

# South Asian Peoples

*The greatest concentration of lostness on Earth*

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## Pray for the Hindu pilgrims of the Kumbh Mela

60 seconds of prayer a day for 60 days  
could change 60 million lives for eternity

**March 2** – Hindus are trekking hundreds of miles to bathe in the Ganges River in Haridwar, India, when they believe the planets' alignment indicates the holy river is most capable of washing away their sins. Please pray for the salvation of Hindus celebrating the Kumbh Mela (pronounced KHOOM MAY-lah) now through April.

**March 3** – Please take a few minutes today to look, through photos, at the faces of those who are at this year's Kumbh Mela. You can find several photos at <http://tinyurl.com/y8akdq> or <http://www.asiastories.com>. As you look into each face, ask the Holy Spirit to guide your prayers for that person.

**March 4** – Ask the Lord to prompt Christians worldwide to pray faithfully for the millions of Hindu pilgrims attending this year's Kumbh Mela. Indians enjoy a good cup of milk tea. Consider gathering a group of friends in your home or church this month for a time of tea and concentrated prayer.

**March 5** – “Some are walking 100 miles. It's amazing to see these people,” one Christian observed at a Kumbh Mela in Haridwar. “Their feet are bleeding, but they're just determined. It is like some power has overtaken them.” Pray that Hindus will want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection.

**March 6** – Authorities limit direct Christian witnessing during the Kumbh Mela, but Christians will be on site in Haridwar, praying for Hindu pilgrims and ready to pray with anyone who desires prayer. Please ask the Lord to protect physically and spiritually every Christian attending this year's mela.

**March 7** – Hinduism is a diverse set of religious, philosophical and cultural beliefs. Reincarnation is fundamental to Hinduism. A basic desire for freedom from the evils and pitfalls of life guides most Hindu practices. Pray John 8:32, asking that Hindus will learn the truth and will let the Truth set them free.



South Asia has the greatest concentration of lostness in the world. Of 1.5 billion people, 969 million South Asians — including 80 percent of India's population — still worship Hindu idols made by the hands of men. The Kumbh Mela draws the largest gathering in the world. Ten million people gathered for the Kumbh Mela April 14, 1998, the last Kumbh Mela that was held in Haridwar, India. The lostness that is there day-to-day and that congregates in Haridwar by the millions every 12th year is virtually untouched. This year, the Kumbh Mela, already under way in Haridwar, will continue through the end of April. Here you will find resources that will help you pray specifically for Hindus who are traveling on pilgrimage to wash in the Ganges River in Haridwar in a desperate search for forgiveness of sin and eternal life.

**March 8** – Officials have increased security measures at the Kumbh Mela in the wake of a deadly bomb blast last month in Pune in the Indian state of Maharashtra. Pray that authorities will thwart any attempts to hamper the safety of the millions attending this year's Kumbh Mela.

**March 9** – South Asia Insights Prayer Guides will help you pray for Hindus, Muslims and Buddhists. Download them at <http://www.go2southasia.org/resource/printables/>.

**March 10** – During every Kumbh Mela, Hindu pilgrims die. They drown in the rivers; illnesses overcome them; human stampedes crush them. During a 1986 Kumbh Mela in Haridwar, about 50 people died when a bridge collapsed. Please pray for the safety and well-being of Hindu pilgrims attending this year's Kumbh Mela.

**March 11** – During this Kumbh Mela, officials expect 50 million people to visit Haridwar. The economic boost is a blessing to the city's residents, but the promotion of Hinduism is not pleasing to God. Pray that the people of Haridwar will seek other ways to make their city attractive and economically healthy.

**March 12** – Hindus know the city of Haridwar as “the gateway to god.” Pray that Hindu pilgrims at the Kumbh Mela in Haridwar will hear and understand what Jesus meant when He said, “I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved” (John 10:9b, NKJV).

**March 13** – Residents of Haridwar invite many travelers to stay in their homes, for a fee, during the Kumbh Mela. Pray that these strangers will not in any way take advantage of the men, women and children in these homes.

**March 14** – Don't forget to set your clocks an hour forward today. India's time is 9 ½ hours ahead Eastern Standard Time in the United States. March 15 marks the “second royal bath” of the Kumbh Mela. Please pray now for Hindus who put their hope in gods who cannot answer them.

**March 15** – Millions washed in the Ganges at dawn today and are now trying to find a spot to rest before making their journeys back home. As they close their eyes to sleep, pray that they will realize that they still have no real rest in their souls. David the psalmist declared, “My soul finds rest in God alone; my salvation comes from him” (Psalm 62:1, NIV).

**March 16** – Pray today that God will introduce you to Hindus in your neighborhood or workplace. Tracts and other helpful resources for sharing the Good News with Hindus are available at <http://www.go2southasia.org/resource/evangelism/> and <http://www.4truth.net/site/c.hiKXLbPNLrF/b.2904151/k.D116/Hinduism.htm>.

**March 17** – Hinduism has a great number of rituals that venerate a diverse group of deities. Many consider these deities to be manifestations of one supreme being, Brahman. Pray that the true and living God will open the eyes of the Kumbh Mela pilgrims and that their hearts will turn to Him.



**March 18** – While the main Kumbh Mela event takes place in Haridwar, the city of Ujjain hosts a smaller or half Kumbh Mela. As you lift up before the living God the Hindus on pilgrimage in Haridwar, please also intercede on behalf of those seeking inner peace in Ujjain, Allahabad and Nasik.

**March 19** – During the mela, children are learning as their parents and siblings model how they should place their faith in man-made images, burning incense, ringing bells, chanting, astrology, and the Ganges River. Pray that the Lord God will draw these little ones to come to Him and trust Him as Savior.

**March 20** – “Oh Ganges, you are the essence of the cosmos ... Who can fittingly sing your praises?” a Hindu holy man chanted as he stood in the midst of the churning waters. Pray that Hindus soon will sing praises solely to the Most High who created the cosmos, including the Ganges.

**March 21** – “They are coming to wash their sins away, and of course we know that they're not going to get their sins washed away, not by this dirty water,” one Christian said. Pray that the Ganges River and the gods of Hinduism will lose their power over the people of India.

**March 22** – Five main roads lead into Haridwar. During the 1998 Kumbh Mela, Christians set up outreach points along the roads going into Haridwar. From there, they were able to share with and minister to Hindus traveling to and from the mela. Pray that Hindus will encounter Christian witnesses along their journeys.

**March 23** – The crowds at the Kumbh Mela can be overwhelming and even dangerous. Pray that God will give government officials, soldiers, police officers, and medical personnel working at this year's Kumbh Mela needed wisdom, resources and stamina.

**March 24** – Officials attribute Kumbh Melas with the birth of three cholera epidemics that reached as far as the countries that border India, one Indian doctor said. During the Kumbh Mela, many people are sleeping in close quarters and all are bathing in the same waters. Pray for good health for everyone.

**March 25** – “I am the LORD, that is My name; and My glory I will not give to another, nor My praise to carved images” (Isaiah 42:8, NKJV). Pray that Hindus who prostrate themselves before idols will instead fall and worship the God who created them, giving Him all glory due Him.

**March 26** – “The Kumbh Mela illustrates a major spiritual stronghold. It has over 1,000 years of entrenchment,” an Indian Christian said. With the Lord, a thousand years are like a day and all things are possible. Pray that God, for His glory, will shatter this stronghold and free the hearts it entangles.

**March 27** – Hindu pilgrims still are making their way to Haridwar to bathe in the Ganges River. Pray that God will prevent these pilgrims from being able to come to the mela. Ask that a local Christian will go share the Good News of Jesus with them right in their own houses.

**March 28** – Please pray against spiritual warfare that will try to attack Christians ministering in Haridwar. “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds” (2 Corinthians 10:3-4, NKJV).

**March 29** – The Hindus’ revered sacred texts called the Vedas (pronounced VEH-dahs) contain much of their tradition. Pray that the Word of God will find its way to the eyes, ears and hearts of Hindus and that they will let it sustain their weary souls.

**March 30** – “They make idols for themselves from their silver, cleverly fashioned images, all of them the work of craftsmen. It is said of these people, ‘They offer human sacrifice and kiss the calf-idols’” (Hosea 13:2b, NIV). Pray that Hindus will understand that Christ, the perfect Sacrifice, has paid the price for their sins.

**March 31** – Christians are preparing to remember Jesus’ sacrifice and resurrection, but Hindus at the Kumbh Mela have no idea that Jesus died willingly to take the punishment for their sins. Many have never heard of Jesus. Plead on behalf of the lost. Ask God to reveal His great love to Hindus.

**April 1** – In Hinduism, actions determine a person’s progress toward salvation, which Hindus define as freedom from the cycle of reincarnation. Virtuous actions lead one closer to the goal, while evil actions prove a lack of understanding. Ask that mela pilgrims will understand and experience firsthand the truth taught in Ephesians 2:1-9.

**April 2** – “The Ganga (Ganges River) is a seductive spirit, so she is seducing the Hindu believers and calling them to her, ‘Come, come,’” one Christian said. “That is what we have to pray against. Pray against this ancient spirit.” Please read Revelation 22:17 and ask that Hindus will accept Jesus’ invitation.

**April 3** – Hindus celebrating the Kumbh Mela will give no thought to Easter. Most have never heard of it and do not know its meaning. Pray that South Asian Hindus in India, Nepal, Kenya, London and the United States will be compelled to ask Christian neighbors and friends to explain their beliefs.

**April 4** – Easter Sunday often is a time to wear new clothes, recognizing that Jesus’ death and resurrection allowed us to have new hearts as we placed our faith in Him. Read Psalm 132 and pray that the resurrected Christ will clothe Hindu priests with true salvation.

**April 5** – Father God, Your Word promises in Romans 10:13 that whoever calls on Your name shall be saved. Haridwar is a place in need of Good News. We beseech You to call Christians to go reap the plentiful harvest that waits among lost Hindus living in and visiting Haridwar.

**April 6** – Kumbh Mela dates are set according to the cosmic positions of the sun, moon and Jupiter. Pray that Hindus will consider the work of the Creator God who set the moon and stars in place and will ask as David did in Psalm 8 why He is mindful of man.

**April 7** – Hinduism is one of the oldest religious traditions practiced today. It has no founder. Pray that Hindus will understand that the Creator God made man in His image and that He loves every living person and desires to have a personal relationship with each one.

**April 8** – South Asian Hindus celebrate a Hindu festival almost every month. Understanding the reasons for observing the festivals help Christian intercessors know how to pray effectively for the Hindus who do not know Jesus as their Savior. Pray that God, through the Holy Spirit, will give Hindus true reason to celebrate.

**April 9** – In January, Hindu pilgrims braved chilly waters to bathe in the Ganges River at auspicious times. This month temperatures will likely reach 100 degrees. Pray that those attending the Kumbh Mela will stay well hydrated and healthy.

**April 10** – Every stage of the Kumbh Mela must be covered with prayer. Not everyone can come walk the path of the Hindu pilgrims. Christians all over the world can take part, however, by going to the throne of grace. Beseech God the Father to have mercy on Hindu pilgrims in Haridwar.

**April 11** – Pray for more Christians to be willing to endure the crowds and dust and noise to be a witness for Jesus Christ at the various Kumbh Melas across India. Are you prepared to embark on such a journey, sustained by your faith in the power of God to save the lost?



## Pray for the Hindu pilgrims of the Kumbh Mela – a 60-Day Prayer Guide

**April 12** – During this festival season, pray that the Lord will bind Satan and that the Holy Spirit will saturate all of India. Pray that Hindus will seek the one true God and that Christians will seize opportunities to share their personal stories and God’s great love story with the lost around them.

**April 13** – Hindus consider some Kumbh Mela bathing days to be royal – Feb. 12, March 15 and April 14. Naga sadhus, Hindu holy men, parade and bathe naked on these days. Pray that these men will humble themselves before the living God who clothes the lilies and who loves them even more.

**April 14** – Ask that the Hindu worshippers who bathe in the Ganges River will not feel the spiritual cleansing they seek until they ask Jesus to cover them with His blood. Pray that Christians will have opportunities to meet with many of these Hindu worshippers to share the Gospel clearly with them.

**April 15** – “We wove our way in and out of people. We walked past small children crying for their parents (who) were nowhere to be seen,” one Christian said. “We (heard) pleas from the public address system for parents to come and get their lost children.” Pray for these little ones today.

**April 16** – Father, it is heartbreaking to think of the millions who travel to try to wash their sins away in the lifeless Ganges River. Jesus, may they hear of Your love and understand that you “loved us and washed us from our sins” with Your own blood (see Revelation 1:5, NKJV).

**April 17** – When pilgrims go to the Kumbh Mela, they often forfeit their incomes during that time to be able to travel. This can cause families to suffer financially. Pray that Hindus will understand that “by humility and the fear of the LORD are riches and honor and life” (Proverbs 22:4, NKJV).

**April 18** – “Once you offer prayers to (the Hindu god) on the auspicious day, the sins committed by you in the past are washed away,” said a Hindu devotee on the bank of the Ganges River. Pray that Hindu pilgrims will understand that Jesus alone has the power to forgive their sins.

**April 19** – Many Indian Christians report that they came to Christ through dreams and visions. Hindus put a lot of trust in their dreams. Pray that Kumbh Mela pilgrims will see Jesus as the One and Only in their dreams, will place their faith fully in Him, and will proclaim His name.

**April 20** – Christians met a girl at one mela. “When she found out who we were, she said they had talked about us at school. When we asked why, she said that her teacher was talking about the foreigners who really love India.” Pray that Hindus will know Christians by their love.

**April 21** – The only way a Hindu escapes the cycle of reincarnation is by dying at the Ganges River. God says, “I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you

and your descendants may live” (Deuteronomy 30:19b, NKJV). Pray that Hindu pilgrims choose Life.

**April 22** – Hindu priests make their livings from donations given at temples. To become a follower of Christ means they must give up their only source of income. Ask that the Lord will help Hindu priests to see past this dilemma and to trust Him for their salvation and their every need.

**April 23** – Pray that every Hindu man, woman and child will have the opportunity to hear about Jesus Christ during the Kumbh Mela in Haridwar. Ask that they may find the true peace that Christ is willing to give all who trust Him by faith and follow Him in obedience.

**April 24** – Hindus often fear that they will dishonor their families or their ancestors if they leave the teachings of Hinduism to become a Christian. Some Hindus may be disowned or even physically persecuted when they choose to follow Jesus as Savior and Lord. Pray for those who are counting the cost.

**April 25** – Hindu pilgrims will collect “holy water” from the Ganges River to take to pour over the images of Shiva in their village temples. Villagers greatly respect those who bring back Ganges water. Pray that villagers will grasp the futility of this and will turn to the true Water of Life.

**April 26** – After one Kumbh Mela, 38,000 people were reported missing. Five days later, 250 people still were missing. Pray that families will be safely and wholly reunited at the close of this Kumbh Mela.

**April 27** – April 28 marks the last bathing date of this Kumbh Mela season. Kumbh Melas will continue as long as there are Hindus who do not acknowledge Jesus as their Savior and Lord. Please continue praying that those attending Kumbh Melas and all Hindus will find true spiritual cleansing through Jesus.

**April 28** – “On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water” (John 7:37-38, NKJV). Pray that Hindus will hear the voice of Christ calling them.

**April 29** – As Hindu pilgrims prepare to return home from the Kumbh Mela, please pray that they will grasp that they leave with the same emptiness and uncertainty they had when they arrived. Ask that they in turn will search for truth and will find it in Jesus, the Water of Life.

**April 30** – The next large Kumbh Mela will be in 2013 in the city of Allahabad. Officials expect more than 120 million people to attend. Begin now to pray that the Lord will call Christians to share the Word of Life with Hindu pilgrims during the 2013 festival.

Find ongoing prayer requests at [www.imb.org/compassionnet](http://www.imb.org/compassionnet). Search requests by “strategic ministries” and scroll down to the “South Asian Hindu Festivals” tab.