

Hinduism

A study of various aspects of the traditional metaphysical doctrines of the Hindu Tradition, along with extensive book and article reviews

Who Invented Hinduism? presents ten masterly essays on the history of religious movements and ideologies in India by the eminent scholar of religious studies, David N. Lorenzen. Stretching from a discussion on the role of religion, skin colour and language in distinguishing between the Aryas and the Dasas, to a study of the ways in which contact between Hindus, on the one hand, and Muslims and Christians, on the other, changed the nature of the Hindu religion, the volume asks two principal questions: how did the religion of the Hindus affect the course of Indian history and what sort of an impact did the events of Indian history have on the Hindu religion. The essays cast a critical eye on scholarly Arguments which are based as much on current fashion or on conventional wisdom as on evidence available in historical documents. Taking issue with renowned scholars such as Louis Dumont, Romila Thapar, Thomas Trautmann and Dipesh Chakrabarty on some central conceptions of the religious history of India, Lorenzen establishes alternative positions on the same through a thorough and compelling look at a vast array of literary sources. Touching upon some controversial arguments, this well-timed and insightful volume draws attention to the unavoidably influential role of religion in the history of India, and in doing so, it creates a wider space for further discussion focusing on this central issue.

"A wider range than usual of Sanskrit texts: not only interesting Vedic, epic, and mythological texts but also a good sampling of ritual and ethical texts. . . . There are also extracts from texts usually neglected, such as medical treatises, works on practical politics, and guides to love and marriage. . . . Readings from the vernacular Hindi, Bengali, and Tamil traditions [serve to] enrich the collection and demonstrate how Hinduism flourished not just in Sanskrit but also in its many mother tongues."—Francis X. Clooney, *Journal of Asian Studies*

In this magisterial volume of essays, Wendy Doniger enhances our understanding of the ancient and complex religion to which she has devoted herself for half a century. This series of interconnected essays and lectures surveys the most critically important and hotly contested issues in Hinduism over 3,500 years, from the ancient time of the Vedas to the present day. The essays contemplate the nature of Hinduism; Hindu concepts of divinity; attitudes concerning gender, control, and desire; the question of reality and illusion; and the impermanent and the eternal in the two great Sanskrit epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. Among the questions Doniger considers are: Are Hindus monotheists or polytheists? How can atheists be Hindu, and how can unrepentant Hindu sinners find salvation? Why have Hindus devoted so much attention to the psychology of addiction? What does the significance of dogs and cows tell us about Hinduism? How have Hindu concepts of death, rebirth, and karma changed over the course of history? How and why does a pluralistic faith, remarkable for its intellectual tolerance, foster religious intolerance? Doniger concludes with four concise autobiographical essays in which she reflects on her lifetime of scholarship, Hindu criticism of her work, and the influence of Hinduism on her own philosophy of life. On Hinduism is the culmination of over forty years of scholarship from a renowned expert on one of the world's great faiths.

Provides an overview of the beliefs and customs of Hinduism, including an introduction to sacred texts, a history of the religion, and its continued growth throughout the world today.

This book is, thus, an effort to compile the history, development and the basic tenets of Hinduism which guide the way of life of one fifth of humanity on earth. Effort has been made to include only the basic information that has helped a Hindu to choose a desired path from amongst the many that have been lighted up by Hindu sages to achieve their goal, that of attaining 'Moksha' or 'Mukti', which means that he or she obtains relief from the cycle of birth and death through good Karmas. This is the central precept of Hinduism. Interaction with people in foreign countries, other than Hindus, reveals that they have little knowledge about Hinduism. It is learnt that British schools have a period or two, in class eight, to deal with all religions which is obviously insufficient to make a child of that age to even understand the actual meaning of the word religion. Hindus who migrated abroad from India at a young age and those who were born abroad, except for Mauritius and Fiji islands where Hindus have lived as a cohesive community for over a century, and those who have continued to maintain their links with their original faith, many have started losing touch with the basics of their religion. Generally, there is a perceptible lack of authentic knowledge about the beginnings of Hindu religion and its evolution over the ages into what it represents today.

Provides an illustrated overview of the origins and development of the Hindu religion. Includes discussion and essay questions, word lists, a test, and answer key.

This book represents in many ways the most complete achievement of Ananda K. Coomaraswamy (1877-1947). -- Back cover. Describes the origins, principal teachings, scriptures, important figures, historical events, and holidays of Hinduism.

The idea that there is a truth within the person discovered through introspection is found in most religions. This book examines this metaphor in the history of Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism and the methods developed in those religions to realize it, particularly prayer and meditation.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, a lone pilgrim reached Gujarat and joined a small ashram in Loj. In time, his followers not only accepted him as the leader of the ashram but also as the manifestation of deity and called him Swaminarayan. His followers increased rapidly and today Swaminarayan Hinduism is a transnational religious movement with major centers in India, East Africa, UK, USA, and Australasia. In a first multidisciplinary study of the movement, this volume provides new and vital information about its history, theology, as well as its transnational development, and brings forth current academic research from fields as diverse as the arts, architecture, sociology, and migration studies, among others. It analyses the philosophy, conduct, and principles that guide Swaminarayan Hindus and provides a case study of the historical and social processes of adapting religious traditions to shape new identities in response to evolving social, economic, and political changes.

IS THE HISTORY OF HINDUISM, THE HISTORY OF BRAHMANAS FROM RIGVEDIC TIMES TO THE PRESENT? Or, does the story of Hinduism begin with the descriptions of the ancient roots as revealed by archaeological findings and the evidence from present day tribal, village and regional cultures? This book looks at both. The history of Brahmanas, tracing their lineage to the fifty-odd Rigvedic poets, is dealt with through the chronological ordering of the Sanskrit texts which were first handed down to us as oral narratives from Gurus to shishyas. The circumstances and purposes for which these texts were written is examined, along with events of a true historical nature. This is followed by a sequential treatment of Hinduism as a 'Rigvedic religion', the two Mimamsas, Buddhism, Jainism, Dharmasastras, the Epics and the Puranas. The growth of Hindu temples, the role of Adi Sankaracharya and the Bhakti movement is delved into, and the influences of Muslim and British rule of the subcontinent on Hinduism is analysed. The author explores one major reason for the survival of Hinduism—the support

of prehistoric tribal and village cultures which were not modified or destroyed by the later-day Brahmanas. Much of tribal and village deities and practices were co-opted into concurrent Hinduism, so-much-so that today these cannot be separated from mainstream Hindu practices and traditions. They exist in all their colourful glory to this date and make Hinduism vibrant. It is these ancient folk religions that provide a stable foundation for the survival of Hinduism, argues author R Ramachandran, presenting in this book an all-encompassing landscape view of Hinduism as it has been for the last five thousand years. Finally, the present status of Hinduism is discussed along with its survival in the future.

A bold retelling of the origins of contemporary Hinduism, and an argument against the long-established notion of religious reform. By the early eighteenth century, the Mughal Empire was in decline, and the East India Company was making inroads into the subcontinent. A century later Christian missionaries, Hindu teachers, Muslim saints, and Sikh rebels formed the colorful religious fabric of colonial India. Focusing on two early nineteenth-century Hindu communities, the Brahmo Samaj and the Swaminarayan Sampraday, and their charismatic figureheads—the “cosmopolitan” Rammohun Roy and the “parochial” Swami Narayan—Brian Hatcher explores how urban and rural people thought about faith, ritual, and gods. Along the way he sketches a radical new view of the origins of contemporary Hinduism and overturns the idea of religious reform. Hinduism Before Reform challenges the rigid structure of revelation-schism-reform-sect prevalent in much history of religion. Reform, in particular, plays an important role in how we think about influential Hindu movements and religious history at large. Through the lens of reform, one doctrine is inevitably backward-looking while another represents modernity. From this comparison flows a host of simplistic conclusions. Instead of presuming a clear dichotomy between backward and modern, Hatcher is interested in how religious authority is acquired and projected. Hinduism Before Reform asks how religious history would look if we eschewed the obfuscating binary of progress and tradition. There is another way to conceptualize the origins and significance of these two Hindu movements, one that does not trap them within the teleology of a predetermined modernity.

Written in easy to understand language, this book offers a clear introduction to Hinduism. It puts emphasis on the religions as a living faith and contains a 'new word' list which explains new and specialist words.

'Defining Hinduism' focuses on what Hinduism is, what it has been, and what some have argued it should be. The oldest of the world religions, Hinduism presents a complex pantheon and system of beliefs. Far from being unchanging, Hinduism has, like any faith of duration, evolved in response to changing cultural, political and ideological demands. The book brings together some of the leading scholars working on South Asian religions today.

If you ever wanted to learn about the concepts and fundamentals of Hinduism then this is the book for you. Even though the Hindu religion is the oldest religion in the world, there are many misconceptions that laypeople have about it. Some people don't understand the mystical chants and mantra traditions where they keep repeating "Aum" over and over again. But you have to understand the religion to truly appreciate where these acts and traditions come from. There is a 4000 year history to Hinduism that many people outside of India don't even know about. On top of that, Hinduism has evolved a lot over the years with both oral and ancient stories involving the laws of Hinduism. These stories were often told by sages who passed down their knowledge of the religion to their disciples. Eventually there was a compilation of ancient Sanskrit texts where Hindus could study the ethical and moral code that they needed to live by. However, Hindus for thousands of years have been changing traditions and teaching new philosophies about the religion that help motivate modern day people to become followers. Furthermore, they encourage them to take up Hindu derived practices, like yoga and meditation, in order to help them feel better in their lives. You don't have to be looking to convert to Hinduism to appreciate this book. It is not a book that is going to try to change you or convince you that Hinduism is the one true religion to believe in. This book simply goes over all the important aspects and traditions of the religion, as they are broken down into chapters. That way you can understand the Hindu concepts of God, prayer, meditation, animal sacrifices and reincarnation. These are the key points that people often misinterpret because they see movies or television shows that misrepresent the real Hindu religion. If you are a westerner then this probably means you. The only way you are really going to learn the truth about Hinduism is to either go to India and visit a Hindu school or read through this entire book with an objective mind. If you are thinking about becoming a Hindu then it has to be your choice alone. You first need to study the Vedic scriptures and seek religious guidance from an elder Hindu. This book will simply awaken you to the religious customs of Hinduism and get you familiar with what you are in for. The great part about Hinduism is that you don't need to have a religious affiliation with it in order to learn from its teachings and participate in its traditions. Hinduism is all about establishing a spiritual connection with your soul and the universe. For some Hindus, they don't even reach this point for an entire lifetime. That is why they continuously reach for the Sanskrit texts and practice their meditations. The chapters in this book: Chapter 1 Introduction to Hinduism Chapter 2 Hindu Philosophy Chapter 3 Concept of Maya in Hinduism Chapter 4 What is Karma? Chapter 5 Soul (Aatma) in Hinduism Chapter 6 Reincarnation in Hinduism Chapter 7 Brahman - The Supreme Being Chapter 8 Why Hindus Worship Idols? Chapter 9 Mantras in the Hindu Religion Chapter 10 Practice of Yoga in Hinduism Chapter 11 Vegetarianism in the Hindu Religion Chapter 12 The Caste System in the Hindu Religion Chapter 13 Popular Hindu Gods and Goddesses Chapter 14 Symbolism of Arms in Hindu Gods and Goddesses Chapter 15 Hindu Swastika Chapter 16 The Aum Chapter 17 Holy books of the Hindus Chapter 18 The Mahabharata Chapter 19 Bhagavad Gita Chapter 20 The Ramayana Chapter 21 River Ganges in the Hindu religion Chapter 22 The cow in Hindu religion Chapter 23 Major Hindu Festivals Chapter 24 Important Hindu Holy places to visit in India Chapter 25 Tips for visiting a Hindu temple Chapter 26 Conclusion

After a brief introduction on the idea of culture, enculturation and acculturation in social anthropology, a theology of culture, symbol and language is treated in order to lead to the central subject-matter of the Christian theology of inculturation, which is articulated in themes such as revelation and culture, redemptive incarnation as an exemplary model of inculturation, Lay people and inculturation, missionary spirituality and inculturation. The final chapters deal with inculturation in the Indian Church, the meeting of the Gospel with Asian religions, cultures and aspirations for full humanity, and Asian Christian theology.

Yoga. Karma. Reincarnation. Most Americans are familiar with a few basic ideas of Hinduism, but are unfamiliar with the big picture. This beginner's guide covers the major Hindu thinkers and their philosophies as well as the dharma, the moral way of life that Hindus practice. In a straightforward style, the authors explain the philosophy, gods, texts, and traditions of the world's third-largest religion, including: the power of karma; Yoga as a path to God; the authority of the Vedas; the development of Jainism, Buddhism, and Sikhism; the legacy of Mohandas Gandhi; Hinduism in popular culture; and more. This guide is stimulating reading for westerners who want to learn the basics of this ancient and mystic religion.

The third edition of this well-regarded introduction to Hinduism adds new material on the religion's origins, on its relations with rival traditions, and on Hindu science.

Explaining the origins, beliefs, scriptures and philosophies of this ancient religion, Klaus K. Klostermaier succeeds in capturing the rich diversity of rituals and gods that comprise Hinduism, while keeping the tone both engaging and

informative. Covering contemporary issues such as the relationship between Hinduism and modern Western ideas, and imminent challenges the religion faces, this sweeping exploration of a fascinating and long-lasting belief system is essential reading for students, followers, and interested readers alike.

Looks at the history, rituals, customs, social aspects, and other issues surrounding Hinduism.

A much-needed, comprehensive and up-to-date thematic and historical survey of Hinduism.

This book can be used by lay readers as well as students of Short and Full GCSE Courses in Hinduism. Every section has a special section entitled Breadth of Vision that offers deeper insights into religious teachings. This book places a greater emphasis on contemporary version of Hinduism, in contrast to what have now become antiquated versions.

Hinduism is a living religion, constantly evolving and refreshing the message of spirituality through the teachings of its contemporary proponents. Western authors writing on Hinduism have often overlooked this feature. Many textbooks on Hinduism are Abrahamic Versions of Hinduism; this book presents a Hindu version of Hinduism focusing on its core teachings of: * The divinity of Man ~ or Spiritual humanism * Religious Pluralism promoted as a central tenet of religion * Religion reconciled with rationality * Emphasis on experiential religion * Spirituality as the common subject matter of both religions and modern sciences

What Is Hinduism? provides one of the most provocative, engaging and detailed examinations of this oldest religious and spiritual tradition in the world. Followed by over a billion people, including a great majority in India, Hinduism is the third largest religion in the world. The teachings of Yoga and Vedanta are followed by millions in every continent. Enriched with a profound pluralistic view, Hinduism emphasizes that the Truth is One but has many paths. Yet, despite its universality, Hinduism remains the most misunderstood of the world's major religions, partly because of its antiquity and the vast extent of its teachings. Acknowledging the importance of the religion and its growing influence globally, David Frawley has addressed the prime teachings of Hinduism, its role in India, its place in the information age and has compiled an exhaustive set of questions and answers dwelling on all the significant issues. This essential learning helps us understand our spiritual heritage as a species and the place of India among the greatest civilizations of the world—ancient and modern. Further, the book charts out how Hindus can overcome the challenges confronting them today and communicate their diverse tradition more effectively, making it an ideal book for the Hindu youth.

Explore Hinduism is a concise but well-rounded introduction to the variety of beliefs and practices, and describes how Hindus think, act and practice their faith in the modern world. Most importantly, it illuminates the 'soul' of Hinduism, its spirituality.

Exploration of contemporary Hinduism, illustrated by case studies from the lived religion.

How can religious freedom be granted to people who do not have a religion? While Indian indentured workers in colonial Trinidad practiced cherished rituals, "Hinduism" was not a widespread category in India at the time. On this Caribbean island, people of South Asian descent and African descent came together—under the watchful eyes of the British rulers—to walk on hot coals for fierce goddesses, summon spirits of the dead, or honor Muslim martyrs, practices that challenged colonial norms for religion and race. Drawing deeply on colonial archives, Alexander Rocklin examines the role of the category of religion in the regulation of the lives of Indian laborers struggling for autonomy. Gradually, Indians learned to narrate the origins, similarities, and differences among their fellows' cosmological views, and to define Hindus, Muslims, and Christians as distinct groups. Their goal in doing this work of subaltern comparative religion, as Rocklin puts it, was to avoid criminalization and to have their rituals authorized as legitimate religion—they wanted nothing less than to gain access to the British promise of religious freedom. With the indenture system's end, the culmination of this politics of recognition was the gradual transformation of Hindus' rituals and the reorganization of their lives—they fabricated a "world religion" called Hinduism.

Your hands-on guide to one of the world's major religions The dominant religion of India, "Hinduism" refers to a widevariety of religious traditions and philosophies that have developed over thousands of years. Today, the United States is home to approximately one million Hindus. If you've heard of this ancient religion and are looking for a reference that explains the intricacies of the customs, practices, and teachings of this ancient spiritual system, Hinduism For Dummies is for you! Provides a thorough introduction to this earliest and popular world belief system Information on the rites, rituals, deities, and teachings associated with the practice of Hinduism Explores the history and teachings of the Vedas, Brahmins, and Upanishads Offers insight into the modern daily practice of Hinduism around the world Continuing the Dummies tradition of making the world's religions engaging and accessible to everyone, Hinduism For Dummies is your hands-on, friendly guide to this fascinating religion.

Congratulations and all the best Dr Srinivasan Gandhi for your wonderful book "Hinduism and Brotherhood" - Dr Sashi Tharoor The feelings, beliefs and customs of brotherhood among the Hindus represents a unique system of its own, the principles of which are not found in the same measure in any other social system of the world. Hinduism involves expressive and symbolic performances, religious utterances and theological gestures about brotherhood. The feelings of brotherhood represent the basic ideals of the Hindu religion and their beliefs, though they may vary from region to region, and are aimed to secure all religious people and the developments of the security feeling of the recipient. This illustrated book familiarizes with cooperation and collaboration of all social systems of people such as the way of life, education, economic system, relation to the daily way of common life, from creation to cremation, and will be of great knowledge for the readers of all religions for mutual understanding about the brotherhood.

Provides an introduction to Hinduism in graphic novel format, discussing its history, beliefs, gods, sacred texts, philosophical and mythological aspects, and everyday practices.

Hindu culture is founded upon the sacred scriptures such as Vedas, which are revered even today, for they contain revelations of eternal Truth and embody the spiritual and cultural heritage of the Hindu people. The Vedas are the legacy

of the rishis and subjective scientists, who touched a deep cord within, far beyond the physical, mental and intellectual layers, which allowed them to see all life as interconnected. They saw the One manifested throughout the universe, making everything sacred to them. When life is honoured and belief in holiness of all life is fostered, one cannot but help acquire a deep sense of reverence for life. Hindu culture has evolved out of this vision. This book provides concise and precise answers to basic questions about Hinduism, unfolding the foundation upon which Hindu culture rests.

Modelled on A.L. Basham's monumental work *The Wonder That Was India*, this account of the Origins and Development of Classical Hinduism represents a lifetime of reflection on the subject, and offers an intriguing introduction to one of the richest of all Asian traditions. The late A. L. Basham was one of the world's foremost authorities on ancient Indian culture and religion. Modelled on his monumental work *The Wonder That Was India*, this account of the origins and development of classical Hinduism represents a lifetime of reflection on the subject, and offers an intriguing introduction to one of the richest of all Asian traditions. Synthesizing Basham's great knowledge of the art, architecture, literature, and religion of South Asia, this concise history traces the spiritual life of India from the time of the Indus Culture through the crystallization of classical Hinduism in the first centuries of the common era, and includes a final chapter by the editor, Kenneth G. Zysk, on Hinduism after the classical period. Uniquely comprehensive, it chronicles as well the rise of other mystical and ascetic traditions, such as Buddhism and Jainism, and follows Hinduism's later incarnations in the West. With its vivid presentation of Hinduism's sources and its clearly written explanations and analyses of the major Hindu texts—among them the Rg-veda, the Brahmanas, Upanisads, and the Mahabharata and Ramayana—*The Origins of Classical Hinduism* clarifies much of Hinduism's enduring mystique. Offering an especially helpful bibliography, numerous illustrations of Hindu art never before published, and a lucid, accessible style, this book is a must reading for anyone who has ever been intrigued by this fascinating religion.

An engrossing and definitive narrative account of history and myth that offers a new way of understanding one of the world's oldest major religions, *The Hindus* elucidates the relationship between recorded history and imaginary worlds. Hinduism does not lend itself easily to a strictly chronological account: many of its central texts cannot be reliably dated even within a century; its central tenets karma, dharma, to name just two arise at particular moments in Indian history and differ in each era, between genders, and caste to caste; and what is shared among Hindus is overwhelmingly outnumbered by the things that are unique to one group or another. Yet the greatness of Hinduism - its vitality, its earthiness, its vividness - lies precisely in many of those idiosyncratic qualities that continue to inspire debate today. Wendy Doniger is one of the foremost scholars of Hinduism in the world. With her inimitable insight and expertise Doniger illuminates those moments within the tradition that resist forces that would standardize or establish a canon. Without reversing or misrepresenting the historical hierarchies, she reveals how Sanskrit and vernacular sources are rich in knowledge of and compassion toward women and lower castes; how they debate tensions surrounding religion, violence, and tolerance; and how animals are the key to important shifts in attitudes toward different social classes. *The Hindus* brings a fascinating multiplicity of actors and stories to the stage to show how brilliant and creative thinkers - many of them far removed from Brahmin authors of Sanskrit texts - have kept Hinduism alive in ways that other scholars have not fully explored. In this unique and authoritative account, debates about Hindu traditions become platforms from which to consider the ironies, and overlooked epiphanies, of history.

Do you want to learn about Hinduism without getting confused? If you are considering reading up on Hinduism or even planning on converting to Hinduism then this book is for you. This book has everything you want to learn about the Hindu religion! Hinduism is a fascinating religion to learn about. Even if you are not Hindu and have no interest in being a Hindu, you can still take it upon yourself to learn about the faith and understand why it is important to so many people around the world. Perhaps you will find that you share many of the beliefs that come out of the religion, or perhaps you won't. But at least you will have a new outlook on Hinduism by advancing your knowledge in its teachings and the way it guides so many people's lives in this world. To have that kind of knowledge can be a very powerful thing. This book will help you gain that knowledge by exploring the most important aspects of Hinduism and the main goals Hindus have in their lives. You will find out much more when you read this fact-filled book about the Hindu religion. After you are done reading, you will walk away with a better understanding about a religion that most of the Western hemisphere knows little about. What you will learn from this book: * Introduction to Hinduism * Important Beliefs in Hinduism * Important Hindu Customs and Rituals * Introduction to Gods and Goddesses in Hinduism * Bhagavad Gita * Hindu Festivals * Hinduism and Buddhism - Differences and Similarities * Conversion to Hinduism * What to do in a Hindu Temple * Pilgrimage to Varanasi * Hindu Mantras

Hinduism is currently followed by one-fifth of humankind. Far from a monolithic theistic tradition, the religion comprises thousands of gods, a complex caste system, and hundreds of languages and dialects. Such internal plurality inspires vastly ranging rites and practices amongst Hinduism's hundreds of millions of adherents. It is therefore not surprising that scholars have been hesitant to define universal Hindu beliefs and practices. In this book, Axel Michaels breaks this trend. He examines the traditions, beliefs, and rituals Hindus hold in common through the lens of what he deems its "identificatory habitus," a cohesive force that binds Hindu religions together and fortifies them against foreign influences. Thus, in his analysis, Michaels not only locates Hinduism's profoundly differentiating qualities, but also provides the framework for an analysis of its social and religious coherence. Michaels blends his insightful arguments and probing questions with introductions to major historical epochs, ample textual sources as well as detailed analyses of major life-cycle rituals, the caste system, forms of spiritualism, devotionism, ritualism, and heroism. Along the way he points out that Hinduism has endured and repeatedly resisted the missionary zeal and universalist claims of Christians, Muslims, and Buddhists. He also contrasts traditional Hinduism with the religions of the West, "where the self is preferred to the not-self, and where freedom in the world is more important than liberation from the world." Engaging and accessible, this book will appeal to laypersons and scholars alike as the most comprehensive introduction to Hinduism yet published. Not only is Hinduism refreshingly new in its methodological approach, but it also presents a broad range of meticulous scholarship in a clear, readable style, integrating Indology, religious studies, philosophy, anthropological theory and fieldwork, and sweeping analyses of Hindu texts.

The roots of Hinduism reach deep into pre-historic hoary past. It has evolved over these millennia, and still this process continues. Dynamism, tolerance, catholicity, assimilation, inclusiveness, optimism and unity in diversity have always been its hallmarks. Its

multiplicity is more apparent than real. In the ultimate analysis, Hinduism proves to be a great synthesis of many diverse and even conflicting and contradictory trends and elements. Thus, its multiplicity and ambivalence are not only incompatible with the concept of essential unity of life and its creator, but also mark its strength. The Vedas and Vedanta form the earliest source of our knowledge of Hinduism. The Vedanta literature reflects mainly the early ritual-side of the Hindu way of living. So do the Puranas, as they throw significant light on the various mundane aspects of later Hinduism. The two Epics and the Gita also delineate the basic tenets of Hinduism, and underline the desirability of dharma and righteous living leading to ultimate triumph of the forces of good over evil.

Hinduism is practised by eighty per cent of India's population, and by thirty million people outside India. In this Very Short Introduction, Kim Knott combines a succinct and authoritative overview of a major religion with an analysis of the challenges facing it in the twentieth century. She discusses key preoccupations of Hinduism such as the centrality of the Veda as religious texts, the role of brahmins, gurus, and storytellers in the transmission of divine truths, and the importance of epics such as the Ramayana. Issues such as the place of women and dalits (untouchables) in contemporary society are also addressed, making this book stimulating reading for Hindus and non-Hindus alike. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

[Copyright: ebe2f9bf737100ee973d5fd8f679aff](https://www.oxfordup.com/9780192806208)