

The Old Hindu Diaspora



The Old Hindu Diaspora originates from the indentured labour system. In the 1830's, British colonial powers needed a new form of cheap labour after slavery was outlawed in most parts of their empire. Colonial powers recruited mostly poor and uneducated South Asians as indentured labourers to work their cotton, coffee, sugar and tea plantations and to build railways and other construction projects for a period of five to ten years.

During this time, almost 1.5 million South Asians were shipped off to colonies in the Caribbean islands, Fiji, South Africa, Mauritius, East Africa and the Malaysian Peninsula. This new form of slavery was soon adopted by other colonial powers, such as the French and the Dutch, after they also outlawed traditional slavery in their own colonies in the succeeding decades.

The majority of those who were bonded and traumatically transplanted in this way were Hindus, many from North India. While labourers were often motivated to join by fear of famine, economic insecurity or conflict, they were also coerced or deceived about what it meant to be an indentured labourer.

Recruitment for the British Indentured Labour System officially ended in 1917 and indentured labour itself was declared illegal in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948.

Many Hindus who found themselves on distant shores, chose to remain and to build a future, rather than risk the dangerous voyage home to a place where they had no money or status. They have built profound connections with their new homes, and contributed in significant ways to the development of their communities. It is towards these communities that we turn our prayers today.

HOW CAN WE
PRAY?



Pray for diaspora Hindus to know that their Creator remembers them and has not left them alone, wherever they are.

(ISAIAH 49:15, 21-22)

Pray for diaspora Hindus who feel lonely or discouraged to know that Jesus went through similar situations and is ready to bring comfort.

(JOHN 16:32-33)

Pray that the long shadow of exploitation would not mark these communities but instead that they would experience the fullness of life here on earth and eternal life through Jesus.

(MATTHEW 6:33-34)

