

“How Can My Hindu Friend Justify Her Unethical Behavior?”

I had an associate for 3 years who was a devoted Hindu.... On the surface they seem nice, but over time it became apparent they allowed for violations of ethics and contracts that I would not have expected. How is this allowed in their culture? They follow the “Laughing” form of Hinduism. The husband laughed at everything as a way to create good karma. I witnessed to them both with very limited effect. I am now planning a trip to India and these questions seem most relevant. Can you help me understand this seeming contradiction in their thought?

Note from the Web coordinator, Byron Barlowe: We asked our Indian friend Rajesh Sebastian to reply. Not only is Rajesh from the predominantly Hindu culture of India and thus highly qualified to comment, but he is also trained in worldview apologetics. Rajesh worked for Ravi Zacharias Ministries and remains a resource person for them in India. He also received his Th.M. from Dallas Theological Seminary.

1. Regarding Contradiction in Indian-Hindu culture: Your friend mentions contradiction. For a Hindu, it is not a problem to live with contradictions. According to Hindus, you talk about contradictions because you are narrow-minded (so it is your fault!). Hindus believe that god can be one and many! God is both good and evil! We see a total collapse of the Law of Non-contradiction in India. Truth is relative (Gandhi and other Indian philosophers made long argument to prove the argument). Therefore, it is possible for a Hindu to be religious and still manipulate ways to make extra income/profit. After all, what is wrong according to one god will be right according to another god. Such attitude in

business help many to become more successful than others who might go by the law and make less profit.

A good example I can think of is this one: A thief goes to steal. On the way, he stops at a temple and offers prayers and makes a promise. If he is not caught, he will give a share from the loot to that god/goddess or temple. So, Indians can be very religious and very corrupt at the same time without feeling bad about being corrupt. In fact, Mr. I. K. Gujral, who was the Prime Minister of India in the 90s for a couple of years, said that "corruption is in the blood of every Indian." Indians believe in "both-and" logic (disagree with "either-or" logic) and can peacefully live with contradictions. This is why you will find even highly educated Hindus involved in superstitions.

Lesson to learn: When doing business with them, be careful. They do not believe in moral absolutes. "What works is right" and "end (more profit) justifies the means." Moreover, it is possible for someone believing in karma to cheat you and live peacefully, thinking that you are suffering now because of your bad karma in the last life and that they are benefiting from it now because of their good karma in the last life! Indians are successful businessmen. A large percentage of motels in the US are already owned by Indians from a particular state where they worship a "goddess of wealth." If money is your god, then you might do anything to get it.

2. Regarding the Laughing form of Hinduism: Hinduism is like a vast sea. There are lot of practices and beliefs that might be contradictory or different from each other. For example, there is a temple in India where they have a festival every year. Devotees go there during this festival that goes for a week and utter curses and abuses to the god in that temple. These are the worst words (@#\$%^&*) you can imagine. They do it with the belief that this is a way of bringing out all the evil thoughts and anger in them and

this god can take it so that they can get cleaned from all the dirt inside them.

Similarly, there are different yoga practices. If you walk around a park in Delhi, or any other cities in India, you will find groups of people standing together and just shouting. They practice it as a form of yoga. Those who practice laughing believe that doing so will help them to control their anger and also will help them to see the positive side of life. Hinduism is all about getting things done. Practitioners look for success even if that includes bribing gods. If gods can be bribed, why can't people cheat? Remember, you cannot be better than the gods you worship. In fact, the Bible says that you will be like the gods you worship. "Contradiction" is an alien concept to Hindus. They will mock you and say you are saying "contradiction" because you are not tolerant of other views. You say there can be only one God because you are not tolerant of the opposite belief!! The only thing Hinduism can not tolerate is exclusivism.

3. In order to communicate the gospel to Hindus, a worldview approach starting with one common Creator might be a better way to go. Starting with Jesus as "Son of God" (they believe there are many sons, why only one?) or man as sinner does not make sense to them. Tell about a Father trying to save the lost ones through the sacrifice of Christ. It is important to abolish polytheistic worldview by showing that polytheism is a self-defeating belief as it teaches that all the minor gods were created by some major gods and finally points down to One Ultimate Being. You have to start from there and then show what that ultimate one will be like and what he has spoken to mankind.

Hope this helps little bit to clear some of the great confusion surrounding Hinduism. However, do not underestimate the system. Hinduism is like the great serpent that can swallow all systems except exclusivism and that is

why Hindus are now fighting exclusive viewpoints in academic circles all over the world.

See the following resources from Probe on Jesus as the only way, or exclusivism vs. pluralism:

- [Christianity and Religious Pluralism](#) by Rick Wade
- [Do All Roads Lead to God? The Christian Attitude Toward Non-Christian Religions](#) by Rick Rood
- [What's the Difference Between Moral Relativism and Pluralism?](#) by Don Closson
- [How I Know Christianity is True](#) by Dr. Pat Zukeran. Note particularly the bibliography section, Is Jesus the Only Way?

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