

Understanding God through different religions.

I. Major world faith systems.

1. Hinduism teaches loving devotion to one supreme God (in His various forms) for the whole world.
2. A person in New Age would see himself or herself as God.
3. Buddhists do not worship any gods or God
4. Muslims believe there is the one almighty God, named Allah, who is infinitely superior and distant from humankind.
5. Christians believe in a loving God who has revealed himself and can be personally known in this life.

II. Hindu worship a multitude of gods and goddesses (some 300,000 of them).

- Hinduism claims 1/6 of the world's population, with over 750 million followers worldwide.
 - approximately 200 Hindu temples or Hindu centers in the U.S
 - Hinduism is comfortable with evolutionary thinking because Hinduism emphasizes on spiritual evolution that occurs over time.
 - Hinduism is the wellspring or foundation of a good part of the New Age thinking.
- Though there are some core beliefs common to virtually all Hindus, there really is no "Hindu orthodoxy"--no hard and fast dogma that all Hindus must believe. It's actually a family of gradually developing beliefs and practices.
- Hindus do believe in a devotion to one Supreme Being that has various forms.
 - Have a number of deities who for the most part are personifications of natural phenomena, such as storms and fire
 - Many Hindus instead of speaking of a multitude of gods, refer to an ultimate reality beyond our comprehension called Brahman
 - Chief among the gods so venerated are Brahma (the creator), Vishnu (the preserver), and Shiva (the destroyer).
- Hinduism provides a comprehensive intellectual understanding of the divine reality, but it lacked a strong appeal to the heart.
 - Bhagavad Gita wrote a "New Testament" for Hinduism.
 - This "New Testament" emphasizes the importance of personal devotion to a god as the essence of true religion, rather than intuitive knowledge of the oneness of all things.
- Interesting concepts of God in the eyes of Hinduism thought could be different and shocking to how we may view God.
 - Hinduism lacks any understanding that God created this world for a good purpose.
 - According to Hindu teaching, man is divine at the core of his being. He is one with God. The problem is that man is ignorant of this fact.
 - The way to God is from the cycle of reincarnation, which is achieved by our own efforts--whether through good works, meditation, or devotion to a deity.

III. The New age religion is more focused on self and power that self can find within his or her on being.

- New Age promotes the development of the person's own power or divinity.
 - A person in New Age would see themselves as God
 - Everything that the person sees, hears, feels or imagines is to be considered divine.
- New Agers view God as something to attain within, not to worship outside herself or himself.
 - New Age presents itself as a collection of ancient spiritual traditions
 - It acknowledges many gods and goddesses.
 - The Earth is viewed as the source of all spirituality, and has its own intelligence, emotions and deity.
 - Self is the originator, controller and God of all.
- The New Age movement has certain beliefs and practices that develops their religion.
 - Very similar to Hinduism that the individual self is ignorant (or forgetting) that the individual is divine or god.
 - They practice yoga, chanting, and other psychic techniques to achieve a divine conscience or understanding that he or she is god.
 - There is no reality outside of what the person determines.

A person develops spiritually to the degree that there is no objective, external reality

Believing themselves to be completely sovereign over their life, nothing about their life is wrong, negative or painful. (Only in their reality.)

IV. The Buddhist religion is unique in itself were Buddhists do not worship any gods or God.

- Buddha (Siddhartha Gautama) never claimed to be divine, and Buddhists reject the notion of any supernatural power.

Buddhists believe that the universe operates by natural law.

Life is seen as consisting of pain: pain in birth, sickness, death, and continuous sorrow and despair.

Most Buddhists believe a person has hundreds or thousands of reincarnations, all bringing misery.

- The Desire for happiness that causes a person's reincarnation for a Buddhists is the belief that you need to let go of all desires.

The goal of a Buddhist is to purify one's heart and to let go of all desires.

A person must abandon all sensuous pleasures, all evil, all joy and all sorrow.

- Buddhists are to follow a list of religious principles and intense meditation

This type of meditation is not a prayer to focus on god but it is more of self-discipline.

A focus on getting your Chi in line (Chi = life force...)

Through dedicated meditation a person may reach Nirvana -- "the blowing out" or release of the flame of desire.

V. Muslims believe there is the one almighty God, named Allah, who is infinitely superior and distant from humankind.

- Allah is viewed as the creator of the universe and the source of all good and all evil.

Everything that happens is Allah's will.

He is a powerful and strict judge, too great to be approached by people.

So it is impossible for individuals to have a relationship with Allah and not able to know much about Allah as well.

- Muslims honors several prophets of history

Muhammad is considered the last prophet and his words and lifestyle are that person's authority.

Believe in Jesus Christ as a prophet and not God or even the Son of God.

Muslims view Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Moses, and Jacob as prophets of God.

Muslims make no distinctions between any of the prophets and only surrendered to Allah is their objective.

- Islam believes that God judges people by their deeds or works.

No one can come to God by Faith alone.

Each Muslim is viewed as having his deeds weighed on a giant scale.

Approaching God is by human merit.

Muslims are disgusted by the thought of a Trinity or a tri-unity God.

They believe that if one believes in a tri-unity God then that is polytheism or the belief in many gods

VI. Christians believe in a loving God who has revealed himself and can be personally known in this life.

- The Christian believes there are many attributes to God.

They believe that God is love.

They believe that God is righteous and holy.

They believe that God is all powerful and in control of all.

They believe that God is all knowing.

They believe that God is everywhere at the same time.

They also believe that God is a Triune God, which God is 3 persons in one-The Father, Son & Holy Spirit.

- The person's focus is not on religious rituals or performing good works, but on enjoying a relationship with God and growing to know him better

Faith in Jesus Christ himself, not just his teachings, is how the Christian experiences joy and a meaningful life

It is through faith in Jesus Christ that you can attain peace with God and have eternal life.

To attain this eternal life or everlasting life you must be born again; a spiritual rebirth.

- There is only one way to the God.

Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the father but through me" (John 14:6)

The Christian believes that if you do not follow Jesus Christ and believe that He is only way to God then you would go to hell.

VII. There is a difference between each religion and how they view God, therefore each religion can not have the same God.

There are very distinct differences about each religion that set each a part from the other.

1. Hindus believe in 300,000 gods.
2. Buddhists say there is no deity.
3. New Age followers believe they are God.
4. Muslims believe in a powerful but detached God.
5. Christians believe in a God who is loving and approachable

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