

Hi Missionaries,

You will receive emails from India, and you will need to have information like this to work from. I suggest that you file this in a GMO file for later use. The info begins with my email exchange with a lady who was at one time one of my OM's.

Anne, was one of my OM's a couple of years ago. She was born into a Hindu family. When she was about nine years old, she was exposed to Jesus Christ, through a school friend, and became convinced that Hinduism was not the way for her. She later received Christ. --When I received a letter from a contact who is Hindu, I enlisted Anne's advise. I hope that it will help you as you respond to letters just like the one I received.

--Read my letter to Anne.....

Hi Anne,

I've read your background, so I thought that maybe you'd give me insight on answering this email.

The young lady says, "Jesus for me personally is a good spiritual teacher, who teaches me to be simple and humble. I love him very much. I think I once saw him in my dreams and it was full of love and emotions. I'm a Christian but I like also Hinduism. Can you believe in two gods, Jesus and Krishna? I believe. I think that all gods are one god. shortly that will be it for now. Have a nice day Sharon, I'm looking forward to hear from you again.

Goodbye. Sorry my English is a little bad."

Anne's letter to me.....

Hi Sharon,

Let's see. Even this is hard for me. It's very difficult to reason with a Hindu... Here are some reasons. One: many Hindus--in fact all that I know of--claim that all gods are the same. Despite this tolerance, Hindus hold that you can only be born into the religion. You cannot become one. Then there is the discrimination between castes among people of the same ethnicity, but then the open arms to different religions. So much of Hinduism is not only ambiguous but there's no basis or foundation for a number of its practices.

It is even harder because Hinduism, unlike other religions, is very ingrained into the Indian culture. It is the basis for their identity. Thus, anything you say to differentiate Christianity from this person's current way of life will be an offense to their culture as well as to their identity.

The reason why Hindus say all gods are the same isn't necessarily because they believe it. In order to attain closeness with God, Hindus have to do necessary rituals, maintain a certain character, and live in obedience. Obviously, their character comes into question when they appear to be intolerant or unkind. They'd rather be inconsistent than perceived as bigoted or unwelcoming.

Hinduism might permit her to say that both are the same but Jesus does not--and this is the distinction that you'll have to make which obviously makes Jesus seem like the bigot.

Other differences you can focus on...the means to attain closeness with God. Krishna puts forward requirements for rituals and sacrifices, yet he himself does not partake in sacrifices the way Jesus does. Jesus became the sacrifice so that we could attain closeness with God. Jesus is distinct from all other religions because He reaches out to humankind unlike the other gods in Hinduism that make requirements for sacrifice.

Secondly, the belief in reincarnation holds that a person is basically recycled until they do penitence for the actions of their previous lives. Obviously, some people end up doing worse so they are reincarnated into a lower being. Let's say the former happens, that person if they are in a lower caste is promoted to a higher caste until they reach the Brahmin caste (the highest of all castes). If this Brahmin lives a satisfactory life according to practice, character, etc... he/she attains moksha --which is basically a complete soul and almost synonymous with becoming a god. As you know, everyone reaps as he sows in Christianity and even if he sins, Christ is the sacrifice.

People of lower castes, let's say the untouchables are more willing to abandon their previous beliefs in Hinduism. For example, Mahatma Gandhi in his time spoke out against this ridiculous practice of shunning untouchables (e.g. people who are handicapped and believed to be paying for sins in their past life). The untouchables at that time rejected their Hindu faith and built a temple to worship Gandhi. (I know just as irrational but the untouchables are more open to suggestion). However, worshippers of Krishna (which tend to be Brahmins) are more reluctant for the obvious reasons.

I've shared all this not knowing how much you know about Hinduism and hoping that it will give you an idea of her mindset. Your best approach is to focus on Jesus and explain why He is different without direct references to Hinduism. He is different because he does not allow room for people to accept some of His teachings and reject others. His teachings are such that you either accept all or reject all. (C.S. Lewis has a good deal to say about this in his book, *Mere Christianity*). He is different because He claims to be the only God--a claim either true or not. The reason for this approach is this--there are black and whites in Christianity and it's easy to point them out without confusion. With Hinduism, it's all gray areas.

Another book that might give you loads of insight is Ravi Zacharias' *New Birth or Rebirth?* The whole book is based on a dialogue between Jesus and Krishna where some of these differences are more clearly articulated. Also, written by a Hindu convert.

I hope this helps. Forgive me for not condensing it for your convenience.

If you have any questions, let me know.

Anne