

Universidad de Montemorelos

Facultad de Educación



UNDERSTANDING THE WORLDVIEW OF HINDUISM FOR
EVANGELISM PURPOSES

Thesis
Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for Undergraduate Degree
in Theology

by

Philip Dangal

November 2018

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Faculty of Theology

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ABSTRACT

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Date completed: November, 2018

Introduction

In the year of 1894, the Adventist message was first introduced in Hindu country India. Since, then thousands of missionaries have been sent to Asian countries like India, Nepal, Maldives, and Bangladesh but very few results have been accomplished. Many missionaries and Missionary Institutions have come to the realization that the work is very challenging to this specific group of people. In order to reach them and to know how they think and perceive things it is vital to understand their worldview.

Purpose

Having mentioned the above problem, this research tends to contribute in understanding the worldview of Hinduism. Only if we understand their worldview,

we will be able to relate with them, and will be able to explain things in a way that both parties understands with less possibilities of being misunderstood.

Method

In order to make it happen, this research followed thematic methodology, first planted the problematic issues, explained the antecedents, and found solutions of the problem.

Results

Found some elements that could serve as a bridge for religious dialogues with Hindus. When the oriental world is crying for medical assistant, medical missionary work would serve as a medium to touch their hearts, other elements that has to deal with salvation, grace, and the identity of the savior of the world is revealed using their own sacred scriptures.

Conclusions

Investigation reached to the following conclusions:

First, Understanding the worldview of any group of people, or individual helps to relate and reach them.

Second, Christ's method alone will work as incredible method to reach the unreached Hindus, most of the Hindus people have prejudice about the western missionaries but if Christ Method was followed and if we seek nothing but their good, surely they will open their hearts for truth.

Third, some elements have been found in their sacred books where it reveals about the Identity of Jesus Christ and presents Him as the redeemer of the world.

Key words. Worldview, Hinduism, Adventists, elements, bridge

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TABLE OF CONTENTES

Chapter

I. INTRODUCTION	1
Background to the Problem	1
Statement of the Problem.....	5
Research Question	6
Complementary Questions	6
Purpose	6
Specific objectives	6
Justification.....	6
Validate of the Investigation	7
Limitations	7
Delimitations	7
Expected Results.....	7
Conceptual Framework	8
Definition of terms.....	8
Conclusions	11
II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE	12
What is a worldview?.....	12
The Importance of Worldview	15
Historical development of the Hindu beliefs.....	16
Indus Valley Civilization (2000 to 1700 B.C.E)	17
Vedic Period (1600-800 B.C.E)	18
Classical Period (800-200 B.C.E)	19
Epic and Early Puranic Period (200 B.C.E -500 C.E)	20
Medieval and Late Puranic Period (500-1500 C.E)	21
Contemporary elements of the Hindu worldview	21
Brahman ('God) Inspired Rishis (holy ones) and reveled His secrets.....	22
Each living organism is Divine in essence	26
Good or Evil is Natural Consequences of Personal Actions	29
Each Living Organism Dies to Move Into Another State Of Its Divine Essence	31
The Ultimate Purpose In Hinduism Is That the Divine Essence be Released From the Cycle of Reincarnation	35
Core Beliefs of Hinduism	37
Deities.....	38

Brahma.....	38
Vishnu.....	39
Shiva.....	40
Holy Chants (Mantra).....	41
Gayatri mantra.....	42
Pilgrimage a Sacred Journey.....	43
Beliefs on Sacrificial system.....	45
Caste System.....	46
Hindu Practices.....	48
Puja or Worship.....	49
Festivals.....	50
Makar Sakranti.....	50
Diwali-Festival of lights.....	51
Holi-Festival of colors.....	52
Vijaya Dashami.....	53
Summary.....	54
III. METHODOLOGY.....	56
Investigation Design.....	56
Instrumentation.....	57
Treatment of Data.....	57
Summary.....	58
IV. RESULTS.....	59
Elements For Adventists That Can Contribute Dialogues With Hindus.....	59
Great Importance Of Health Message In Hinduism And Also In Adventism.....	59
High Consideration of Social relationships bonds in Hinduism And Also in Adventism.....	62
Janna Yoga or the Value of Education highly Valued By Hindus and Also By Adventists.....	63
Hindu Scriptures points to Jesus (Christ in Hinduism).....	64
Salvation In Hinduism and also in Adventism is through Grace not by Karma.....	64
The rise of redeemer- A man who was born of a virgin.....	65
Death and suffering of Christ in Hindu Vedas.....	66
Atonement for sins in Hinduism.....	68
Resurrection of Jesus mentioned in Hinduism.....	68
Discussion.....	69
Summary.....	71
V. SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND IMPLICATIONS.....	72
Abstract.....	72

Resumen	73
Introduction.....	74
Methodology	78
Results	78
Discussion	78
Conclusion.....	80
Recommendations.....	81
REFERENCE LIST	82

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The presented work of investigation, pretends as its name indicates, to understand the worldview of the Hinduism with the motive of building bridges among them. This chapter tends to plant the background and antecedents about the topic, mentions the need, and objective of a research like this.

Background to the Problem

Hinduism is one of the third largest religion in the world.¹ According to Pew Research Center, in the year of 2012 there are 1 billion Hindus around the world, representing 15% of the global population, in which 94% of Hindus lives in the country of India, 2% in Nepal and 1% in the country of Bangladesh.² In the year of 2013, Cline Center for Democracy research revealed that around 80.5 % of total population in India practices Hinduism, 80.4% of total population in Nepal, 50.3% in Mauritius, and 12% in Bangladesh.³ Even though India, Nepal and Mauritius are known as the major countries for the Hinduism, the presence of Hindus can be found in many other countries such as, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri-Lanka, Bhutan,

¹ Jeffery D. Long, *Historical Dictionary of Hinduism* (Scarecrow Press, 2011), ix.

² "Hindus", *Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project* (blog), el 18 de diciembre de 2012, <http://www.pewforum.org/2012/12/18/global-religious-landscape-hindu/>.

³ "Percent Hindu by Country, around the World," *TheGlobalEconomy.com*, accessed August 28, 2018, <https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/rankings/hindu/>.

Afghanistan, Fiji, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam, Ghana, Kenya, Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago, Netherlands, United Kingdom, Canada and United States.¹ This religion had its origin in the valley of Indus, now located somewhere between Pakistan and northwest India, with the rise of Indus civilization in the year of 2600-1600 BCE.²

Hinduism is consists of unique philosophy and worship different gods.³ The perspective of Hindus about the world around them is an illusion (maya), their goal is to liberate their souls from the illusory cycle of rebirth. Good karma alone can liberate the soul from the cycle of reincarnation.⁴ Hinduism claims to have 33 millions of gods and goddess, each and every one of them have different roles to play in this universe.⁵ Spirit possession is very common in Hinduism, in fact most of the people desire to be possessed by spirits, because they believe that through the act of possession their deities dwell in their bodies and will protect them. Hindu traditions of spirit possession include accounts of possession by the gods, demi-gods, ancestors, ghosts, and other spirit entities.⁶ In Hinduism, the society is divided into different classes which is known as, "Caste system" this division determines ones occupations, dietary habits and interaction with members of other

¹ "Hindu American Foundation (HAF)," accessed August 31, 2018, <https://www.hafsite.org/>.

² Klaus K. Klostermaier, *Hinduism: A Short History* (Oneworld Publications, 2014), 5.

³ Rajeev Verma, *Faith & Philosophy of Hinduism* (Gyan Publishing House, 2009), 37.

⁴ Rachel Dwyer, *What Do Hindus Believe?* (Granta Books, 2013), 5.

⁵ V. Satish, *Tales of Gods in Hindu Mythology* (Partridge Publishing Singapore, 2014), i.

⁶ Frederick M. Smith and Frederick Smith Sir, *The Self Possessed: Deity and Spirit Possession in South Asian Literature and Civilization* (Columbia University Press, 2006).

casters as well. In Hinduism there exists four different castes, and anyone who does not belong to these castes are known as outcast or untouchable.¹

It is well believed that the Christianity in Hindu country India was first introduced with the arrival of Thomas who was the disciple of Jesus. Thomas first stepped in the town of Parur, South India state of Kerala, where he was able to convert some Hindus and established the first Christian congregation named, “Church of Kottakkavu”.² Beginning of the 1700, many protestants Christians began the mission trips to India. Since then, thousands of missionaries from the western world has been sent to the Hindu countries such as in India, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Mauritius but the results have been very unsatisfactory.

For the first time, Adventist message entered in the Hindu nation, India in the year of 1894, by literature evangelists and missionaries William Lenker and A.T. Stroup.³ With a vision to conquer a Hindu country, they passed house to house, selling books and telling people about Jesus. They asked more missionaries from abroad to involve in the literature evangelism, and as the result of this work, the India mission field developed into a union, and then later into division. Literature evangelism has been the key method to establish the Adventist church in India. In the late 1950’s Dr. Stanley and Raylene Sturges were the first Adventists who visited Nepal as missionaries. They began with a small one room

¹ “Hinduism: Caste System, Reincarnation, and Karma,” accessed September 17, 2018, <https://philosophy.lander.edu/oriental/caste.html>.

² Roger E. Hedlund, *Christianity Made in India: From Apostle Thomas to Mother Teresa* (Fortress Press, 2017).

³ The challenging years 1990-1995, Images II, The Seventh-day Adventists Church In Southern Asia, 29

clinic, people with physical problem used to come and get treated, as the result there was a tiny congregation of believers getting together to worship. The medical missionary work is the method that opened the door for Adventists in Nepal.¹

Even though India is considered as a country that has good numbers of Adventist populations with the memberships of 1,548,225 but if we compare with the country population 1.324 billion, the ration is 1:849 which demonstrates that there is still much work to be done.² The Global Mission coordinator of the Southern Asia Division, Kalapala J. Moses writes, “the church growth in Hindu nations has been slow, many missionaries are unable to relate to people of different cultures and religions.”³

There are different reasons why the territories of Hinduism has not been conquered by Christianity. One of those reasons, frequently cited, is intolerance. In some of the places it is illegal to stand publicly to preach or to do the public evangelism. In the year of 2014, the law passed in Nepal stating that anyone who encourages, gives public speeches about Christianity, or tries to convert the people to any other religion is considered as a criminal, he/she will be punished with five years of imprisonment and would have to pay the penalty of fifty thousand rupees.⁴

¹ “Scheer Memorial Adventist Hospital,” Scheer Memorial Adventist Hospital, accessed August 16, 2018, <http://www.scheermemhosp.org/scheer-memorial-adventist-hospital.html>.

² 153rd Report of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists for 2015 and 2016, Annual Statistical Report

³ “Outreach in the Hindu Context,” Ministry Magazine, accessed August 16, 2018, <https://www.ministrymagazine.org/https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/1997/06/outreach-in-the-hindu-context>.

⁴ “Criminal Code 2074 Enacted by the President :NepalChurch.Com”, consultado el 28 de agosto de 2018, <http://nepalchurch.com/14432/criminal-code-2074-enacted-by-the-president/>.

In spite of all the efforts to reach the Hindus, there are only 2.5% of Christians in India, 0.5% in Nepal, 0.2% in Bangladesh, and 25.3% in Mauritius which is very minority in numbers.¹

In recent years, most of the missionaries centers are coming to realization that something is missing, they all come to the conclusion that the methods which are used to evangelize in the western countries may not work among Hindus.²

There has to be something different than the traditional way of reaching. According to Adventist leader the biggest challenge that many missionary face working with Hindu people is the lack of understanding of the Hindus worldview.³

Statement of the Problem

There are more than 1 billions of people who follow Hinduism in this world. And majority of them are from the countries like Nepal and India.⁴ For centuries, Christian missionaries have tried to conquer the territories of South Asia with the Gospel, however, there still remains territories in possession of Hinduism. For the missionaries, understanding the way to look the Hindus world remains an unresolved issue to achieve better results in reaching them for Christ

¹ "World Religions: Composition by Country and Continent," accessed August 28, 2018, <http://christianityinview.com/world-religions/world-religions.html>.

² Stephen Neill, *A History of Christianity in India: The Beginnings to AD 1707* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), 34.

³ Hedlund, *Christianity Made in India*.

⁴ "Hindus", *Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project* (blog), el 18 de diciembre de 2012, <http://www.pewforum.org/2012/12/18/global-religious-landscape-hindu/>.

Research Question

Having mentioned, the following question arises, what are the elements that make up the worldview of Hinduism and what elements would serve as a bridge to engage in a religious dialogue?

Complementary Questions

First; what are some elements which would contribute to Adventists to build a bridge to engage in a religious dialogue with Hindus?

Second; what recommendations would be useful in trying to reach the Hindus?

Purpose

This research aims to provide an understanding of the elements that make up the way of thinking of practitioners of Hinduism in order to find ways of religious dialogue to reach them for Christ

Specific objectives

Objectives of this research are listed below. First; find the elements that make up the worldview of Hinduism. Second; identify what elements will serve as a bridge for religious dialogue.

Justification

Taking the gospel to the land of Hindu countries have been understood as a challenging task. Till now, we find very few materials and guidelines for the missionaries and anyone who wants to work among such group. The fact that Hinduism is so challenging is because of many gods, diversity of traditions, and the religion itself is so much melted with one's lifestyles. To connect this vast gap

between gospel and misunderstood Hinduism worldview, this work would be much useful. Hinduism being one of the major religion in the world justifies the necessity of an study and understanding of any possible approach to complete the mission.

Validate of the Investigation

Hinduism is one of the subject that has being studied from many generations, and along the way, many philosophers, researchers and theologians have left numbers of reliable books and articles on this subject. The accessibility of the experts in the investigation field and having support of the missiologist as an assessor of the project gives more authenticity for this work.

Limitations

Because of the geographical challenges, no personal Interviews were taken with the Hindus experts neither with Hindus priests. The amount of time that was disposed to elaborate this research was very limited.

Delimitations

Delimitations are studied on Hinduism alone, place will be limited mostly in the countries of South Asia, like India, Bangladesh, and focused much in Nepal.

Expected Results

Previous experiences of the researcher among Hindus were mostly related to practical, day to day approach without implementing some sorts of methods, because he did not have formal studies neither the complete understanding of their worldview. Now after the research and having studied bachelors degree in theology

the comprehension have been enlarged. Which will lead this research to contribute some vital methods that can be applied to reach Hindus. In order to reach someone we ought to know their worldview well. Through this project, anyone who would like to work among Hindus will get some practical ideas to comprehend their worldview, methods that can be used to evangelize, similarities and differences between Hinduism and Christianity.

Conceptual Framework

The purpose of this investigation is not to offend any religions. Having in mind the declaration of the Bible, "Love one another" (John 13:34) the investigator respects every person regarding their religious beliefs. The study is realized in the Adventist mission perspective, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Mathew 28:19-20) The great commission appeals us to take this gospel to all the nations. Even in the Hindu nations where Christians are few.

Definition of terms

Below is a brief explanation of the meaning of the specialized terms used both in the approach of the problem and in the theoretical framework and in the presentation of the results.

Worldview:- A worldview is how one views or interprets reality. The German word is *Weltanschauung*, meaning a "world and life view," or "a paradigm." It is the

framework through which or by which one makes sense of the data of life.

A worldview makes a world of difference in one's view of God, origins, evil, human nature, values, and destiny.¹

Hinduism:- major religious and cultural tradition of the Indian subcontinent, including belief in reincarnation and the worship of a large pantheon of deities.²

Caste: - The caste system is a particular form of social stratification to which one belongs only through birth and is characterized by having a solid, rigid and immobile system.

Atman: The inner self or soul of a person, which transmigrates from one life to another and which, upon realizing moksha, is said to be united in a fundamental sense with the ultimate, universal self, the Paramatman, of the whole cosmos.

Bhagavad-Gita: Literally, "The Song of the Adorable One." The most popular of Hindu scriptures, which occurs in the great epic known as the Mahabharata. It tells of the revelation and teaching of Krishna (one of the great avatars of Vishnu) to Prince Arjuna as the climactic battle of the Mahabharata is about to begin.

Dharma: The eternal natural law, moral as well as causal, that governs existence, human and non-human (including divine beings), and is thought to be built into the nature of things. Specifically, it refers to moral and spiritual duty in

¹ Norman L. Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics* (Baker Publishing Group, 1998).

² C. Stephen Evans, *Pocket Dictionary of Apologetics & Philosophy of Religion: 300 Terms & Thinkers Clearly & Concisely Defined* (InterVarsity Press, 2010).

accord with cosmic law and order, especially duty as dictated by age, temperament, and social status.

Ganga: The sacred river Ganges begins in the Himalayas, where Shiva dwells. The river is reported to come from heaven, streams through the lock of the god and flows into the ocean. The river has healing qualities in case of illness; ritual cleansing is encouraged as well for believers.

Mantra: A sacred syllable, sequence of syllables, or sometimes a name, word, or phrase that is used in meditation. The mantra is usually assigned by one's guru, and believed to tune one into the divine ground of existence. One of the most well known is the sacred sound Om (or Aum).

Puja: Ritual household worship of the deity, commonly involving oil lamps, incense, prayers,

Puranas: "Old tales," stories about deities that became important after the Vedic period.

Ramayana: One of the two great epics of Indian literature, telling the story of one of Vishnu's avatars, known as Rama. The Ramayana tells the story of Rama and his wife Sita (the ideal domestic couple), Sita's abduction by the demon Ravanna, and her rescue with the help of the monkey king Hanuman, who is later made into a god, and his monkey army.

Untouchables: Those who have been expelled from their own castes for violating its rules and regulations. They could only perform the foulest and most

menial of tasks in society. Although outlawed by the Indian Constitution, the group still exists today and faces much suffering.

Upanisads: Literally, “those who sit near.” Philosophical texts, in the form of reported conversations, composed around the sixth century B.C.E. and reflecting on the theory of the Vedic ritual and the nature of knowledge.

Yoga: Any one of four paths of spiritual discipline intended to lead a person to deliverance from samsara and the realization of moksha – i.e., to atonement with ultimate reality. Specifically, it means a “yoking” of the self by spiritual discipline, a method of training designed to lead to union of the human spirit with ultimate reality and release from the limits of the individual ego. Normally, following a specific yoga involves apprenticeship to a guru, a spiritual teacher or guide.

Conclusions

In this chapter the foundation of the work was built. The pages started with the introduction, the current situation about the Hinduism in the world specially in the South Asian Countries. The need of profound investigation on the topic was presented. And the major question of this research paper was established. Some strong aspects were presented which gives more authenticity to the work and justifies for this research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this section, the foundation is laid for the investigation. Definition of worldview is planted, its importance is highlighted and the historical development of the Hindu religion was sketched. In the same way, five contemporary elements of the Hindu worldview is viewed In brief. Those worldview elements leads to the Beliefs, practices and festivals of Hinduism.

What is a worldview?

The word itself suggests, that a worldview is an overall view of the world, not merely a physical view, but rather a philosophical, the perspective on everything that exists, matters and affects us directly.¹ Every human being holds some sorts of worldview. People may not completely be aware what worldview they hold, but this does not mean that they do not have any. Origin and History of this word goes all the way to 1790, When German historian and Philosopher Immanuel Kant used the term, *Weltanschauung* for the first time, which can be translated as worldview. Soon this term became viral in all the continents. Oxford English Dictionary states that this word was entered in the English language from the year of 1868.²

¹ "What in the World Is a Worldview?: Part 1," accessed September 4, 2018, <https://www.crossway.org/articles/what-in-the-world-is-a-worldview-2/>.

² "Worldview: Definitions, History, and Importance of a Concept," n.d., 50.

One of the contemporary Philosopher and Apologetics, Ronald Nash defines the worldview as, “Conceptual scheme by which we consciously or unconsciously place or fit everything we believe and by which we interpret and judge reality.”¹ Worldview is something that defines the reality of our lives, and that provides the foundations and reasons for why we live, move and perform all actions. In the article about worldview, James Orr compares worldview with lenses or a pair of eyes glasses through which we look at the world, “Depending upon the lens prescription, worldview glasses will make everything blurry or clear or somewhere in between.”² This analogy suggests, different people may have been observing the same object but the way they both perceive may differ, and this is because of the different worldview they embrace. On the basis of the kind of lenses or glasses, depends how we see things, understands and live it. Therefore, worldview is the perception of life, God, mankind, after death, and all the sets of beliefs one carries. Worldview that one has is fundamental because it provides foundation for moral values and shape the path for the future decisions.

David Naugle defines the worldview as, “A vision of God, the universe, our world, and ourselves rooted and grounded in the embodied human heart as the seat and source of our worship and spirituality, ideas and beliefs, loves and affections, decisions and actions.”³ Above statement gives us a clear idea that, our

¹ Ronald H. Nash, *Worldviews in Conflict: Choosing Christianity in the World of Ideas* (Zondervan, 2010), 16.

² Worldview and a Christian Worldview, n.d., 23.

³ David K. Naugle Jr, *Worldview: The History of a Concept* (Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002).

worldview affects all parts of our lives, specially spiritual aspect. All the important decisions in our lives that we have ever taken or will ever take are based on the worldview one has. Worldview is also understood as something which our mind can take of things in the efforts to grasp them together as a whole from the standpoint of some particular philosophy or theology.¹

The assistant Professor of Philosophy, Tawa J. Anderson, from the Oklahoma Baptist University published an article on May 22, 2012, where he portrays that all the worldviews lies on four fundamental questions about reality. The elements of one's worldview are created on the basis of these essential questions:

The first and foremost question is, What is our nature? Who am I? What does it mean to be human? And why are we different from all other creatures? Are we here in this earth by chance or for a purpose?

The second question deals with the understanding of this world. How is this world formed? Does God exists; If so, what is God like? If not How did this world came into existence?

The third question deals with the reality of the sin problem that exists. Why there exists an evil? And how can sin be understood?

¹ James Orr, The Christian View of God and the World, foreward Vernon C. Grounds, Grand Rapids, MI:Kregel publication, 1989, 3

The final question deals with our future goal. What is the purpose of this life? What happens when we die? Is death the end of this life; or does life exists beyond the grave?¹

The Importance of Worldview

We are formed by the worldview we possess. Understanding the worldview is very important because it answers the biggest questions of life and determines our actions, behaviors and the purpose of life.² Focusing on the importance of understanding the worldview, great thinker W. Gary Phillips states, “our existence in the world screams for answers.” Each human mind craves for the basic answers about life. He later states, “that even the nonreligious people realize that they have a crying need in their heart.”³ And that need is nothing than the search for meaning and purpose of life.

Some Philosophers compares worldview with the sea voyager navigational chart, Which points the directions that one is taking, what to expect on the way, and how things are related to one another. Considering this metaphor, one can conclude that, as the map plays a vital role to lead us to the right destination so our worldview does therefore, worldview should be trusted, but not uncritically.⁴ A man

¹ “The Importance and Impact of Worldview,” *Baptist Messenger of Oklahoma* (blog), May 22, 2012, <https://www.baptistmessenger.com/the-importance-and-impact-of-worldview/>.

² Lois Allen and Darrow Miller, *The Worldview of the Kingdom* (YWAM Publishing, 2005), 18,19.

³ W. Gary Phillips, William E. Brown, and John Stonestreet, *Making Sense of Your World: A Biblical Worldview, Second Edition* (Sheffield Publishing, 2009), 5.

⁴ J. Mark Bertrand, *Rethinking Worldview: Learning to Think, Live, and Speak in This World* (Crossway, 2007), 31.

who does not have a firm understanding of his worldview can be compared with a boat in the middle of the sea without clear directions but in contrary one who holds the firm and clear worldview is able to face the world with competence and understands the purpose of life. Unfolding the need for a worldview Arthur Holmes says, "the need to unify thought and life; the need to define the good life and find hope and meaning in life; the need to guide thought; the need to guide action."¹

Historical development of the Hindu beliefs

The development of the Hindu beliefs is composed in five different historical periods. The first period occurred around 2000 to 1700 B.C.E,² known as Indus Valley Civilization, where the Aryans migrated and established the form of worship to river Ganga. The second period was a Vedic Period which was occurred in 1600-800 B.C.E, where Vedas (the sacred scriptures of Hinduism were composed). The third period, from 800-200 B.C.E is considered as classical period, where people were seeking the philosophical answer for the religious practices and established different traditions and forms of worship. Between 200 B.C.E-500 C.E, fourth period, was considered as epic and early puranic period because it was in this period all the mythological epics were written and considered as holy scriptures. And the last one, 500-1500 C.E was the period where people taught the lessons from Puranas and use the book of puranas at religious ceremonies as the

¹ Arthur Frank Holmes, *Contours of a World View* (Eerdmans, 1983), 5.

² B.C.E stands for, Before Common Era, which is equivalent to (B.C) Before Christ, therefore, 2000 to 1700 B.C.E is understood as 2000-1700 B.C

major religious authority.¹ The five historical periods of Hinduism is discussed below.

Indus Valley Civilization (2000 to 1700 B.C.E)

The history of the formation of Hinduism goes back to the year of 2000 to 1700 B.C.E, when for the first time the group of Aryans (Indo European) migrated from the central Asia and settled down in the north India, near the river Sindhu, which later became famous as Indus valley Civilization.² Indus valley civilization was located in the basin of the river Indus, which flows through present day Pakistan. Some historians have found the male figure at the Mohenjo-Daro, from which they come to the conclusion that the moment when Aryans moved to River Indus, they established the images and worshipped gods.³ It is believed that in this period they offered animal sacrifices to the images. The Indus valley civilization contributed a vast number of traditions, bathing rituals and worship practices to the Hinduism. Many scholars have found large numbers of figurines in Indus valley, which they believe that Aryan people worshipped a mother goddess symbolizing fertility which is a common practices among Hindus even today.⁴ To the East of the great bath the temple existed where all the Indus people used to gather and worship gods, goddess of fertility and also river Ganges, they considered river

¹ Mark W. Muesse, *The Hindu Traditions: A Concise Introduction* (Fortress Press, n.d.), 16.

² Burjor Avari, *India: The Ancient Past: A History of the Indian Subcontinent from c. 7000 BCE to CE 1200* (Routledge, 2016), 64–74.

³ "BBC - Religions - Hinduism: History of Hinduism," accessed September 11, 2018, http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/hinduism/history/history_1.shtml.

⁴ Asko Parpola, *The Roots of Hinduism: The Early Aryans and the Indus Civilization* (Oxford University Press, 2015), digital.

Ganges as holy because she provided sufficient water for the irrigations and made life possible.¹ Indus people worshiped the mother goddess in addition to male and female deities, they practiced the form of yoga and meditations. It is found that they used to worship some trees such as pipal or Acasia tree. They mostly cremated the dead bodies near rivers.²

Vedic Period (1600-800 B.C.E)

The Vedic period is the era in the history of Hinduism during which the Vedas, the oldest sacred texts (for Hindus), were being composed. According to the professor Mark Muesse, who is an expert in world religions, states that, “these texts were formulated during the year of 1600-800 B.C.E.”³ It was during this period that four main Vedas of religion Hindus were composed. Four Vedas are identified as the essential and most sacred in Hinduism. Each Vedas consists of different contents that has to do with rituals and knowledge about self and gods. The Vedas were written in the Sanskrit language.⁴ The author of the Vedas are rishis (holy men) who claimed to receive the inspirations from gods. There are four different Vedas in Hinduism and Rig Veda is considered as the first scripture ever written, and the religious practices of the dwellers in Indus valley revolved around

¹ <http://fileserver.net-texts.com/asset.aspx?dl=no&id=4821>

² “The Religion of the Indus Valley Civilization,” accessed August 31, 2018, <https://www.hinduwebsite.com/history/indus.asp>.

³ Muesse, *The Hindu Traditions*, 16.

⁴ Swami Achuthananda, *The Reign of the Vedic Gods* (Relianz Communications Pty Ltd, 2018), 10,11.

this Veda.¹ Rig Veda consists 1,028 collections of hymns, royal knowledge, and mantras (chants). Liturgy during these periods were connected with the rituals and sacrifices performed by the chanting of Rigveda's verses, singing of Samans and mumbling of offering mantras. Priests were the responsible to execute the ceremonies.² Atharva Veda consists of different magical chants and spells. Yajur Veda consists of prose and verse for sacrificial ceremonies. And the last Veda, Sama, consists of chants which can exclusively be pronounced by priests in the special ceremonies.³

Classical Period (800-200 B.C.E)

During the classical period it was established a various forms of worships to different deities. This period is also known as a transitional stage from the religious of the Vedas to the traditions and worship rituals. All the gods and goddess that are worshipped were the ones who were expressed in Vedas.⁴ Teachings of Upanishads were highlighted during this period. Upanishads deals some philosophical orientation, such as the purpose of life, the beginning and end of life. Formal classes were started under the trees to teach the pupils about the Hindus Philosophy, traditions, and forms of worship.⁵ During this period, many people

¹ Domenic Marbaniang, *History of Hinduism: Pre-Vedic and Vedic Age* (Lulu Press, Inc, 2015), 31.

² "Vedic Period - New World Encyclopedia," accessed September 11, 2018, http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Vedic_Period#cite_note-0.

³ Raj Kumar, *Know The Vedas At A Glance* (Pustak Mahal, 2003), 4.

⁴ Wendy Doniger, *Purana Perennis: Reciprocity and Transformation in Hindu and Jaina Texts* (SUNY Press, 1993), 4.

⁵ Eknath Easwaran, *The Upanishads: The Classics of Indian Spirituality* (ReadHowYouWant.com, 2010), xviii.

started seeking the answer for the pain and sufferings the human race face, as the result, they started teaching about the immortality of soul, and the teaching such as when someone dies, the body perishes but the soul takes another form.¹ It was during this period the concept of Dharma, Karma, reincarnation and caste system was established.

Epic and Early Puranic Period (200 B.C.E -500 C.E)

This period is known as the epic period because it was during this time the great two famous epics of Hinduism, *the Mahabharata and Ramayana* were composed. Mahabharata was written by sage Vyasa and Ramayana was written by Valmiki. These stories were written in poetry, with the narrative of thousands of pages. Mahabharat is known as the longest written epic with the length of 12,000 pages.² The ideology and many names of Hindus deities were given during this time period. According to the mythology it was during this age that gods incarnated and reigned in this earth.³ These epics describes the lives of god Rama, Krishna and the war between gods and demons when they incarnated as human flesh and came in this earth and rule during this period.

¹ "Axial Age Thought: Hinduism - The Human Journey," accessed September 11, 2018, <https://www.humanjourney.us/ideas-that-shaped-our-modern-world-section/axial-age-religions-hinduism/>.

² Kapur and Kamlesh, *History Of Ancient India (Portraits Of A Nation)*, 1/E (Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd, 2010), 108.

³ George Mason Williams, *Handbook of Hindu Mythology* (ABC-CLIO, 2003), 4.

Medieval and Late Puranic Period (500-1500 C.E)

This period is also considered as a Bhakti (devotion) movement. The philosophy about the bhakti yoga and the path of devotion as a means to salvation was highlighted during these years.¹ *Vaastu Shastra*, some architectural sections that are considered as the sacred scripture were written during this period. Even in this days of age this Shastra is considered as a scripture that has the divine authority. Anyone who is willing to build houses, temples or any building, first they consider the Vaastu Shastra and start the work with ceremonial acts.² gods such as Rama and Krishna were worshipped as the principal gods by millions. During this period the Sanskrit literature flourished because many Hindu scholars contributed the religious texts, *bhanas* (monologue play), stotras (hymn compositions), story literature and anthologies of poetry. Epic-Puranic theme were very popular and people started using the Purana's text for the religious ceremonies.³

Contemporary elements of the Hindu worldview

In this section, five major elements of the Hindu worldview is discussed. These are the worldview that impact all the areas of Hindus understanding. Among five one the element is, Brahman ('God') inspired Rishis (holy ones) and revealed His secrets." The second one is, Each living organism is Divine in essence. The

¹ Himansu Charan Sadangi, *Dalit: The Downtrodden of India* (Gyan Publishing House, 2008), 162.

² Jaimini Mehta, *Critiquing the Modern in Architecture* (Routledge, 2017), 30.

³ Upinder Singh, *A History of Ancient and Early Medieval India: From the Stone Age to the 12th Century* (Pearson Education India, 2008), 548.

third is, good or evil is natural consequences of action performed, in the same way the fourth element is, each living organism dies to move into another state of divine essence and the last element is, the ultimate purpose in Hinduism is that the Divine essence be released from the cycle of reincarnation.

Brahman ('God) Inspired Rishis (holy ones) and reveled
His secrets

One of the most important and fundamental element of the Hindu worldview is the authority, value and devotion they give to their sacred scriptures. In Hinduism; principles, beliefs, doctrines, practices and festivals are drawn from their sacred scriptures. These scriptures are considered as the one with absolute authority for religious views and practices. The ultimate "God"¹ inspired and gave revelations to the ancient sages, and they transmitted exactly what "God" had revealed them. Vedas are considered revelations seen by ancient sages after intense meditations. For the centuries the Vedic messages were transmitted orally. Rishis and priests would memorize the large amount of Vedas and would transmit to the next generations.² But not until the year of 1600 and 800 BCE these sacred words were written down.³ Vedas, Ramayana, Mahabharata, and Puranas are some of the sacred scriptures, each of them have sub divisions.⁴

¹ When Hindus refers to the Supreme Divine or Brahman the word God is written first letter in capital letter as the proper name, but because of the different philosophy that is held by the researcher every time this word appears it is encircled by the quotation mark, "God". Indicating that the researcher respects other religious body but at the same time holds different philosophy.

² Borayin Larios, *Embodying the Vedas: Traditional Vedic Schools of Contemporary Maharashtra* (Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co KG, 2017), 19.

³ Marbaniang, *History of Hinduism*, 30.

⁴ "Hindu American Foundation (HAF)," accessed August 31, 2018, <https://www.hafsite.org/>.

Vedas are considered as the mother of all scriptures, all other Hindu scriptures have drawn their central teachings on the basis of Vedas.¹ Hinduism refers Vedas as Ananta, which means eternal.² They believe that the words expressed in Vedas have no beginnings and no ends. Everything else in this universe is destroyed by time but the Vedas will never be destroyed.³ Hindus claim that the knowledge that is hidden in the Vedas are originated by Divine Himself.⁴ Defending its own authority, Artha Veda claims, “ Which deva gave the Vedas? And the answers that the one, who is controlling and maintaining the entire universe, is the creator of Vedas.” Arthaveda 10:7.20. Another section of the Veda states, “The creation remains same in all cycle of creations and hence even the constitution of the creation- the Vedas also remains the same.” Rig Veda 10:90.3.

There are four basic Vedic texts which are also known as Samhita, “Collection”.⁵ The first Veda is ‘Rig Veda’ which is considered as one of the most important and oldest one, the Rig Veda itself is divided into ten books (Mandalas) which includes collection of hymns and praises to different deities.⁶ In the collection of 10 books of Rig Veda, there are around 1,028 hymns arranged.⁷ In the Rig Veda there are 100 hymns addressed to the Lord of Soma; 250 addressed to Lord Indra,

¹ Sahebrao Genu Nigal, *Axiological Approach to the Vedas* (Northern Book Centre, 1986), 18.

² *The Vedas: With Illustrative Extracts* (Book Tree, 2003), 151.

³ G. Ch Narang, *Message of the Vedas — GC Narang* (Рипол Классик, n.d.), 40.

⁴ Sanjeev Newar, *Essence of Vedas* (Agniveer, 2017), 6.

⁵ Carl Olson, *Hindu Primary Sources: A Sectarian Reader* (Rutgers University Press, 2007), 7.

⁶ David R. Slavitt, *The Rig Veda: First Mandala* (Anaphora Literary Press, 2015), 1.

⁷ Olson, *Hindu Primary Sources*, 8.

200 hymns addressed to the Lord of Agni; and many addressed to Lord Surya; and few others are addressed to the Ushas, Aditi, Saraswati, Varuna, and the Asvins.¹ This Veda focused more on appeasing the demigods for blessings to attain material facilities. The second type of Veda is 'The Sama Veda' It is the collections of melodious Chants.² And they are sung during the worship and the performance of yajna worship. Sama Veda are usually used by the priests during the ceremonies performance. The large portions of mantras are taken from the Rig Veda.³ The third type of Veda is: Yajur Veda which is also considered as the liturgical collections and was made to meet the demand of ceremonial practices. It is a handbook for priests to perform the sacrificial rites. It is divided into two sections, the earlier 'black' and the more recent 'white'⁴. And the last one is called, Atharva Veda. It is a collection of 20 books containing hymns, chants, spells and prayers; and involves issues such as healing of illnesses, prolonging life, black magic and rituals for removing maladies and anxieties. Unlike the other three Vedas, the "Atharva Veda" is not as concerned with sacred rituals, but addresses the daily problems of Vedic people.⁵

¹ Stephen Knapp, *The Power of the Dharma: An Introduction to Hinduism and Vedic Culture* (iUniverse, 2006), 45.

² Roshen Dalal, *The Vedas: An Introduction to Hinduism's Sacred Texts* (Penguin UK, 2014), digital.

³ *Sama Veda*, 1842.

⁴ Kumar, *Know The Vedas At A Glance*, 8.

⁵ "What Is Atharva Veda? - Definition from Yogapedia," Yogapedia.com, accessed October 14, 2018, <https://www.yogapedia.com/definition/6655/atharva-veda>.

In the same way, Ramayana is another sacred scripture of Hinduism, which is in the form of Poem in Sanskrit Language. This book has around 24,000 verses.¹ It's a poetic story of Rama, the king of Ayodhya. Valmiki was the one who wrote this book.² Hindus believe that the one who recites the Ramayana, shall be honored, with sons, grandsons and riches in this world and in the worlds to come.³ Another sacred book in Hinduism is Mahabharat, the literal meaning of Mahabharat is 'the great India' and is written by a Brahmin named Vyasa.⁴ Mahabharat is an epic story of how "God" incarnated and ruled in the earth in Hastinapur and story revolves around the battle for the throne. One of the part of Mahabharat is Bhagwat Gita. Bhagawat gita is very famous among Hindus. It consists 18 chapters and has 700 verses. The literal meaning of Bhagawat Gita is, 'a song for God'.⁵ Another important scripture is Puranas. The Puranas are collections of mythology, hymns, ancient history, rules of life, rituals, instructions and knowledge, cosmology. There are 18 Puranas, with six each dedicated to Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. In all the Puranas the goddess Lakshmi is given a prominent place without

¹ *The Ramayana and Mahabharata Condensed into English Verse* (Courier Corporation, 2012), digital.

² R. K. Narayan, *The Ramayana: A Shortened Modern Prose Version of the Indian Epic* (Penguin, 2006), 1.

³ *Valmiki's Uttara Kanda: The Book of Answers* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2017), 199.

⁴ "The Origin and Significance of the Epic Mahabharata," accessed October 16, 2018, <https://www.hinduwebsite.com/hinduism/essays/the-origin-and-significance-of-the-epic-mahabharata.asp>.

⁵ Swami Mukundananda, *Bhagavad Gita: The Song of God* (Jagadguru Kripaluji Yog, 2013), digital.

any sectarian dispute. The most important Puranas are: Vishnu Purana, Bhagavata Purana (Krishna), Shiva Purana, Markendeya Purana (to the Goddess).¹

Each living organism is Divine in essence

Another main elements that composes the Worldview of Hinduism is an idea that all living organism is divine in essence, and is known by the name Aatman.²

The literal meaning of Atman is “spirit”, or also sometimes referred as “soul”, (understood in a distinct sense from its western conception).³ According to Hinduism, each living organism is atman. Atman is eternal, immortal, invisible, imperishable, shapeless and ageless soul which is inherent in every living organism.⁴ Each and every living thing such as people, animals, plants are atman in essence. The word Aatman is derived from Sanskrit which means essence or breath.⁵ In the natural process of birth and death, Hinduism believes that, the infinite soul gets into a physical form, just as when we get dressed, we use different dresses in the same body, in the same way, during the birth, soul has taken place in the physical body.⁶ Death is not the end of life, It is simply the separation of the atman from the physical body, death in one form is the birth in

¹ Om Prakash Shukal, *Excellence In Life* (Gyan Publishing House, 2007), 75,76.

² Barry Blackstone, *The Uttermost Part* (Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2015), 146.

³ Cyprian Csonsiglio, *Spirit, Soul, Body: Toward an Integral Christian Spirituality* (Liturgical Press, 2015), 158.

⁴ Prem P. Bhalla, *ABC of Hinduism* (Educreation Publishing, 2017), 20.

⁵ John A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner, *Oxford English Dictionary* (Clarendon Press, 1998).

⁶ Jennifer MacKay, *Hindu Mythology* (Greenhaven Publishing LLC, 2014), 28.

another.¹ Explaining about the immortality of atman, Bansi says, “You just watch your body falling off like a discarded garment. The real you is timeless and beyond birth and death.”²

The reason why in Hinduism atman is considered as eternal and cannot be destroyed is because it has the essence of “God”, which is also known as the essence of Brahman.³

The Brahman is the self-existed, eternal, and supreme universal soul and also referred as a supreme divine.⁴ He manifests himself without limit, with the power of creating, destroying and re-creating. Highlighting the concept of Brahman being supreme, immortal and without limit, the Sacred book of Hinduism explains in this way: “What cannot be spoken with words, but that whereby words are spoken: Know that alone to be Brahman, Spirit; and not what people here adore. What cannot be thought with the mind, but that whereby the mind can think: Know that alone to be Brahman, the Spirit; and not what people here adore. What cannot be seen with the eye, but that whereby the eye can see: Know that alone to be Brahman, the Spirit; and not what people here adore” (Kena Upanishad 1:1-3). It is well believed that it’s the same Brahman personified and took the Divine forms and appeared as different gods to accomplish the distinct function in this universe.

¹ Larry A. Samovar et al., *Communication Between Cultures* (Cengage Learning, 2016), 144.

² Bansi Pandit, *Explore Hinduism* (Heart of Albion, 2005), 108.

³ Richard Hayes, *God Made Simple* (Lulu.com, 2017), 116.

⁴ Vensus A. George, *Paths to the Divine: Ancient frand Indian* (CRVP, 2008), 198.

According to Hinduism, we all have the part of “God” inside of us, which in a sense makes us all gods. There is no distinction between “God” and his creation.¹ At the core of Hinduism the Atman (human soul) and Brahman (Divine essence) are the same.² “God” and soul are one, and cannot be separated. One of the religious leader and a contemporary teacher of Hinduism states that “the soul has never been separated from “God” and would never be, therefore everything that has life on this earth is divine in itself”.³ Highlighting this fact, Upanishad, the Sacred scripture of Hinduism states, “this is my Soul in the innermost heart, greater than the earth, greater than the aerial space, greater than these worlds. This Soul, this Self of mine is that Brahman” (*Chandogya Upanishad 3.14.3 – 3.14*). One of the author states, the fact that each and every one of us have the essence of “God”, may not be realized without a religious thirst. Only when people realize that their infinite soul is “God” himself, than he will find the meaning of his existence. Until and unless we stop desiring the things of this world we will not recognize our own Divinity. All human beings have the yearning of Divine in their heart, it’s just the matter of realizing and seeking after it.⁴ Because of the hatred, envy, fear or other negative things, “God” has been hidden or covered within us. Because of this purpose to know “God” that dwells in body, many Hindus tend to focus much in meditation in different form of Yoga.

¹ Donna Doss, *God, If You’re Real , Let’s Talk!* (Lulu.com, 2014), 126.

² Bilal Philips, “Did God Become Man?,” n.d., 10.

³ “The Concept of Atman or Eternal Soul in Hinduism,” accessed September 17, 2018, <https://www.hinduwebsite.com/atman.asp>.

⁴ Kerry Brown, *The Essential Teachings of Hinduism* (Rider, 1988).

Good or Evil is Natural Consequences of Personal Actions

Another vital element of the Hindus Worldview is the concept of karma. In Hindus understanding, every activities that are performed, has consequences. If they perform good works it will lead to good results, but if the actions are bad they harvest negative consequences, actions does not only have affects in this life but also in lives to come.¹ They believe that their actions in this life determines how they will born in the next life.² If a person have lived a good life and has not harmed anyone or anything, his or her soul might be born as higher standard of life, or may receive the blessings to be born into a higher caste. All the Brahmins³ and the high caste people are considered as those who have done a good karma and received their good consequences, as a result they are privileged to be born into a higher caste. But in the other hand, if a person has been evil, and harmed others, he or she will reborn into a lower caste.⁴ If they are continuously do bad, their soul can be reborn into an animal, even into a lowly insects. In such case, the soul would have to attempt and use all his efforts to work his way back up to the ladder of a series of rebirths.⁵

¹ Jane A. C. West, Jay Lakhani, and Seeta Lakhani, *Special Times: Hinduism* (A&C Black, 2009).

² Mukul Goel, *Devotional Hinduism: Creating Impressions for God* (iUniverse, 2008), 34.

³ In Hinduism, Brahmin is the highest of the four castes. This caste included priests, guards of sacred learning, spiritual teachers and gurus. Members of this caste traditionally served as communicators between the common people and deities, or the Divine.

⁴ *Understanding Society: Readings in the Social Sciences* (Macmillan International Higher Education, 1970), 272.

⁵ Walter Hazen, *Inside Hinduism* (Lorenz Educational Press, 2003), 9.

Hindus claims that the concept of Karma holds three essential features: first, It serves as an ethnical or moral law: which means good actions produces happiness and pleasures whereas, evil actions produces suffering, tragedy and tears. Secondly, It is considered as the moral responsibility of an individual to accept consequences of the deeds. This is also considered as the law of justice. And for last, even though consequences can be faced in this lives in the form of sufferings, the final and ultimate consequences of the karma demonstrates in rebirth. It is manifested in the higher or lower forms of existence, men, animals, insects, plants etc.¹

In the book, *Hindu Ethics*, the author highlights that karma operates as a universal principle of justice, for this reason Karma is quite independent of the will of “God” or any other supernatural beings. It is well believed that even “God” is constrained by individual’s own karma.² According to this theory, “God” is fair and gives exactly what one deserves. “God” does not make one suffer for no reason and he does not make one happy for no reason. Hindu people do not consider Karma as some punishment, but it’s a natural act and are consequences of decisions. The concept of karma is also compared with the nature of seed, just like a seed most of the times Karma does not fructify immediately after seed is sown. By our actions, speeches and thoughts we sow numerous karmic seeds, and will produce a positive or negative results, sooner or later.

¹ Yuvraj Krishan, *The Doctrine of Karma: Its Origin and Development in Brāhmaṇical, Buddhist, and Jaina Traditions* (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1997), 3.

² Roy W. Perrett, *Hindu Ethics: A Philosophical Study* (University of Hawaii Press, 1998), 66.

In the Eighth Century, a Hindu reformer, Shankacharya divided the karma into three different categories.¹ The first type of Karma is called as, *Sanchita*, which means the 'gathered' or 'piled up' karma, what people have brought with them from past lives. 'Sanchita' means collected karma that can be cleared by spiritual practices like meditation. It is the sum of one's past karmas; all actions, good and bad, from one's past lives follow through to the next life. Second type is *Parabda* which is also known as fructifying works. This Karma is the portion of past actions which is responsible for present situations. It is a reaping process of the past and cannot be changed or avoided. It is also referred as the actions that has begun, and its effects is already manifesting. Prarabdha is the karma that is yielding its effect right now. You cannot avoid or change it as it is already happening. The last one is *Kriyaman or Agami karma*. 'Agami' literally means 'not come'. Agami karma is the karma that has not yet come: one that will take effect in the future. If you commit a crime, you may not get caught today but will live with thoughts of the possibility that you may get caught one day. This is the future karma of the action.²

Each Living Organism Dies to Move Into Another State Of Its Divine Essence

Another important worldview element in Hinduism is the concept of what happens to Divine essence (atman or a soul) after death. They believe that a soul

¹ Jonn Mumford and Meghan Stevens, *Karma Manual: 9 Days to Change Your Life* (Llewellyn Worldwide, 1999), 23.

² "All About Hinduism," accessed September 18, 2018, <http://www.dlshq.org/download/hinduismbk.htm>.

[atman] is immortal and cannot be destroyed,¹ but reincarnates again and again until it receives the deliverance. This process is called as reincarnation, which is 'to be made flesh again' or to reenter into the flesh. Holy Scripture of Hinduism, Bhagwat Gita, describes the concept as: "Just as a man discards worn out clothes and puts on new clothes, the soul discards worn out bodies and wears new ones." (*Bhagawat Gita* 2.22). During this process the soul enters into many bodies. According to Hinduism, death is considered as a destructive power. Everything that is touched by death comes to end. However, it cannot touch the individual selves (atman) which is immortal and indestructible. While the physical body faces death, the soul (atman) remains intact and escapes from the body to take birth again. Highlighting this concept the oldest sacred scripture of Hinduism states, "may your spirit return again, to perform pure acts for exercising strength, and to live long to see the sun." Rig Veda 10.4.57.4. The Bhagavad Gita states: "Never was there a time when I did not exist, nor you, nor all these kings; nor in the future shall any of us cease to be. As the embodied soul continuously passes, in this body, from childhood to youth to old age, the soul similarly passes into another body at death. A sober person is not bewildered by such a change;" and "Worn-out garments are shed by the body; Worn-out bodies are shed by the dweller within the body. New bodies are donned by the dweller, like garments."

According to Hinduism, when person dies, he does not necessarily born only on this earth, Holy Scripture of Hinduism, Arathaveveda and Puranas, mentions

¹ Alexandra David-Neel, *Immortality and Reincarnation: Wisdom from the Forbidden Journey* (Simon and Schuster, 1997).

that a person may possibly born in 14 different worlds, which is called “Lokas” in Sanskrit language. These 14 worlds are different ‘earth’ like worlds somewhere in the universe. Heaven¹ and hell² are part of these fourteen worlds. Scriptures mentions that heaven is located above us and hell below us. According to Hindus understanding, the next birth could be in any place between heaven (the place of pleasure), hell (a place of torture) or in any of the remaining 12 Lokas (different ‘earth’ like worlds). In the fourteen Lokas, seven are considered as higher worlds sometimes also referred as different heavens and seven as lower worlds which are known as underworlds. Seven Higher Lokas are: 1). Satya Loka; this is where Brahma or the supreme consciousness exists, free from the feathers of birth and death. 2). Tapa Loka; in this world different deities live. 3). Jan Loka; where souls of complete and unhindered access to the material world, they can travel to any place at the speed of thought. 4). Mahar Loka; the abode of great sages and rishis, these are beings who through long periods of meditations have become greater than the deities themselves. 5). Svar Loka; region between the sun and polar star, the heaven of the god Indra. Heavenly paradise of pleasure, where all the 330 million Hindu gods reside along with the king of gods, Indra. 6). Bhuvan-Loka; sun,

¹ The concept of heaven in Hinduism is distinct from the Heaven that Christians refers to. In Hinduism heaven is a place of pleasure and enjoy, but the soul (Atman) do not dwell there for eternity, once the determined time ends, the soul again reincarnates to another world in another form. Therefore, In Hinduism heaven is considered as a place of journey in the cycle of birth, death and rebirth.

² According to Hinduism, people who have committed bad deeds and accumulated negative karma are sent to hell to purify their souls. Hell is a place devoid of all pleasures, and where pain is experienced at every moment. The time spent in hell depends on the severity of one's past deeds. After the soul is purified, it is sent to another incarnation, such as a human or an animal. Hell is ruled by Yama, the Hindu god of death.

planets, stars. Space between earth and the sun, inhabited by semi-divine beings.

7). Bhur-Loka, is referred as this earth where man and animals live. Other seven Lokas; which is believed located below us are as follows: 8). Atala-Loka, 9). Vitala-Loka, 10). Sutala-Loka, 11). Talatala-Loka, 12). Mahatala-Loka, 13). Rasatala-Loka, 14). Patala-Loka.¹

Hinduism says that our unfulfilled desires are primarily responsible for our rebirth. It is believed that there is interaction between predeterminism of certain experiences, or lesson intended to happen during the physical life.² Actions that are accumulated or performed in the previous lives determines what body one would take, which organisms one would be or including the homes and social status one will gain. Another book In Vedas describes this process as, “God grants bodies in different births, according to your deeds, providing a happy or unhappy place on this earth (Yajur Veda 35.2).

Hinduism claims that the people who are reincarnated have the ability to remember their past lives. Few numbers of Hindus have publicly confessed that they do remember their past life.³

¹ “Puranas - What Are the Different Types of Lokas?,” Hinduism Stack Exchange, accessed October 2, 2018, <https://hinduism.stackexchange.com/questions/14792/what-are-the-different-types-of-lokas>.

² Ashim Bhattacharyya, *Hindu Dharma: Introduction to Scriptures and Theology* (iUniverse, 2006), 177.

³ J. Danelek, *Mystery of Reincarnation: The Evidence & Analysis of Rebirth* (iUniverse, 2007), 97.

The Ultimate Purpose In Hinduism Is That the Divine Essence be Released From the Cycle of Reincarnation

Another element of Hindu worldview is Moksha, which is also known as liberation or to be free. It is considered as the final objective and a goal of life. This is viewed as the highest purity and perfect stage where one will be free from all ignorance, impurities, pain and miseries. In this stage the soul is free from all blemishes and flaws and lives in a divine bliss.¹

In the cycle of birth, death and reborn again exists pain, suffering, tragedy and problems but to escape from this cycle is what Hindus people call 'to achieve Moksha or liberation.' Moksha is the end of the cycle of death and rebirth.² That is the reason why it is also called as 'Liberation' because moksha is achieved when all the desires are overcome. Hinduism believes that when you achieve Moksha your soul gets merged with the Supreme soul, i.e. "God" (Brahman). This concept teaches people about earning your own righteousness. The more righteous and morally good you are, you will be able to get liberation if not you will be bound into the cycle of samsara. The word samsara comes from the Sanskrit language, which means the cycle of birth, death and rebirth.³

According to Hindu concept, achieving the Moksha does not mean that they or a soul goes to a specific place such as heaven. They believe that their Aatman, soul or spirit is united with the ultimate spirit called Brahman. This is also

¹ J. M. Mehta, *Four Objectives of Human Life* (Pustak Mahal, 2006), 60.

² Sue Penney, *Hinduism* (Heinemann, 1999), 24.

³ John Blando, *Counseling Older Adults* (Routledge, 2014), 183.

known as the ultimate point because when it happens, the cycle of birth, death and reincarnation ends. Most of the time Hindus compares this concept with a drop of water that is emerged in the vast ocean.¹

According to Hindu scripture, there are three different ways to achieve Moksha. sometimes they are also known as, three Yogas. The first way to achieve Moksha is: 1) *Karma Yoga*. In this category, lies everyday rituals of which are religious obligations. The sacred book Vedas gives some specific guides about rituals that are to be performed in the rising of sun, in marking birth, marriages and death. This yoga is simply known as the duty that everyone ought to do. Men and women have different duties and functions in the religious rituals. Men ought to do the daily offering to gods, should participate in different rites. Women are prohibited to perform such rites, therefore, a birth of son is considered as a huge blessings in Hindu families. Although Karma Yoga is not viewed as a most important way to achieve Moksha it leads to the goal of release towards liberation of soul from the cycle of reincarnation.² The second way to achieve Moksha is : 2) *Janna Yoga* or the Way of Knowledge. It has to do with attending the most spiritual knowledges as possible.³ This is the study of ways how you can know yourself deeply, and have an encounter with the supreme being Brahman. Different Yogas are practiced in order to perform these ritual or acts.⁴ Knowledge in itself is considered as power. Forgetting the world outside and understanding the power of self within one self

¹ Hazen, *Inside Hinduism*, 9.

² Warren Matthews, *World Religions* (Cengage Learning, 2008), 80.

³ Hazen, *Inside Hinduism*, 10.

⁴ Penney, *Hinduism*, 24.

makes someone in contact with the ultimate reality. And the third way to achieve Moksha in Hinduism is: 3) Bhakti Yoga, which is also known as a devotion way. If followed this, people will have the deep sense of “God” and would emerge in the intense love of “God”. This Path teaches to love everyone and hate none. And leaving all the world pleasures and desire one out to seek the path of divine truth.¹ According to Hindus philosophy one who serves great soul (atman) and who does not regard anything as his/her own is the who passes from the illusion of this world. This Bhakti yoga helps people to forsake the love of materials. In this stage, one renounces not only the fruit of action but the action itself, and thus renounces everything and becomes completely a devotee.²

Defending this theory the sacred book, Bhagavat Purana explains in this way: “All performance of dharma is meant for ultimate liberation (moksha). It should not be performed for material gain. Furthermore, one who is engaged in the ultimate occupational service should not use material gain simply for sense gratification.” Bhagavat Purana 1.2.9.

Core Beliefs of Hinduism

Since Hinduism has no commonly agreed set of teachings it would be complicated to outline as their fundamental doctrines, however some basic and major beliefs has been discussed.

¹ Swami Vivekananda, *Bhakti Yoga: The Yoga of Love and Devotion (Art of Living)* (editionNEXT.com, 2015), 3.

² Ravindra Kumar, *Bhakti Yoga for Beginners: Beginners Guide* (Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd, n.d.), 21.

Deities

Even though there are different perspectives and explanations about their deities, most of the Hindus people claim to believe in one supreme “God”. Brahman is considered as almighty, pre-existed, “God” who is without any form.¹ The ancient Hinduism legend highlights that, in order to worship, human being always needs a semblance or a form of “God”. With that reason Brahman made himself in a physical form “Trimurti”. In the miracle of appearing in the physical form, three gods appeared, Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva.² These three gods becomes the central group of deities and are responsible to run the entire universe.³ These three gods sometimes are also referred as Trimuti or trinity.⁴

Brahma

Brahma is represented as the creator. He is also presented as four-headed god, with four arms in each hand he holds a string of beads and also he has Vedas, the sacred books of Hinduism in his hand.⁵ It is believed that he lives in the Mount Meru, which is the center of the universe.⁶ From the mouth of Brahma formed, goddess Saraswoti, who is the wife of Brahma. She is the goddess of

¹ Swami Achuthananda, *Many Many Many Gods of Hinduism: Turning Believers into Non-Believers and Non-Believers into Believers* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2013), 68.

² Sunita Pant Bansal, *Hindu Gods and Goddesses* (Smriti Books, 2005), 10.

³ Air Marshal RK Nehra, *Hinduism & Its Military Ethos* (Lancer Publishers LLC, n.d.), digital.

⁴ John Stratton Hawley and Vasudha Narayanan, *The Life of Hinduism* (University of California Press, 2006), 245.

⁵ Bruce M. Sullivan, *Seer of the Fifth Veda: Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa in the Mahābhārata* (Motilal Banarsidass Publ., 1999), 86.

⁶ Mukundchandra G. Raval, *Meru: The Center of Our Earth* (Notion Press, 2016), digital.

knowledge, art and music.¹ The book Dasam Granth states that the Lord Brahma manifested himself in seven different incarnations, which are also known as the seven avatars of Brahma. Hinduism believe that gods can incarnate and take the form as many gods. This action is called, 'Avatar'.²: The seven avatars of Brahma are: Valmiki Avatar, Kasyapa Avatar, Dattatreya Avatar, Lakshman Avatar, Vyasa Avatar, Balarama Avatar and Kalidasa Avatar.³ All of these avatars are worshipped by the followers of Brahma.

Vishnu

In Hindus scriptures, Vishnu is portrayed as the Lord, preserver. His all duty is to preserve the work of Brahma. In the other sacred book, purana, Vishnu is also represented as the supreme one.⁴ Laxmi is the wife of Vishnu and a goddess of wealth.⁵ It is well believed that Vishnu was incarnated in ten different forms. The Holy Scripture, Bhagwat Gita, states that, "For whenever the law of righteousness wither away, and lawlessness raises its head, Then do I generate myself on earth for the protection of the good, for the destruction of evildoers, for the setting up of righteousness I come into being, age after age. Bhagwat Gita, 4:7-8. The ten avatar of Vishnu are: Matsya (Fish), Kurma (turtle). Varaha (wild boar), Narasimha

¹ Wilco Editorial & Design Team, *BRAHMA* (Wilco Publishing House, n.d.), 7.

² "The Concept of Avatar or Incarnation in Hinduism," accessed October 16, 2018, <https://www.hinduwebsite.com/hinduism/concepts/avatar.asp>.

³ *Dasam Granth* (Hemkunt Press, n.d.), 17.

⁴ Horace Hayman Wilson, *The Vishnú Purána: A System of Hindu Mythology and Tradition* (J. Murray, 1840), 7.

⁵ B. R. Kishore, *Hinduism* (Diamond Pocket Books (P) Ltd., 2001), 87.

(half-human, half-lion), Vamana (dwarf then giant), Parashurama, Rama, Krishna, Buddha and Kalki.¹ Most of the Hindus consider that Jesus Christ also one of the avatar of Vishnu, with this reason, it is common to see some of the Hindus families have images of Jesus along with other gods and goddess. All these avatars are considered as gods and worshipped by Hindus.

Shiva

Shiva is known as the Destroyer, he is the ultimate responsible for the destruction of earth and all the things therein, He destroys old, weak and useless things so that new and beautiful things can be created again.² It is well believed that Shiva has three eyes, through which he can see the past, present and future.³ In the holy book Shiva Purana, Shiva has been represented with more than one thousand different names. Such as, Mahadeva, Bhairava, Mahakala, Trlovhana, Tripurari, Kamaghana, Nilakantha, Tryambaka, Aghora, Bhagavat, Ugra, Vishwanath etc.⁴ Each name represents his different personality and different divinity. His Body is covered with ashes of the cremation-grounds, he wears tiger's skin.⁵ Parvati is the name of Shiva's wife. She is also known as the goddess of power and energy. They also believe that she is a personification of the material

¹ Devdutt Pattanaik, *Vishnu: The Protector (Penguin Petit)* (Penguin UK, 2016), digital.

² Tammy Laser, *Gods & Goddesses of Ancient India* (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2014), digital.

³ Dr B. R. Kishore, *Lord Shiva* (Diamond Pocket Books (P) Ltd., n.d.), 8.

⁴ B. K. Chaturvedi, *Shiv Purana* (Diamond Pocket Books (P) Ltd., 2004), 81–84.

⁵ Dr B. R. Kishore, *Lord Shiva* (Diamond Pocket Books (P) Ltd., n.d.), 8.

energy.¹ It is believed that Shiva had nineteen avatars (incarnated) Piplaad Avatar, Nandi Avatar, Veerbhadra Avatar, Bhairava Avatar, Ashwatthama, Sharabha Avatar, Grihapati Avatar, Durvasa, Hanuman, Rishabh Avatar, Yatinath Avatar, Krishna Darshan Avatar, Bhikshuvarya Avatar, Sureshwar Avatar, Keerat Avatar, Suntantarka Avatar, Brachmachari Avatar, Yaksheshwar Avatar, Avadhut Avatar.²

Holy Chants (Mantra)

Mantra is understood as a general name for the formulas, verses or sequences of words in prose which contain praise are believed to have magical, religious or spiritual efficiency, are recited, muttered or sung in the Vedic ritual and which are collected in the methodically arranged corpora of Vedic texts.³ This rite is performed twice daily, in the morning and afternoon. The ritual patron for conducting the mantra is the priest place their hands on a bundle of grass, lies to the west of the altar. The position of hand can vary in two different traditions kausitakins do as follows:

Morning: Left hand palm down right hand on left hand with palm up;

Afternoon: Left hand with palm up; right hand on left hand with palm down.

But in the Taittiriya tradition they follow the different positions:

Morning: left hand palm up; right hand on left hand with palm down

¹ KAMALA CHANDRAKANT, *Shiva Parvati* (Amar Chitra Katha Pvt Ltd, 1971), 4.

² "19 Incarnations of Lord Shiva, Avatars of Lord Shankar – Chakrayog," accessed August 31, 2018, <http://www.chakrayog.in/articles/19-avatars-of-lord-shiva.aspx>.

³ Harvey P. Alper, *Understanding Mantras* (Motilal Banarsidass Publ., 1991), 4.

*Afternoon: right hand palm up ; left hand on right hand with palm down.*¹

Hindus believe that mantra can help feel more peaceful or more energize. It can help cope with illness and by pronouncing the magic words can even bring the healing power to the physical body.² Mantra is also considered as a powerful instrument to please gods and goddess. Talking about the mantras, Rigveda describes it in this way: “We want to pronounce that mantra at the ceremonies, gods, which is pleasing and unrivalled. And so the men have willingly taken up this speech that they will attain all the riches from you.” There are different kinds of mantras in Hinduism such as Gayatri mantra, Pavamana mantra, Shanti Mantra, Shiva Sutra mantra and each mantra is used for different occasions and for different purposes. Above all Gayatri mantra is known as one of the most powerful mantra which is recital with the main objective of achieving moksha:

Gayatri mantra

It is believed that Gayatri mantra protects the one who chants it. The word ‘Gayatri’ means the universal energy which is constantly working in various ways. Gayatri is also the name of a particularly sacred verse of the Rigveda.³ According to the Vedas, gayatri is the mother of all the mantras. Through the regular recitation of this mantra the merit such as the lack of fear, sorrow and misery and lead to the attainment of peace, prosperity and harmony in society. If recited well

¹ Frits Staal, *Ritual and Mantras: Rules Without Meaning* (Motilal Banarsidass Publ., 1996), xv.

² Thom Ashley-Farrand, *Healing Mantras: Using Sound Affirmations for Personal Power, Creativity, and Healing* (Random House Publishing Group, 2008), 8.

³ Vijaya Kumar, *Power of Mantras* (Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd, 2005), 14.

and followed through the life time this mantra can help one person to gain moksha liberating the one from the cycle of birth. The Gayatri mantra is always recital in Sanskrit language which goes like this:

Om Bhur Bhuvah Swah
Tat-savitur Verenyam
Bhargo Devasya Dhimahi
Dhiyo Yonah Prachodayat ¹

General meaning of this Mantra is: We meditate on that most adored Supreme Lord, the creator, whose effulgence (divine light) illumines all realms. May this divine light illumine our intellect.²

Pilgrimage a Sacred Journey

Pilgrimage also known as *tirthayatra*, is a sacred journey which usually involves of a large number of people, in many sacred places as monumental temples, sacred hills, or sacred places. Several pilgrimage sites are places of natural beauty, located in the lap of nature such as mountains, next to river, lakes or waterfalls. ³ One of the main motive of the pilgrimage is to wash away all the sins and wrong doings one has committed so that he can attain the Moksha or liberation. In the oldest Hindu sacred scripture, Rigveda states like this:

Flower-like the heels of the wanderer,

¹ Vijaya Kumar, *Power of Mantras* (Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd, 2005), 13.

² "Gayatri Mantra - A Universal Prayer - Meaning & Significance | Sathya Sai International Organisation," accessed July 30, 2018, <http://www.sathyasai.org/devotional/gayatri>.

³ Knut A. Jacobsen, *Pilgrimage in the Hindu Tradition: Salvific Space* (Routledge, 2013), 4.

His body groweth and is fruitful;
All his sins disappear,
Slain by the toil of his journeying. (Rigveda 320)

Even in this day of age, people take the journey for pilgrimage to sacred places for the purification and redemption from sin.¹ The Sanskrit word itself for pilgrimage is tirtha, tri means to get rid of all sins and the word, 'tha' means place therefore, pilgrimage is a place where people go to get rid of or wash away all the sins.² When someone promises gods and does journey according to the promise made than gods will be pleased and grant forgiveness of sins. One will also gain the desire of ones heart by the act of pilgrim to different places.³ There are different motives and kinds of pilgrimages. One of the kind is, *Sthawar teerthas* are places that has a great importance for religious or spiritual aspects, In this kind of pilgrimage the places such as Ganga river, Yamuna mountain, Mount Kailash, Vrindavan, ashrams are included. The second types is, *Jangam Teerthas* are the seers, sages and spiritual masters. And the final type of Pilgrimage is known as, *Manas Teerthas*, which is done with the motive of searching for truth, forgiveness, kindness, charity, patience, knowledge and ultimately to achieve Moksha.⁴

¹ Surinder M. Bhardwaj, *Hindu Places of Pilgrimage in India: A Study in Cultural Geography* (University of California Press, 1983), 88.

² Krishan Sharma, Anil Kishore Sinha, and Bijon Gopal Banerjee, *Anthropological Dimensions of Pilgrimage* (Northern Book Centre, 2009), 2.

³ Sunita Pant Bansal, *Hindu Pilgrimage: A Journey through the Holy Places of Hindus All over India* (V&S Publishers, 2012), 7.

⁴ Bansal, 7.

Beliefs on Sacrificial system

The Sanskrit Word for sacrifice is yajna, which is the vital part of Hindus lifestyle.¹ The purpose of the sacrifice is to wash away the effect of Karma and also to achieve Moksha or liberation.² Usually they sacrifice animals like goat, hen, ox etc. The act of sacrificing animal in Sanskrit is called, 'Bali' which means offering, offering of flesh or blood.³

The concept of sacrifice in the Hinduism is very important, Hindu scriptures portrays that sacrifice is necessary to free us from the condemnations of Karmas. The way of purifying the sinful nature is through the sacrifice, whenever somebody commits sin or evil things, their first reaction is to find an animal to sacrifice to blot away their consequences.⁴

Explaining about the importance of sacrifice, the sacred scripture Mahabharata says, "O Yudhishthira, those that commit sins, can always free themselves from them through penance, sacrifice and gifts. O king, O foremost of men, sinful people are purified by sacrifice, austerities and charity. The high-souled celestials and Asuras perform sacrifices that the high-souled celestials had waxed so wondrously powerful; and having celebrated rites did they vanquish in the Danavas. Do thou, O Yudhishthira, prepare for the Rajasuya, and the horse-

¹ Jeffrey Carter, *Understanding Religious Sacrifice: A Reader* (A&C Black, 2003), 3.

² Stephen Phillips, *Yoga, Karma, and Rebirth: A Brief History and Philosophy* (Columbia University Press, 2009), 187.

³ "Blood Sacrifice in Hinduism | Mahavidya," accessed November 12, 2018, <http://www.mahavidya.ca/2010/06/10/blood-sacrifice-in-hinduism/>.

⁴ Yuvraj Krishan, *The Doctrine of Karma: Its Origin and Development in Brāhmaṇical, Buddhist, and Jaina Traditions* (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1997), 15.

sacrifice, as well as, O Bharata, for the Sarvamedha and the Narmedha.”

Mahabharata 14.3 In Mahabharata, It is mentioned seven wild sacrificial beasts such as lion, tiger, boar, monkey, bear, elephant and buffalo and seven domestic sacrificial beasts such as bull, stallion, billy goat, ram, ass, mule and even human man. (Mahabharat 6.5.12-14).

The contemporary Hindus, tends to sacrifice not merely in the daily bases but in the special occasions like in Durga Puja, because they say, items such as grains, vegetables, plants, sweets should be considered representative of the animals.¹

Caste System

The origin of caste system has many theories behind it.² Some of them are religious, while others are biological and Historical. Holy book of Hinduism, “Rigveda” gives the religious prospective of how the caste system was formed. The primal man-Purush destroyed himself to create a human society, and different Varnas (Castes) were created from the different parts of his body. The Brahmins were created from his head; Kshatrias originated from his hands; the Vaishias from his thighs and the Sudras from his feet. ³ Bhagwat Geeta, one of the Holy Scriptures of Hinduism, defending the caste system states that, “ I created mankind

¹ Himalayan Academy, “Hinduism Today Magazine,” accessed November 12, 2018, <https://www.hinduismtoday.com/>.

² Rajendra K. Sharma, *Indian Society, Institutions and Change* (Atlantic Publishers & Dist, 2004), 61.

³ R. K. Pruthi, *Indian Caste System* (Discovery Publishing House, 2004), 1.

in four classes, different in their qualities actions; though unchanging, I am the agent of this, the actor who never acts! (Bhagawat Gita 53)

Historically, It is believed that the caste system began with the arrival of the Aryans in India around the year of 1500 BC.¹ The Aryans established some sort of social ordering called Varnas, which was based on the four hierarchical divisions of function in society. It is well believed that in order to secure their status, the Aryans laid out social and religious rules in such a way that only they were allowed to become priests, warriors and businessmen of the society.²

Caste determines whom a person can marry, what kind of work can he do, and even controls what he can eat or touch.³ Castes are classified into four divisions Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Sutra, and subdivisions into many.⁴ Brahman is considered as the highest of all the castes, the person of the Brahman is sacred. Assaulting a Brahman is the worst sin ever, even a king has no right to inflict corporal punishment on a Brahman. If a Shudra assaults a Brahman, he should be put to death. It is said that the wrath of Brahmin is more dreadful than the wrath of gods. When Brahmans open their mouth for the curse it has a deadly

¹ Pruthi, 2.

² David Abram, Rough Guides (Firm), and Nick Edwards, *The Rough Guide to South India* (Rough Guides, 2003), 632.

³ Mukhtar Ahmed, *The Arains: A Historical Perspective* (Createspace, 2016), 32.

⁴ Lindsey Harlan and Paul B. Courtright, *From the Margins of Hindu Marriage: Essays on Gender, Religion, and Culture* (Oxford University Press, 1995), 151.

effect.¹ High class people promote the healthy lifestyle. And many of them tend to be vegeterians.²

One of the greatest problem in the caste system is that those who are blessed enough to born on the high caste family, they have all the rights, privileges and opportunities but those who were born in the low caste family, will not have either chance or the opportunities to improve their living standard. There is an saying in the Bengali expressing this idea, "Telo mathae tel dea" which means "Pour oil on a head already full of oil."³ It is believed that Brahmins were the first social classes who divided their community into sociological levels, and they reserved all the social rights, justice and privileges to themselves⁴

Hindu Practices

This section consists of different rituals, obligations and annual festivals of Hinduism. And deals with practices that they follow. More than a philosophical perspective this section tends to give some practical overview of this religion.

¹ Pruthi, *Indian Caste System*, 12.

² François Mariotti, *Vegetarian and Plant-Based Diets in Health and Disease Prevention* (Academic Press, 2017), 108.

³ mundaland, *Caste And Untouchability*, 2002, <http://archive.org/details/CasteAndUntouchability>.

⁴ Gurpreet Mahajan, *India: Political Ideas and the Making of a Democratic Discourse* (Zed Books Ltd., 2013), 15.

Puja or Worship

Puja or worship ceremonies are conducted in homes and in temples.¹ Each Hindu family conduct the mornings and evenings rituals. During the morning rites the family members gather together, and they find some beautiful flowers, water, a bowl of rice, fruits and usually a red colored-powder, which they offer to their gods.² Personal pujas are conducted at homes but public pujas are conducted in temples by priest.³ Hindu worship involves images, prayers, and diagrams of universe. Worshippers repeat the name of their favorite god or goddess.⁴ Fire is the essential part of the Hindus worship, whatever religious rituals and ceremonies they perform fire is the must substance. They act of performing the worship ceremonies with the help of fire is known as, “Yagnas”⁵ In each and every Puja ceremonies there are five things that are expected from the worshippers, 1. A pot containing water, representing the body; 2. Murtis (an image of deity); 3. Prasad (a flower or fruit offering, representing nature); 4. Yantras (a mandala or sacred pattern representing the universe); and 5. A mantra, or chant. They usually begin the worship with the mantra. In most of the cases offerings are made during the

¹ Prema Kurien, *A Place at the Multicultural Table: The Development of an American Hinduism* (Rutgers University Press, 2007), 93.

² Dave Symmons, *This Is Hinduism* (Nelson Thornes, 1998), 4.

³ Pratapaditya Pal et al., *Puja and Piety: Hindu, Jain, and Buddhist Art from the Indian Subcontinent* (Univ of California Press, 2016), 106.

⁴ “BBC - Religions - Hinduism: Worship”, consultado el 27 de julio de 2018, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/hinduism/worship/worship.shtml>.

⁵ Robin Rinehart, *Contemporary Hinduism: Ritual, Culture, and Practice* (ABC-CLIO, 2004), 13.

Puja. ¹ Occasionally, Hindu women take the fasting or votive observance, which is also a part of the worship ceremony, even though votive observance is totally optional most of the women find it their privilege to do so, married women fast for the long life of her husband. Whereas unmarried girls fast as a prayer wishing a good husband. It is also a medium of pleasing gods. ²

Festivals

In this section, some important festivals of Hinduism have been described, with their historical background, and the way Hindu people celebrate these festivals.

Makar Sakranti

Makar Sakranti is the festival of harvest.³ This festival is celebrated always on the same day of the every year- January 14.⁴ The Sun god, 'Suryadev' is worshipped in this festival. Sun god is worshipped because he is considered as the giver of light, and the conqueror of darkness (Ignorance).⁵ During this festival millions of people take a dip in Ganga river and pray to sun god (Suryadev). In this day, people clean their houses, and make everything ready. It is a time when all

¹ Jeffrey Hays, "HINDU WORSHIP, RITUALS AND PRACTICES | Facts and Details," accessed July 27, 2018, <http://factsanddetails.com/world/cat55/sub354/item1350.html>.

² Manish Verma, *Fasts and Festivals of India* (Diamond Pocket Books (P) Ltd., 2013), 27.

³ Paul Fieldhouse, *Food, Feasts, and Faith: An Encyclopedia of Food Culture in World Religions [2 Volumes]* (ABC-CLIO, 2017), 349.

⁴ Laura Dawn Lewis, *2014 LEEP Event, Editorial & Promotional Calendar: Holidays and Observances for the US, UK, Canada, Australia & Chinese Markets* (LEEP Publishing, 2013), 351.

⁵ Anirudha Behari Saran and Gaya Pandey, *Sun Worship in India: A Study of Deo Sun-Shrine* (Northern Book Centre, 1992), 67.

the family members get together and eat delicious foods and have fellowship together.¹

Diwali-Festival of lights

The word Diwali is derived from the Sanskrit words *deepa vali* which means, light-ray.² Therefore this festival is known as the festival of lights. This festival usually falls in the month of October or November. Hindus people celebrate Diwali as the symbol of victory of good over evil.³ Hindus legend tells that when demon Ravana kidnapped Lord Rama's wife Sita, Rama along with Hanuman (monkey god) went on their way to find Sita. Twenty days later when they arrived in their home town Ayodhya, it was the darkest night. But all the people of the kingdom lit the lamps and welcome them home. It is believed from that day on people celebrate this festival with many lights in their houses.⁴ Diwali is celebrated for five days, and each one of these days have special significance and different activities. On the first day, many people shop, they believe that the first day of Diwali is the lucky day to buy precious things such as gold and silver. This day is also considered as crow day, they worship crows in this day. Dog is worshipped in the second day, because of their loyalty and people put the flowers garland and worship dogs. The third day is the actual and grand day of Diwali where people share sweets and gifts, and during the night time they use fireworks. In this day,

¹ Swami Mukundananda, *Festivals of India* (Jagadguru Kripaluji Yog, 2015).

² Kate Torpie, *Diwali* (Crabtree Publishing Company, 2008), 13.

³ Rina Singh, *Diwali* (Orca Book Publishers, 2016), digital.

⁴ Rina Singh, *Diwali* (Orca Book Publishers, 2016), digital.

people worship their cows, they put tika in the forehead of cows and give them special food, they considered cow as the goddess. And the fourth and fifth day is also considered as brothers and sisters day, where they worship their brothers and sisters. ¹ This prayer is repeated in most of the homes:

Asatho Maa Sad Gamaya.

Thamaso Maa Jyothir Gamaya.

Mrithyur Maa Amritham Gamaya.

Om Shanti, Shanti, Shanti.

Translation:

From untruth lead us to Truth.

From darkness lead us to Light.

From death lead us to Immortality.

Om Peace, Peace, Peace.²

Holi-Festival of colors

Holi or also known as color festival has its root in the Hindus Holy Scriptures like Narad Purana and Bhavishya Puran. The story of devoted Prahalad is the associated legend with holi. The story tells that Prahalad was the son of the demon king, Hiranyakashipu, even though being a son of demon he was devoted

¹ June Preszler, *Diwali: Hindu Festival of Lights* (Capstone, 2007), 8.

² Lisa Love, "Asatho Maa Sad Gamaya," *The Prayer Shrine* (blog), March 28, 2018, <http://prayer shrine.com/asatho-maa-sad-gamaya/>.

to the Lord Vishnu. Day and night he worshipped his Lord. King Hiranyakashipu didn't like that his son was devotee of Bishnu, he tried thousands of ways to stop him from worshipping Bishnu but all the time he failed. The King had a sister named Holika who had to capacity to sit on fire without being consumed. So the king asked Holika to have Prahalad in her lap, with the intention to kill his son. Holika took Prahalad in her lap and sat in the fire. The young boy Prahalad prayed to his Lord Vishnu to keep him safe, as the result Prahalad was harmless but Holika was consumed by fire. Since, that day people celebrate Holi as the celebration of victory. ¹ In this day of age people celebrate Holi with colored powder and water, music, dance and make special food to be eaten.²

Vijaya Dashami

Vijaya Dashami is another widely celebrated festival of Hindus.³ It is celebrated for the five days which is also considered as Durga puja. They believe that Durga got victory over the Mahishsura demon, and on the memorable of that victory people celebrate the Dashami.⁴ It falls during the month of September-October.⁵ They celebrate this festival through social gatherings and offering sweets and gifts to relatives, friends and neighbours. During these days all the schools and

¹ Priyanka Verma, *Holi: Festival Of India* (Diamond Pocket Books Pvt Ltd, 2014), 1–4.

² Sujatha Menon, *Celebrating Holi: A Hindu Celebration of Spring* (The Rosen Publishing Group, Inc, 2009), 20.

³ Kartar Sing hBhalla, *Let's Know Festivals of India* (Star Publications, 2005), 14.

⁴ Dinesh Verma, *Indian Festivals Activity Workbook* (Chanda Books, 2010), 67.

⁵ Anne T. Mocko, *Demoting Vishnu: Ritual, Politics, and the Unraveling of Nepal's Hindu Monarchy* (Oxford University Press, 2015), 147.

offices are closed, and people visit their loved ones. Worshippers takes the consecrated water from the ghata which is considered as holy, and sprinkles it over himself as well as all the family members gathered to receive the goddess blessings by chanting special stotra.¹

Summary

This Chapter starts with explaining the importance of understanding the concept of worldview. How does the one's worldview impacts on how he/she views life. And leads lectors to the historical development of the religion Hinduism and its beliefs. The historical development has been divided into five different periods and explained on how different periods contributed different teachings and doctrines in this religion. The five different historical development of the Hindus beliefs are: first, Indus Valley Civilization. Secondly; Vedic Period. Third; Classical period. Fourth; Epic and Early Puranic Period and the last one is Medieval and Late puranic period. The next section contains five contemporary elements of the Hindu worldview. These elements are the ones that builds up the worldview, philosophy, doctrines, practices and festivals of this religion. Five elements of Hindu worldview are: 1) Brahman inspired Rishis to reveal His secrets 2) Each living organism is Divine in essence 3) Good or Evil is natural consequences of personal actions 4) Each living organism dies to move into another state of its divine essence 5) The

¹ Hillary Rodrigues, *Ritual Worship of the Great Goddess: The Liturgy of the Durga Puja with Interpretations* (SUNY Press, 2003), 71.

ultimate purpose in Hinduism is that the divine essence be released from the cycle of reincarnation.

Another section deals with core beliefs of Hinduism. Beliefs about main deities such as Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva and their incarnation in this world. Holy chants or mantra are considered another main element in their doctrines. Sacred Journey (Tirtha Yatra) is considered as a medium to earn merits and erase the bad karma that has been accumulated.

Hindu practices and festivals plays a vital role in their religious experiences. Each and every festivals such as makar sankati, Diwali, Holi, Vijaya Dashami have their own significant. And one of the aspect of their beliefs that cannot be separated is the system of castes. Which is a division of social classes into different levels.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter defines and explains the kind of work that has been done in this research paper. Gives some fundamental and validate sources to justify such a work. And gives information about the sources that have been used. Plants philosophical framework for this research. And finally defies the need of such kind of research and how it was dealt.

Investigation Design

This study followed the thematic methodology, based on what Vyhmeister defines: "In thematic research, precisely this is done: a subject is investigated. It identifies a question to answer, a gap to fill, a problem to solve. And then the question is answered, the void is filled or the problem is solved."¹ And was tend to achieve the objective as this kind of investigation demands. Explaining about the objective Peter McLaren says, "The object of thematic investigation is to construct generative themes or expressions that result from disadvantaged groups reflecting

¹ Nancy Jean Vyhmeister and Terry Dwain Robertson, *Quality Research Papers: For Students of Religion and Theology* (Zondervan, 2014), 40.

on their needs and concerns. The purpose is both to facilitate educational programming and to develop a concertizing cultural action.¹”

In this paper the problem was identified in chapter I and the answer is given in chapter IV. Chapter II presents theoretical elements that serve as context and foundation for the answer that is stated in chapter IV. And finally the conclusion and recommendations are laid in chapter V.

Instrumentation

The materials used in this research come from various sources, which are mainly bibliographical: books, digital books, articles, digital articles, search engine Logos, websites and Holy Scriptures of Hinduism such as Vedas, Bhagwat Gita, Ramayana and Puranas

Treatment of Data

This work tends to deal with some informative way with the objective of translating one of the most complex misunderstood religion of the world, Hinduism to the western audience with the main motive of seeking some practical bridges to connect them.

¹ Peter McLaren and James M. Giarelli, *Critical Theory and Educational Research* (SUNY Press, 1995), 241.

Summary

In this chapter, the type of Investigation was defined. The method that was followed to make it happened was justified. And the authenticity of the work was established by mentioning the sources that are used in this paper.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Theoretical framework section explored five main elements which forms the worldview of Hinduism. Doctrines, practices, festivals and teachings are derived from worldviews. After understanding their worldview, now auther tends to seek some elements that would help building a bridge between Adventism and Hinduism.

Elements For Adventists That Can Contribute Dialogues With Hindus

In this section, some elements that can be contributed for the religious dialogues with Hindus are listed. The main purpose of the elements is to build the bond of friendship and point them to the savior of the world, the one and only who can give hope in this hopeless world.

Great Importance Of Health Message In Hinduism And Also In Adventism

As we have discussed previous, Hindus specially the ones from high classes promote the healthy lifestyle. They tend to keep their mind clear in order to communicate with their gods.¹ Most of the Hindus, specially Sadhus are aware of the harm is caused by the things that should not be used, Hinduism does not

¹ Mariotti, *Vegetarian and Plant-Based Diets in Health and Disease Prevention*, 108.

promote the use of alcohol, drugs or any kind of activities that harms body and mind.¹

In the same way, Adventists also have a high regard for the health messages. When people in these Hindu nations are crying for health care, God has given us the method to reach them. Medical missionary work is bound with the gospel commission. When disciples were sent by Christ in their first missionary journey, He bade them, “As ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils.” Matt 10:7,8.² Through the Spirit of Prophecy God has told us how to reach to difficult places, “As a means of overcoming prejudice and gaining access to minds, medical missionary work must be done, not in one or two places only, but in many places where the truth has not yet been proclaimed. We are to work as gospel medical missionaries. This work will break down prejudice as nothing else can.”³ As the right hand of the gospel, medical missionary work alone will break down the walls of prejudice and soften the hearts of people. If we first attend their health, restore their broken physical condition and they themselves will be ready to receive the heavenly messages. “In every place the sick may be found, and those who go forth as workers for Christ should be true health reformers, prepared to give those

¹ Richard Beck and David Worden, *Truth, Spirituality and Contemporary Issues* (Heinemann, 2002), 63.

² “Medical Missionary Work,” *Ministry Magazine*, accessed November 25, 2018, <https://www.ministrymagazine.org/https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/1955/10/medical-missionary-work>.

³Ellen G White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9 (Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1855), 211

who are sick the simple treatments that will relieve them, and then pray with them. Thus they will open the door for the entrance of the truth. The doing of this work will be followed by good results.”¹ In the Hindu dominant countries, where it is almost impossible to step with the gospel in the hand, medical missionary method will stand till the very last, even in the times of hardship and in spiritual darkness this work alone will open the doors like nothing else. “As religious aggression subverts the liberties of our nation, those who would stand for freedom of conscience will be placed in unfavorable positions. For their own sake, they should, while they have the opportunity, become intelligent in regard to disease, its causes, prevention, and cure. All those who do this will find a field of labor anywhere. There will be suffering ones, plenty of them, who will need help, not only among those of our own faith, but largely among those who know not the truth. The shortness of time demands an energy that has not been aroused among those who claim to believe the present truth.”² There are many remote villages in Nepal and India, where the gospel has not been reached, and their culture is so much emerged with the Hindu traditions it is impossible to reach them with the western traditional evangelism methods, but with the medical missionary work we can enter into their homes and in their heart, people who are capable to treat the body are highly respected in these communities.

¹ Ellen Gould Harmon White, *Medical Ministry* (Pacific PressPub Assn, 1963), 320.

² Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Health* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2016), 506.

High Consideration of Social relationships bonds in Hinduism And Also in Adventism

In the difficult Hindu countries like Nepal and India, friendship evangelism would be a great way maintain the relationships. In every human heart exists a desire to love and to be loved by someone.¹ As mentioned, in chapter II, the form of worships, festivals, and holidays promotes the bond of friendship. For Hindu mind respecting others and being a friend matters the most, therefore, if we approach them as a friend not as a religious commander, we will accomplish much.² In the other hand, Adventist have the same philosophy towards their fellow beings, we are designed in such a way that we need someone to listen us, a close friend that would understand us, when all the world goes away a true friend that would be by our side. In fact, When God created He created us to be there for each other. He did not made us to be isolated but rather to be in a community. (Genesis 2:18) We are rational beings, we need each other to survive and to have a meaningful life. Therefore, there is no other great and effective methods than the friendship evangelism.³ This method may take time and effort but this is what gave success to our Lord Jesus Christ. Friendship evangelism is considered as one of the most effective and the simplest way for each and every Christian to bring people to the Lord. We are surrounded by people all around us, friends that we work or study with, our neighbors, family are some of the people that we can

¹ John Swinton, *Dementia: Living in the Memories of God* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2012), 45.

² Robert T. Moran, *Managing Cultural Differences* (Routledge, 2007), 374.

³ Jack Kuhatschek, *Evangelism: Reaching Out Through Relationships* (Discovery House, 2018), digital.

influence. We find this method even in the Bible times, When Andrew found Jesus, then he brought his brother Peter to Him. (John 1:40-42) Nathanael was the one who was introduced to Jesus through his friend Philip (John 1:43-45). In the book of Mark 5:19, Jesus does an incredible miracle and heals a man, he determines to follow Jesus, but Jesus commands him to go home with friends and share them the great things that had happened to him. The best way to do the friendship evangelism is to meet them where they are, involving in their activities and praying for them.

Janna Yoga or the Value of Education highly Valued By Hindus and Also By Adventists

As mentioned in previous chapter, one of the main devotion of the Hinduism is about Janna Yoga, which practically means the path of knowledge.¹ They believe that obtaining a true education is vital. According to this Philosophy education opens the doors and like no other can. In the same way, Adventism has a high value for the work of publications, they consider one of the main way to reach the unreached group of people is through the work of publications.

Ellen G White explains how the work of redemption and education is co-related, "In the highest sense the work of education and the work of redemption are one, for in education, as in redemption, 'other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.'"² When the preachers are not allowed to preach publicly and hold the public evangelism Ellen White refers the publication ministry

¹ Hazen, *Inside Hinduism*, 10.

² Ellen Gould Harmon White, *Education* (Creative Media Partners, LLC, 2018), 50.

as silent messenger, “ Publications must be multiplied, and scattered like the leaves of autumn. These silent messengers are enlightening and molding the minds of thousands in every country and in every clime.¹ Publications in the persecuted country serves as a seed in the fertile field, if sown it will give its fruits hundred times more.

“May the Lord move upon many of our young men and women to enter the canvassing field as canvassing evangelists. By the canvassing work the truth is presented to thousands that otherwise would not hear it.”²

Hindu Scriptures points to Jesus (Christ in Hinduism)

Even though Hinduism is a complex religion with many traditions and several sets of beliefs, when it comes to the concept of salvation, many Hindus sacred scriptures continuously points to Jesus. In the below section, some essential elements have been discussed to contribute a true seeker to find Jesus in Hindus scriptures, which would be helpful to point Hindus people to Jesus the Messiah, using their own Sacred scriptures.

Salvation In Hinduism and also in Adventism is through Grace not by Karma

As far as redemption of humanity, the holy scriptures of Hinduism also leads to one and only redeemer. According to Bhagavat Gita, “when it comes to the Salvation, “God” does not accept karma either good or bad.” (Bhagavat Gita 2.50)

¹ Ellen G. White, *Ellen G. White Review and Herald Articles - Book I of IV* (Lulu Press, Inc, 2013), digital.

² Ellen Gould Harmon White, *Reflecting Christ* (Review and Herald Pub Assoc, 2009), 253.

Another passage states, “neither weapons, nor wind, nor fire, nor millions of deeds can remove this bondage. Only the wonderful sword of knowledge that comes out of discrimination sharpened by the grace of God can destroy it”. (Viveka Chudamani 147) above statements says that if you really want to achieve the salvation, karma is not the answer, only the grace of God can save the humanity from the sinful conditions. All the traditions, festivals and good deeds fails in the achievement of salvation.

Highlighting this amazing grace, Bible states, “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God” Ephesians 2:8. Confirming that a salvation is achieved by grace of God another verse declares, “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men” Titus 2:11. Paul was probably one of the apostle who mentioned most about the way to achieve salvation states, “being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus” Romans 3:24. In the same way, the book of Titus confirms that grace alone makes us partakers of salvation, “So that being justified by His

The rise of redeemer- A man who was born of a virgin

In one of the holy scripture of Hinduism originally written in Sanskrit language states, “Koumaro loko ajanishta’ putrah nwarvethan wai uttaravoth.” (Atharva Veda 13:3-4) which can be translated as: “A son will be born to a virgin in this world, take ye hold that he is superior than everyone.” Which reveals the truth that the one who will born of a virgin is the supreme one. In the same way, one of the famous and most used Hindu scripture says, “Ko bhayaanithi tham praaha Sodovaachamudaanwitha: Esthaputhram cha maam idhi Kumaareegarbha

samahayam Aham easa Maseeha nama Bhavishya.” (Mahapurana, chapter 3, verse 34), which translates as, “May I know who you are? That man replied happily, “I am the son of God born to a virgin. My name is Easa Maseeha (the redeemer), above statements clearly says that the redeemer of this world is none but only one. Millions of gods and goddesses in Hinduism but no one claimed to redeem or to give the eternal life, the salvation can be obtained only through the supreme one, who is born of a virgin. Regarding Jesus, the Rig Veda says, “The supreme leader who is the cause and governor of all creation who protects and saves sinful mankind, He Himself appeared upon the earth wrapped in a body that is Holy and without sin.” (Rig Veda 10.125)

Bible, the Holy Scripture of Christians reveals the identity of that supreme man who was born of a virgin, “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.” (Isaiah 17:14). Actually when the event happened around two thousand years ago, Bible records, “Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” (Luke 2:11-12)

grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. Titus 3:7

Death and suffering of Christ in Hindu Vedas

It could be surprising to many, that the death and suffering of Jesus Christ was predicted even in the sacred books of Hinduism. One of the oldest and most used Veda describes in this way, “The sacrificial victim is to be crowned with a

crown made of thorny vines” (Rig Veda X:90:15). Not only about the thorny crown but also the wounds in His hands and legs were mentioned, “His hands and legs are to be bound to a yooपा causing bloodshed” (Ithareya Brahmanam 2 : 6). Yajurveda mentions about the bones of Jesus that were not broken, “None of His bones must be broken” (Yajurveda XXXI). Regarding the event that happened just before the death of Jesus, another Hindu scripture says, “Before death he should be given a drink of somarasa (Ithareya Brahmanam). Having mentioned all the above details that points to Jesus, Rig Veda says, “ *Thamevam Vidwanamrutha iha bhavathy Nanya pandha ayanaya vidya*” (Rig Veda X:90:16) which means, "Those who meditate and attain this man, believe in heart and chant with their lips, get liberated in this world itself and there is no other way of salvation."

Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit has not flesh and bones, as you see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he showed them his hands and his feet. (Luke 24:39-40)

But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they broke not his legs: But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and immediately came there out blood and water. And he that saw it bore record, and his record is true: and he knows that he said true, that you might believe. For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. (John 19:33-36)

"Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, put it on a stick, and offered it to Jesus to drink." (Matthew 27:28)

Atonement for sins in Hinduism

One of the section of Vedas, which deals with sacrificial philosophy and rituals describes in this way, “*Sarvapapa pariharo raktha prokshna mavasyam*” (*Thertiriya Aranyaka verse 3*) Which can be translated as, “the redemption is possible only through the shedding of blood.” The sacred Veda not only mentions the need of shedding of blood for the redemption it also gives the identity of the one whose blood alone can atone for the redemption, “*thad raktham Paranatmena punyadena baliyagam*” (*Thertiriya Aranyaka verse 3*) which means, “that blood has to be through the sacrifice of God himself.” History gives the testimony, there is no God other than Jesus in all the universe who came down and shed his precious blood for the humanity. Therefore, the text that was written in the Hindus scripture fulfils in Jesus Christ. Sama veda repeats the same truth, “*Prajapathi devapyam aathmanam yagnam kruthva prayachita*” which can be translated as, “God will offer himself as a sacrifice for the redemption of mankind.”

Resurrection of Jesus mentioned in Hinduism

In the book of Hinduism, it is mentioned of a man who was put to death and came to life by his victrous power, It tells about a man who was also a God, the book of Bruhat Aranyaka Upanishad says in this way, “*Yad Vruksho vrukshano rohati, mulannavatharah punah, martyah svinmrutyuna vruknah, kasmaanmulaat prarohati, Retasa iti maavocata, jivatastat praja yate, dhanaruh a iva val crau vruksho, anjasaa pretya sammbhava*”, which means, “if the tree is cut, it will grow again from its root. But after the man was cut off by death, from which root does he come forth? Do not say that he is from the ratas (seed or semen) because ratas

comes from the one who lives. Remember this man is dead. But this man comes alive on his own.”

Discussion

There are some scholars that have done some excellent job researching about the similar topic. In the year of 2008, William Hedrick from the Liberty University presented his Senior Thesis for his Honor Program which entitled, “Worldviews of Hinduism.” In his work he studied the Vedic branch of Hinduism in order to understand the worldviews of Hinduism. In his work he redefined the concept of ‘God’, Universal spirit Brahman, gods, the problem of life, and the solution. He makes it clear that his investigation holds the motive to evangelize Hindus. He conclude stating that the common bridge between Hinduism and Christianity is the path of devotion, path of service and the path of intellect.¹

In the same way, one of the contemporary successful missionary Gordon Christo of Southern Asia Division of Seventh-day Adventist Church, published an article in ‘Journal of the Adventist Theological Society’ in the year of 2002, with the title, “Staying Within the Boundaries: Contextualization of Adventism for India.” In his article he does a theological distinction about the doctrines of Hinduism and Christianity. And finds some common ground between Hinduism and Adventism. He gives some practical elements of links such as the philosophy of education,

¹ Will Hedrick, “The Worldviews of Hinduism and the Christian Believer,” n.d., 62.

health, gospel and culture etc. and his motive of research is to seek the common ground to reach the unreached people.¹

One of the excellent research paper that was designed about building a bridge between Hinduism/Buddhism worldview elements and Christianity is by Pastor Kelly Hilderbrand , he mentioned about the concept of Karma and justice for human being. In his work, he describes the concept of Karma but from the ideology of Buddhism and compares with the concept of Justice with Christianity. He takes the two concepts as an element for a bridge, but ends stating that the concept of Karma in Hinduism and in Buddhism is cruel, righteousness by work and it shows less justice. But in other hand the grace God is amazing, justice and full of love.²

¹ Gordon Christo and Spicer College, "Staying Within the Boundaries: Contextualization of Adventism for India," n.d.,

² Hilderbrand Kelly, "Karma_as_Justice.Pdf," n.d.

Summary

This chapter presented the result or the answer of the question. And found some elements that would seek as a bridge to relate with Hindu people. Among them, the medical missionary work will be a right tool to engage with this people. And searching their holy scripture some elements have been discovered with talks about the identity of Jesus Christ, gives an glimpses that salvation is not through Karma nor through obedience of daily rituals but through the precious blood of Jesus. Those text can be used to build a bridge for a religious dialogue with Hindus.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

This last chapter summarizes the investigation work. Starting with the overall summary of the work, Methodology that was followed, results of the investigations and the discussion. And finally conclusions and recommendations were given.

Abstract

Introduction. In the year of 1894, Adventist message was first introduced in Hindu country India. Since, then thousands of missionaries have been sent in South Asian countries but very few results have been accomplished. And many missionaries have come to this conclusion that, to work among Hindus is very challenging. In order to reach them and to know, how they think and perceive things it is vital to understand their worldview.

Objective. Having mentioned the above problem, this research tends to contribute in understanding the worldview of Hinduism in order to know how they think and perceive things.

Methodology. This research followed thematic methodology, first planted the problematic issue, explained the antecedents, and found the solutions of the problem.

Results. Found some elements that could serve as a bridge for religious dialogues with Hindus. Elements that has to deal with salvation, grace, and the identity of the savior of the world is explored using their own sacred scriptures.

Conclusions. The investigation reached to the following conclusions:

First, Understanding the worldview of any group of people, or individual helps to relate and reach them.

Second, most of the Hindus people have prejudice towards western missionaries but if Christ Method is followed and if we seek nothing but their good, surely they will open their heart for truth.

Third, some elements have been found in their sacred books where it reveals the Identity of Jesus Christ and presents Him as the redeemer of the world.

Keywords: Worldview, Hinduism, Adventists, elements, bridge

Resumen

Introducción. En el año de 1894, el mensaje adventista se introdujo por primera vez en India, un país hindú. Desde entonces, miles de misioneros han sido enviados a países del sur de Asia, pero se han logrado muy pocos resultados. Y muchos misioneros han llegado a esta conclusión de que, trabajar entre los hindúes es un gran desafío. Para poder llegar a ellos y saber cómo piensan y perciben las cosas, es vital entender su cosmovisión.

Objetivo. Habiendo mencionado el problema anterior, esta investigación tiende a contribuir a comprender la cosmovisión del hinduismo para saber cómo piensan y perciben las cosas.

Metodología. Esta investigación siguió una metodología temática, primero planteó el problema, explicó los antecedentes y encontró las soluciones al problema.

Resultados. Encontró algunos elementos que podrían servir de puente para los diálogos religiosos con los hindúes. Los elementos que tienen que lidiar con la salvación, la gracia y la identidad del salvador del mundo se exploran utilizando sus propias sagradas escrituras.

Conclusiones. La investigación llegó a las siguientes conclusiones:

Primero, entender la cosmovisión de cualquier grupo de personas o individuo ayuda a relacionarse y alcanzarlos.

Segundo, la mayoría de los hindúes tienen prejuicios hacia los misioneros occidentales, pero si se sigue el Método de Cristo y si no buscamos nada más que su bien, seguramente abrirán su corazón a la verdad.

Tercero, se han encontrado algunos elementos en sus libros sagrados donde revela la identidad de Jesucristo y lo presenta como el redentor del mundo.

Introduction

The worldview of Hinduism can be divided into five main elements. Among these elements Vedas are considered as the supreme authority for all the worldviews, beliefs, philosophy, practices and Hindus festivals. According to Hindus, each words and messages in Vedas are given from 'God' himself, therefore Veda is considered as eternal, the rule to measure all acts, source of

divine knowledge and highest authority for mankind.¹ The second worldview of Hinduism is understood as, 'each living organism is divine in essence.' Which holds the beliefs that every living creatures have the essence of Brahman 'God' in himself. Which does not only makes man eternal and infinite but 'God'. This point of view states that there is no distinction between God and human beings. Only those who have religious thirst and searches after the Divine essence hidden within through the forms of meditations and yoga will come to the realization of Brahman that is within each soul.² Third worldview element of Hinduism is: good or evil is natural consequences of personal actions. In Hinduism the term Karma is used to define its importance. Whether the actions are good or bad, they will reap the consequences, and the consequences could be seen in the moment when action is done, could be in the future, or could in the next life. And the way of consequences could appear in different forms such as good actions leads to the achievement of riches, prestige, born in high caste, born as high standard in life. But in other hands, bad actions reaps the bad consequences such as some accidents in present time, tragedies in future or birth as a low caste, poor in another life.³ The fourth element of Hindu worldview is: Each living organism dies to move into another state of its divine essence. This concept is well known as the process of reincarnation in Hinduism. Since they believe that the soul is immortal and cannot die, but when body dies the soul, which is also the essence of 'God'

¹ Narang, *Message of the Vedas* — GC Narang, 40.

² Doss, *God, If You're Real, Let's Talk!*, 126.

³ *Understanding Society*, 272.

takes another form or body and takes rebirth in another form depending upon his/her karma. One could take any body and could be born in one of the fourteenth earth like world, that they believe exists.¹ And the final element of the Hindu worldview is; the ultimate purpose in Hinduism is that the divine essence be released from the cycle of reincarnation. This process is known with the term, 'Moksha' or attaining liberation. In this phase the spirit or essence of Brahman goes to mingle with the Supreme Brahman. And Hindus desire to reach to this stage. It is believed that there are different ways to reach to this stage, meditations, daily rituals and obligations are some of the ways to reach the liberation.²

In the next section, different doctrines of Hinduism has been discussed. Even though this religion does not have once concrete set of beliefs, some core beliefs have been abstract. One of the important element of their belief is the concept of one 'God' and many gods. In Hinduism they have one supreme 'God' which is known as Brahman. But Brahman realizes that human beings always needs images, or some sort of forms to worship. Therefore, Brahman manifested himself into three different individuals sometimes also reffered as 'Trimurty' and these trimurty have been incarnated in different forms, bodies which makes 33 millions of gods and goddesses.³ In the same way, mantra or holy chants are considered as vital part in Hindus worship. These chants are withdrawn from the sacred scripture Vedas and are recited every mornings. Another belief in Hinduism

¹ "Puranas - What Are the Different Types of Lokas?"

² Mehta, *Four Objectives of Human Life*, 60.

³ Hawley and Narayanan, *The Life of Hinduism*, 245.

is about the sacred journey to the holy places such as Ganges river, holy mountains, temples etc. Hindus take journey of pilgrimage with the desire of achieving Moksha, to wash away the sins, and as a form of adoration.¹ Another important belief in Hinduism is the system of sacrifices, the holy book such as Vedas, Puranas mentions about the sacrifices of animals for the pardon of sins, taking these words Hindus people sacrifice animals in during the festivals of Durga Puja.² The final element of Hindu belief is the Caste system. Caste system is divided into five different categories. They believe the Brahman "God" was the one who established the caste system, therefore it is the duty of all mankind to follow and maintain in the rule.³

Another section deals with the main practices in the Hindu religion. Just as the doctrines, it would be hard to define exactly all the Hindu practices but main practices have been discussed. Practices such as Puja or worship, there is a specific way or a form of doing puja ceremonies and it is a vital part of Hindus life. And other festivals such as Makar Sankranti, Diwali, Holi, Vijaya Dashami are celebrated with much joy. Each one of these practices and festivals have their unique way of celebrating.⁴

¹ Alper, *Understanding Mantras*, 4.

² Carter, *Understanding Religious Sacrifice*, 3.

³ Ahmed, *The Arains*, 32.

⁴ Symmons, *This Is Hinduism*, 4; Saran and Pandey, *Sun Worship in India*, 67; Verma, *Holi*, 1–4; Verma, *Indian Festivals Activity Workbook*, 67.

Methodology

The Methodology that has been used for this investigation is Thematic Method. Where certain topic has been elaborated and found the basic element of the Hinduism in order to understand them well and to know how do they think. And core beliefs of Hinduism were discussed, in order that to happen many books, articles, websites were used.

Materials that are used for this Investigations are physical books from the Library, digital books in the online platform such as google books, Kindle, online articles and some websites. This Investigation is done with much care with a lot of respect for both religious groups of Adventist and Hinduism.

Results

Final section tends to seek the answer that was established in the first and second chapter. Author gives seven different common elements of Hindus that can help an Adventist to build a bridge for religious dialogues. Medical Missionary work, following Christ's methods would help to reach them wherever they are and opens the doors for dialogues. Using their own sacred book such as Vedas, Puranas, Bhagawat gita we can point the nature of true savior who can deliver from the sinful nature and sinful world.

Discussion

There are some scholars that have done some excellent job researching about the similar topic. In the year of 2008, William Hedrick from the Liberty University presented his Senior Thesis for his Honor Program which entitled,

“Worldviews of Hinduism.” In his work he studied the Vedic branch of Hinduism in order to understand the worldviews of Hinduism. In his work he redefined the concept of ‘God’, Universal spirit Brahman, gods, the problem of life, and the solution. He makes it clear that his investigation holds the motive to evangelize Hindus. He conclude stating that the common bridge between Hinduism and Christianity is the path of devotion, path of service and the path of intellect.¹

In the same way, one of the contemporary successful missionary Gordon Christo of Southern Asia Division of Seventh-day Adventist Church, published an article in ‘Journal of the Adventist Theological Society’ in the year of 2002, with the title, “Staying Within the Boundaries: Contextualization of Adventism for India.” In his article he does a theological distinction about the doctrines of Hinduism and Christianity. And finds some common ground between Hinduism and Adventism. He gives some practical elements of links such as the philosophy of education, health, gospel and culture etc. and his motive of research is to seek the common ground to reach the unreached people.²

One of the excellent research paper that was designed about building a bridge between Hinduism/Buddhism worldview elements and Christianity is by Pastor Kelly Hilderbrand , he mentioned about the concept of Karma and justice for human being. In his work, he describes the concept of Karma but from the ideology of Buddhism and compares with the concept of Justice with Christianity. He takes

¹ Hedrick, “The Worldviews of Hinduism and the Christian Believer.”

² Gordon Christo and Spicer College, “Staying Within the Boundaries: Contextualization of Adventism for India,” n.d.,

the two concepts as an element for a bridge, but ends stating that the concept of Karma in Hinduism and in Buddhism is cruel, righteousness by work and it shows less justice. But in other hand the grace God is amazing, justice and full of love.¹

Conclusion

The investigation has come to the following conclusion:

First, Five main elements of the Hindus worldview are; God (Brahman) Inspired Rishis (Holy Ones) to reveal His secrets, each living organism is God in essence, Each action has natural consequences, each living organism dies to move into another state of its divine essence and the final one is, the ultimate purpose of Hinduism is to liberate Atman from the cycle of reincarnation.

Second, some core beliefs of Hinduism are; beliefs on Deities, Beliefs on Holy Chants, Beliefs on Pilgrimage and Beliefs on Sacrifices.

Third, Some common practices in this religion are: Puja or form of worship, celebrations of religious festivals such as Makar Sakranti, Diwali, Holi and Bijaya Dashami.

Fourth, there are four main elements that can serve as the bridge for religious dialogues with Hindus, Holy Scripture of Hinduism states that the ultimate redeemer is the one who is born of a Virgin- which indicates the Identity of Jesus Christ, Death and suffering of Jesus Christ is mentioned in the holy Puranas, Karmas are daily actions and obligations but salvation is only through supreme God, and the final element is Atonement for sins in Hinduism is through blood and

¹ Kelly, "Karma_as_Justice.Pdf."

their holy scriptures mentions that blood has to be of the supreme God creator. All these elements helps Adventists to point them to the true Savior that is revealed in Bible.

Recommendations

After the framework is planted and the result is abstracted this research leaves following recommendations:

First, it is recommended to follow up on this topic to continue profound investigations on the worldview of Hinduism and elements that serves as a bridge for Adventists.

Second, It is recommended all the Adventists Institutions to teach about the concept of worldview, and specially the religion Hindus, and what can be done to win their confidence as Adventists.

Third, Adventist mission centers are recommended to retake this subject of worldview of Hinduism and teach them to anyone who would want to go different country as missionary.

Fourth, It is recommended to buy and make it available more materials and resources about the topic Hinduism in the Library. In the Library of Montemorelos there are very limited amount of books on this subject.

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