



DISCUSSION GUIDE

“Mythbusters: All Religions Are the Same” Hinduism

Hinduism is the oldest of the world's major religions tracing its origins to the Aryan people and culture between 3800—2200 BC. It is estimated that there are 900 million Hindus in the world today.

Hindus believe each human being has within them an “atman” which is a part of god himself. How is this different from the Christian idea that each of us has a soul? What do we mean when we say we are created “in the image of God.”?

The atman means God is part of us. Because god is part of us and god is perfect, we cannot be marred by sin. We are simply ignorant. Life's challenge, therefore is not freedom from sin, but overcoming ignorance through knowledge. Contrast this view with the Christian view that sin is the human condition and is overcome only by grace through faith in Christ. Read Romans 5: 12-19 Romans 3: 23-26

Dharma means “duty” and is the path to fulfillment or enlightenment. If a Hindu is faithful in dharma or duty to god, they will have the opportunity to be born again into a better life form and grow to the next “level” of life. Contrast the concept of dharma with the concept of justification through faith in Romans 5: 1-11

We have observed that the belief in reincarnation is central to both Buddhism and Hinduism though the interpretations differ. Some Christians suggest it is acceptable to integrate the idea of reincarnation into Christian thought and practice. What do you think? Read Hebrews 9: 27-28.

The paths to knowledge in Hindu practice are known as the four “yogas.” They consist of: (1) the study of spiritual principles, (2) loving things of god and worship, (3) certain kinds of exercises to move one's focus from self to god, and (4) pursuit of good deeds. Many people today practice yoga (exercises) without knowing it's association with Hindu faith. Do you see any harm in this? Why or why not?

Many people today, even those who would describe themselves as Christians, practice something syncretism. This is the practice of creating your own “personalized” religion by taking bits and pieces of various faiths and crafting them into something that “works for them.” Syncretism is like a spiritual smorgasbord where you take practices and beliefs from a variety of religions and create the “Gospel according to ME.” What are the dangers of this practice?