**BABIES THROWN FROM ROOFTOP IN INDIA!**

**In early May, 2008 news stations everywhere where showing video of babies being thrown off the rooftop of the parliament building in Solapur, in the state of Maharashtra, India 50’ above the ground where a group of men held a large blanket ready to catch the infants as they were dropped. This was done to bring the babies good luck and health!**

[**Michael Jackson**](http://www.mtv.com/news/articles/1458799/20021120/jackson_michael.jhtml) **created an international controversy when he dangled his baby out the window of his 5th floor hotel room in Berlin, Germany. But if he had done the same thing in this town in India, he would have been criticized for not letting go of the baby. This custom has been going on for 500 years and the organizers claim there have never been any accidents. (You have to be a complete utter moron to believe that).**

**The religious makeup of India is approximately 80% Hindu and 13% muslim.**

**This custom is practiced at Muslim temples but sometimes Hindu couples participate as well, especially those who have been blessed with a baby after praying at the Muslim shrine.**

**So if this practice is valid, the babies of Solapur should be the luckiest and healthiest in the world (since I know of nowhere else it is done). Do you believe that is true? I don’t. If anyone wants to prove something in the world of the paranormal or religious, here is a great opportunity: just design and conduct a scientific study to prove that these babies really are healthier and luckier than those that don’t get dropped and you will be famous (if it’s true).**

**Regarding the preposterous claim that no one has ever been injured, some things are just so absurd they don’t require rebuttal. Call these organizers what they are - ‘liars’. But I can see why no one will say anything against them though: if you had to live there, the last thing you would want is a bunch of angry imams looking for revenge and knowing your name.**

**Now let’s discuss the majority religion of India - Hinduism.**

**HINDUISM**

**One of the earth’s four major religions; each of which has approximately 1 billion members. The others are islam, catholicism, and non-catholic christians (mainly protestants). Most live in India, but other countries with large Hindu populations include Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Mauritius, Fiji, Suriname, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom, and Canada.**

**Hinduism contains a vast body of scriptures. Divided as Sruti (revealed) and ‘Smriti’ (remembered). They provide guidance on the practice of dharma (religious living). The most important in authority and antiquity are the four Vedas. They are Rig Veda, Sama Veda, Yajur Veda and Atharva Veda. The concluding portion of the Vedas are the ‘Upanishads’.**

**Prominent themes in Hindu beliefs include** [**Dharma**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dharma) **(ethics/duties),** [**Samsāra**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samsara) **(The continuing cycle of birth, life, death and rebirth),** [**Karma**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karma) **(action and subsequent reaction),** [**Moksha**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moksha) **(liberation from samsara), and the various** [**Yogas**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yoga) **(paths or practices).**

**Most Hindus believe that the spirit or soul—the true "self" of every person, called the** [**ātman**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atman_%28Hinduism%29)**—is eternal. According to the monistic/pantheistic theologies of Hinduism (such as** [**Advaita Vedanta**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Advaita_Vedanta) **school), this Atman is ultimately indistinct from** [**Brahman**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brahman)**, the supreme spirit. The goal of life according to the Advaita school is to realize that one's ātman is identical to Brahman, the supreme soul. The** [**Upanishads**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Upanishads) **state that whoever becomes fully aware of the ātman as the innermost core of one's own self, realizes their identity with Brahman and thereby reaches Moksha (liberation or freedom).**

**Other** [**dualistic**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dualistic) **schools (see** [**Dvaita**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dvaita) **and** [**Bhakti**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhakti)**) understand Brahman as a Supreme Being who possesses personality and worship Him or Her thus, as** [**Vishnu**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vishnu)**,** [**Brahma**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brahma)**,** [**Shiva**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shiva) **or** [**Shakti**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shakti) **depending on the sect.**

**There are also schools like the** [**Samkhya**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samkhya) **which have** [**atheistic**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atheism_in_Hinduism) **leanings.**

**Earliest evidence for Hinduism dates to 5500 b.c.e. (or 1500 years before the Christian god created the earth). I’ll let you guys fight that one out among yourselves.**

**Most Hindu scriptures are not typically interpreted literally. More importance is attached to the ethics and metaphorical meanings derived from them.**

**Hinduism has a developed system of symbolism and iconography to represent the sacred in art, architecture, literature and worship. These symbols gain their meaning from the scriptures, mythology, or cultural traditions. The syllable** [**Om**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Om) **(which represents the Parabrahman) and the** [**Swastika**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swastika#Hinduism) **sign (which symbolizes auspiciousness) have grown to represent Hinduism itself.**

**AFTERLIFE**

**Hindus believe in reincarnation. The basic belief is that a person's fate is determined according to his deeds. These deeds in Hinduism are called 'Karma'. A soul who does good Karma in this life will be awarded with a better life in the next incarnation. Souls who do bad Karma will be punished for their sins, if not in this incarnation then in the next incarnation and will continue to be born in this world again and again. The good souls will be liberated from the circle of rebirth and get redemption which is called 'Moksha' meaning freedom.**

**RITUALS**

**The vast majority of Hindus engage in religious rituals on a daily basis. Most Hindus observe religious rituals at home. However, observation of rituals greatly vary among regions, villages, and individuals. Devout Hindus perform daily chores such as worshiping at the dawn after bathing (usually at a family shrine, and typically includes lighting a lamp and offering foodstuffs before the images of deities), recitation from religious scripts, singing** [**devotional hymns**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhajan)**,** [**meditation**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meditation)**, chanting mantras, reciting scriptures etc. A notable feature in religious ritual is the division between purity and pollution. Religious acts presuppose some degree of impurity or defilement for the practitioner, which must be overcome or neutralised before or during ritual procedures. Purification, usually with water, is thus a typical feature of most religious action. Other characteristics include a belief in the efficacy of sacrifice and concept of merit, gained through the performance of charity or good works, that will accumulate over time and reduce sufferings in the next world.**

**Hindu society has traditionally been categorized into four classes, called Varnas;**

* **the** [**Brahmins**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brahmin)**: teachers and priests;**
* **the** [**Kshatriyas**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kshatriya)**: warriors, nobles, and kings;**
* **the** [**Vaishyas**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vaishya)**: farmers, merchants, and businessmen; and**
* **the** [**Shudras**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shudra)**: servants and labourers.**

**Hindus and scholars debate whether the caste system is an integral part of Hinduism sanctioned by the scriptures or an outdated social custom.**

**MAJOR HINDU GODS WIVES**

**brahma (the creator) saraswati (goddess of learning)**

**vishnu (the preserver) laxmi (goddess of wealth & prosperity)**

**(krishna = earlier version of vishnu)**

**shiva (the destroyer) parvati (Kali or Durga)**

**In total, there are over 330,000 of these supernatural beings in various Hindu traditions.**

**Many denominations of Hinduism, such as** [**Vaishnavism**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vaishnavism) **and** [**Saivism**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saivism)**, teach that occasionally, God comes to Earth as a human being to help humans in their struggle toward enlightenment and salvation (**[**moksha**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moksha)**.) Such an incarnation of God is called an avatar (or avatāra.) In some respects, the Hindu concept of avatar is similar to the belief found in** [**Christianity**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity) **that God came to the earth** [**incarnated**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Incarnation_%28Christianity%29) **in the form of** [**Jesus**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesus)**. However, whereas most Christians believe that God has assumed a human body only once, Hinduism teaches that there have been multiple avatars throughout history and that there will be more. Thus** [**Krishna**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Krishna)**, who is not only viewed as an incarnation but also source of all incarnations, says:**

**Whenever righteousness declines
And unrighteousness increases,
I make myself a body;
In every age I come back
To deliver the holy,
To destroy the sin of the sinner,
To establish righteousness.**

**DENOMINATIONS**

**Contemporary Hinduism traditionally has four major divisions:** [**Saivism**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saivism)**,** [**Shaktism**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shaktism)**,** [**Smartism**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Smartism)**, and** [**Vaishnavism**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vaishnavism)**.**

**Hinduism is a very rich and complex religion. Each of its four denominations shares** [**rituals**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ritual)**,** [**beliefs**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belief)**, traditions and personal gods with one another, but each sect has a unique philosophy on how to achieve life's ultimate goal (**[**moksa**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moksa)**, liberation). For example a person can be a devotee to Shiva and a Vishnu devotee but they can practice the** [**Advaita Vedanta**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Advaita_Vedanta) **philosophy which believes there is no difference between Brahman and a person's** [**individual soul**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atman)**. Conversely, a Hindu may follow the Dvaita philosophy which stresses that Brahman and the soul are not the same. But each denomination fundamentally believes in different methods of self-realization and in different aspects of the one supreme God. However, each denomination respects and accepts all others, and conflict of any kind is rare.**

**THE CASTE SYSTEM**

**There are four** [**castes**](http://adaniel.tripod.com/castes.htm) **in Hindu religion arranged in a hierarchy. The highest caste is Brahman, and they are the priest caste of Hinduism. After them are the Kshatria, who are the warrior castes. After them are the Vaishya caste , who are business people. And after them are the Sudra, who are the common peasants and workers. Below these four castes there are casteless, the untouchables. The four castes were not allowed to have any physical contact with the untouchables.**

**skepticism in india - president of the Indian Rationalist Society Sanal Edamaruku**

**http://indianrationalists.blogspot.com/**

**QUOTES**

**Andrei Sahkarov 1921-1989 68**

**a Soviet nuclear physicist, is said to be the father of the Soviet hydrogen bomb and an advocate of human rights. and Nobel Peace Laureate. Exiled by the government for fighting for democracy and human rights.**

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| **"Freedom of thought is the only guarantee**  |
| **against an infection of peoples by the mass myths,**  |
| **which, in the hands of treacherous hypocrites and demagogues,**  |
| **can be transformed into bloody dictatorships."** |

**Arthur C. Clarke 1917-2008 90**

**Prolific author, most famous for the novel “2001: A Space Odyssey” and movie of the same name. During WW2 he served in the British Royal Air Force as a radar instructor.**

**His proposal for a satellite communications system earned him a nomination in 1994 for the Nobel Prize. He was again nominated for a Nobel Prize in 1999 for literature.**

**He lived the last 50 years of his life in Sri Lanka where his favorite hobby was scuba diving.**

**In 1959 at the age of 41 he contracted polio and had to spend most of the rest of his life in a wheelchair (hence the love for scuba diving). His timing nearly parallels that of American president Franklin Delano Roosevelt who got polio at around the same age and was also wheelchair-bound the rest of his life.**

**He identified himself as an atheist and stated “I don’t believe in God or an afterlife.” But he did admit to an affinity for Buddhism which he did not consider a religion. That sounds like material for a future show.**

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| **"Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic."** |
|  |
| **“If I was a religious person, I would consider creationism nothing less than blasphemy.**  |
| **Do its adherents imagine that God is a cosmic hoaxer who has created that** |
| **whole vast fossil record for the sole purpose of misleading mankind?”**  |