devata')? How does that work? Does it make sense?

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16. Which are the holy scriptures of Hinduism?
 17. Do the same rules of behaviour apply to every Hindu?
(dharma for each caste and individual)
 18. What is darshan?
 19. How do you pray?
 20. Are there some particularly beautiful and popular prayers?
 21. What is meditation?
 22. What are mantras?
 23. Which day of the week is holy for Hindus (like Sunday for Christians and Friday for Muslims)?
 24. Why do you believe in astrology?
 25. What about arranged marriage?
 26. What is the status of women?
 27. What about caste?
 28. Isn't it cruel and absurd to have members of your community which are considered untouchable?
 29. How do you explain suffering and evil in this world? How does it tally with your idea of god. (Natural catastrophes, genocides, dictators [Saddam, Idi Amin])
 30. Hindus are considered peaceful. Their greatest commandment is non-violence (as Mahatma Ghandi preached, who was then shot by a fanatical Hindu). Yet Hindus indulge in much communal violence, e.g. in Ayodhya, the massacre in Gujarat a few years ago. Christians are not likely to behave like this, not even in the name of God. Aren't Christians much more peaceful and much less violent than Hindus?
 31. What is a saint in Hindu eyes?
 32. Give us the names of some great, and generally recognised, Hindu saints. (e.g. Ramakrishna, Ramana Maharshi, ...)
 33. Give us the names of some other great Hindus in history (e.g. Mahatma Gandhi, ...; Valmiki, Tulsidas, ...)
 34. Which god created this world?

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35. What is the relationship between 'GOD' and the visible world?
 36. What are the main teachings of the Gita?
 37. Please quote some of the most memorable verses of the Gita.
 38. Do you have something like the Christian and Jewish 'Ten Commandments'?
 39. Can you recommend some books on Hinduism? And where can they be bought?
 40. Christians either go to heaven (if they live well) or to hell in all eternity (if they live badly). Do Hindus ever go to hell? In all eternity?
 41. Which religion provides a greater incentive to people to live well?
 42. Are there people who are 'evil' (e.g. Hitler, Saddam, Idi Amin, mass murderers, paedophiles, Dr Shipman, Myra Hindley, ..., rapists, the kidnappers and murderers in Iraq, ...)?
 43. Which are the most important Hindu festivals?
 44. Do Hindus fast? Why?
 45. Are wives inferior or subject to their husbands?
 46. Do the same rules of behaviour apply to all castes?
 47. Are all Hindus vegetarians?
 48. Do Hindus drink and smoke?
 49. We have seen pictures of the erotic temple statues in Orissa? What does sex have to do with religion?
 50. Can you explain the ten incarnations of Vishnu? Do you believe that they really happened?
 51. Will there be any more incarnations of God?
 52. Is there anything a Hindu must believe, and if he doesn't, he is no longer considered a Hindu. (Like Christians, who must believe that Jesus is the Son of God, otherwise they are not considered Christians.)
 53. Who is the greatest Hindu god? Krishna, Rama, Siva, Devi, ...?

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54. Are there actions which are purely good and others which are purely bad?
 55. Do Hindus try to convert others to become Hindus? If Hindum is the true religion, shouldn't Hindus try to make converts (as Christians do in order to save others from eternal perdition)?
 56. Will all Hindus answer these questions in the same way?
 57. Are the gods real? Is this world real? (In the answer, the six systems of Hindu philosophy should be mentioned)
 58. Do all Hindus believe in a personal god? Or is the Hindu god impersonal?
 59. Do you pray to statues?
 60. What is the highest goal of a Hindu? (moksha, union with God)
 61. Is it necessary for a non-Hindu to become a Hindu in order to progress on his spiritual path?
 62. What is a guru?
 63. What is a sin? Why is it bad to commit sinful acts?
 64. Christians and especially ex-Christians often worry and complain about suffering in this world. How can God permit such a thing? Why does he not prevent it? Either he is not powerful enough, or he is not loving enough, or he does not exist at all. Do Hindus ask similar questions? How do they answer them?
 65. I am rather impressed by the answers you have given. Would it be a good idea if I stopped being a Christian and converted to Hinduism? Will conversion to Hinduism help me to reach God more quickly?
 66. (Answer: No. Conversion is neither necessary nor desirable, unless you absolutely cannot help it. Stick with the religion of your childhood and practise it's good aspects while ignoring everything you regard as unhelpful. But having learnt something about Hindum has the advantage that you will be able to treat the Hindus you meet with more respect, sympathy and understanding. That is a gain. You will also understand your own religion better by being able to compare it with another.)
 67. What is yoga?
 68. What is karma yoga, bhakti yoga, and jagna yoga?

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69. Muslims have very strict rules of conduct: pray x times a day, fast during a specific month, donate a fixed proportion of your income to charity, make a pilgrimage to Mecca, etc). Do Hindus have some similarly strict rules of conduct?
 70. Some people say that Hinduism is a mystic religion while Judaism, Christianity and Islam are prophetic religions. What does that mean?
 71. Does it matter whether a person belongs to one religion rather than another? Are there true religions as opposed to false religions?
 72. What is meant by the Hindu maxim 'Respect all religions'?
 73. How to Hindus respond to blasphemy?
 74. Who is the founder of Hinduism?
 75. I have observed that Hindus are particularly concerned with 'respect', in a way that is uncommon in modern English culture. Can you explain? Answer sketch: teacher, guest, wife, husband, ... / nature, sun, cow, ... / printed objects / outstretched feet, left hand / sacred images / what else? / ...
 76. Tell us something about the most popular gods and their features and stories. (Rama, Krishna, Lakshmi, Ganesh, Parvati, Hanuman, Shiva [North India])
 77. What is the sacred language of Hinduism, the language in which the most ancient texts and prayers are written?
 78. Do you believe that Hinduism is a true (the true?) religion. I suppose you do, otherwise you would not be a Hindu. But if Hinduism is true then Judaism, Christianity and Islam (and other religions) must be false religions. Is this how you see it?
 79. What is the significance of the symbol OM? Is it a name of God, or Brahman? Or what is it? What does it mean? (Answer done)
 80. Do you believe in miracles?
 81. How important is arranged marriage for Hindus?
 82. Do you have rules which prescribe how often and when you have to pray, to meditate, to fast, etc. How does your approach compare to that of the Muslims?
 83. What are the similarities and differences between the Jewish/Christian Ten Commandments and the Hindu Yamas and Niyamas? (Note: In the answer cover the Five Buddhist

Silas as well.)

84. What is a guru?

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