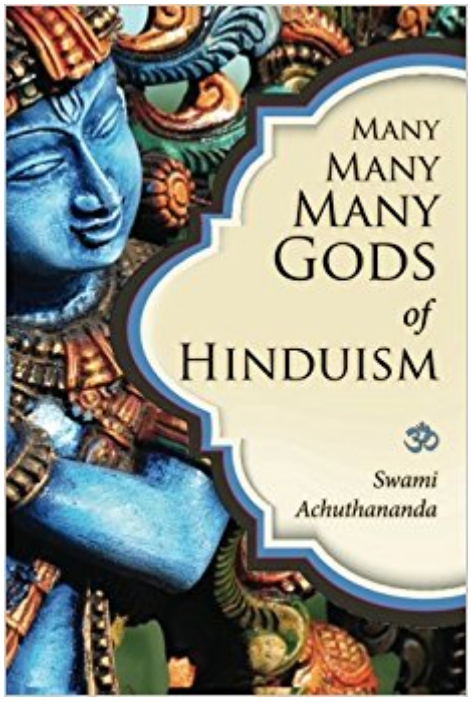
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Many Many Many Gods Of Hinduism: Turning Believers Into Non-believers And Non-believers Into Believers



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Synopsis

Religion is the opium of the people, said Karl Marx many centuries ago. For more than a billion people living in India and abroad, Hinduism is the religion and a way of life. In this multi-award winning book, Swami Achuthananda cracks open the opium poppy pods, analyzes the causes for euphoria, and comes away with a deeper understanding of the people and their religion. *** Winner 2014 Next Generation Indie Book Awards (Religious Non-fiction) ***This is a comprehensive book on Hinduism. It tells you why Hindus do the things they do - and don't. Written in a casual style, the book guides you through the fundamentals of the religion. It then goes further and debunks a number of long-standing myths, some of them coming from the academia (of all places). While most books shy away from contentious issues, this book plunges headlong by taking on controversies, like the Aryan Invasion Theory, idol worship, RISA scholarship and many more. In fact one-third of the book is just on controversies that you rarely find in any other literature.Other Awards:*** Finalist - 2014 Pacific Book Awards (Religion) ****** Bronze - 2014 IPPY Award - (Religion) ***

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Customer Reviews

"...a positive and edifying introduction to Hinduism that teems with basic facts and love for the faith....Achuthananda's explanations are helpful without oversimplifying or removing his emotional connection to the ideas..." --Kirkus Review Overall, this book is an excellent introduction for anyone interested in learning about Hinduism. Its short chapters make it easy to read selections as time permits, and Swami Achuthananda's casual and humorous voice makes presented concepts easy to follow. --Clarion Review "In India, the religion is the culture and the culture is the religion. You

cannot learn one without the other." Like everything else in this book, that sentence is worth contemplating. But slowly, sometimes through analogy (the banyan tree), sometimes through simple and fascinating historical exposition, we begin to sense this tradition....Bookreview.com considers "Many Many Many Gods of Hinduism" one of the most fascinating and valuable books we have come across in a long time. --BOOKREVIEW.COM..an eye-opening and compelling read. Many of your preconceived notions about Hinduism will be challenged by Swamiji. -- T.K. Narayanan, Radio commentator (retired), AIRNot often a book on religion can be a fun read, but this one was fun, and I recommend it to anyone with an open mind. --Tania Henley, Religious Forum (speaker), AlabamaSprinkled with human stories, parables and personal views (and occasional "peeves"), the writing is always engaging and at times delightfully controversial. --Tom Bryson, Author of Too Smart to Die Swami Achuthananda has used exactly the right mix of scholarship and unsophisticated prose to blow the lid off some of the most misconceived impressions of Hinduism. --Norm Goldman, BookPleasuresIn the form of short essays, Swami Achuthananda with his intimate knowledge of Hinduism, clearly and effectively sets the record straight concerning inaccurate information prevalent today pertaining to Hinduism and the way it is portrayed.--Norm Goldman, BookPleasuresThe similarities and differences with Buddhism are fascinating, and the book doesn't avoid the hypocrisies, shortcomings, and superstitions related to the faith. It pulls no punches and shows all sides and facets, ugly or beautiful, smart and silly.--Michelle, B&N Reviewer

In this book, Swami Achuthananda takes generation XYZ on a journey to ancient India to discover the wisdom of its ancestors and the secrets to the future. Surveying the religious landscape, Swamiji notes with disbelief that a great deal of misinformation exists in the way Hinduism is portrayed. But Swamiji is no wimp when he rounds up a few rogue academics -- like water buffaloes in the wild -- for perverting history and perpetuating century-old myths. "Hindu literature is diverse and vast and will take you several cycles of rebirth to comprehend," says Swamiji. "It's best understood by those who have a genuine interest and appreciation of the culture."

Although "Many Many Many Gods of Hinduism" by Swami Achuthananda was only published a few months ago, it has already garnered many thoughtful plaudits from reviewers. Rather than repeat the same praiseÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â •well deserved as it isÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â •I would suggest that first the reader go to the on-line Norman Goldman (Book Pleasures) interview with Achuthananda to get a feeling for the almost light-hearted approach the author has taken in presenting material that could be at the very least confusing to most of us and at worst, positively stultifying."Many Many Many

Gods of Hinduism" is carefully, simply, satisfyingly, and often amusingly written. The chapters are short, cogent, engaging, but never trivial. In the first section of the book, the author states "In India, the religion is the culture and the culture is the religion. You cannot learn one without the other." Like everything else in this book, that sentence is worth contemplating. Certainly those of us who are Christian would find that baffling compared to what we consider our culture-free belief. But slowly, sometimes through analogy (the banyan tree), sometimes through simple and fascinating historical exposition, we begin to sense this tradition: a religion of many holy books but not one single divine authoritative text, with no one hierarchical leader, with no holiest of places, without one overriding doctrine or formal symbol, a religion with 330 million personal gods, all manifestations of Brahman, the transcendent indescribable Brahman who is the only absolute reality (totality) and whose presence in all things is called Atman (self).In Chapter 33 Achuthananda gives in a few paragraphs the essence of Hinduism. "When people say salvation in Hinduism is achieving the highest state of the mind, they are not off the mark. But this is just a simplification of its complex tradition. When you further explore the concepts of Maya, karma, dharma, samsara and Moksha, you've taken the whole of its vast traditionsÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â|In the supreme state of meditation, consciousness goes beyond time and change. It is in this state that the Atman of the soul merges with Brahman."Bookreview.com considers "Many Many Many Gods of Hinduism" one of the most fascinating and valuable books we have come across in a long time.

So much history and custom sits in Hinduism that I figured this book would be a mile wide and an inch deep. Instead it covers the basics of Hinduism and focuses on what Westerners don't know about the religion and its history. It delves into how Hinduism was brought to the West, and how Hinduism views other religions. The historical and cultural connections to Zoroastrianism were fascinating.This book is for anyone who wants to learn about Hinduism. It would make a great primer and introduction, covering much of the history and the basic of the beliefs and practices.

'Many Many Many Gods of Hinduism' is a definite must-have, even if you're not entirely interested in learning the intricacies of the religion and the customs of the Hindu people. Punctuated with good-natured humor, this book makes what could be very heavy and confusing reading an entertaining journey that is relateable, friendly, and most of all extremely engaging.On the surface, the book does a great job explaining and clarifying the image of what westerners have in their minds about Indians- addressing every common aspect that we're culturally and tactlessly accustomed to. The "head bobble" is one example. But intermixed are deep wells of fascinating information that

leave you thinking and examining your own thoughts and mental practices. Clear, concise explanations of Buddhist history, religious sects, various languages and their histories, geographic significances, relationships between India and other surrounding countries, and Indian history that goes as far back as to deeply describe India’s very beginnings are just some of the topics expertly addressed.What’s most interesting about how this book is written centers around the full understanding of how the east and west interact, how they see each other, and why they see each other the ways that they do. This book bridges social differences that are hard to address otherwise- a very rare aspect to any book in this genre.This book is highly recommended to anyone who’s just beginning to understand more about Hinduism and Indian culture(s), or to anyone who’s a little more "in the know". Anyone will find value in this literature. A great read.

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