

Major Religions in India

Hinduism

Islam

Christianity

Sikhism

Buddhism

Jainism

K.S. Bhalla

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Major Religions in India

India is the home of Philosophy, Religion and Spirituality. It is the birthplace of some of the most renowned religions of the world. It has produced spiritual masters of exceptionally high order who proclaimed that all religions were true, if followed in the right spirit. This was explicitly demonstrated by the great master Sri Ramakrishna (1836-1886) in his life. He took up spiritual paths of Hinduism like Vaishnavism, Shaaktha, Advaitism, and dived deep into Christianity and Islam, one after the other, one at a time, and followed them in full earnest and showed that they all lead to the same goal.

The most dominant religion in India today is Hinduism. It is also the most ancient of living religions of the world having its origin in pre-historic times. About 80.5 % of Indians are Hindus. Around 500 BC two other religions developed in India, namely, Buddhism and Jainism. Today about 0.40% of Indians are Jains and about 0.76% are Buddhist. Buddhism spread not only within the Indian sub-continent but also to kingdoms east and south of India. One comparatively new religion in India is Sikhism which was established in the 15th century. About 1.84 % of Indians are Sikhs.

A few non-Indian religions entered India at various points of time. Among them are Islam, Christianity, Zoroastrianism, Bahaism and Judaism. The largest non-Indian religion is Islam. Its followers are about 13.4% of India's population. It first came into India in 711 A.D. when an Arab general conquered Sindh and incorporated it into Umayyad Caliphate. From 1000 A.D. onwards, there was a series of Muslim invasions. Most of the Muslims who came with invading armies settled down here permanently and with them Islam spread in India.

Christians are about 2.33 % of Indian population. Though first Christians came to India almost 2000 years ago, Christianity spread when Christian missionaries arrived in India with the European powers in 15th century.

Two other religions that arrived in India because of religious persecutions in the country of their origin, were Zoroastrianism (7th century) and Bahaism (20th century).

"Major Religions in India" gives a concise account of the origin, growth, tenets, beliefs, scriptures, shrines, traditions and practices of six major religions, namely,

Hinduism: The religion of infinite adaptability and diversity

Islam: The religion of submission to God

Christianity: The religion of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man

Sikhism: The religion of divine grace, harmony and sacrifice

Buddhism: The religion of peaceful, ethical self-culture

Jainism: The religion of asceticism

The book is informative. It brings out positive aspects of these religions with a view to promoting among their followers and others a respect for and an understanding of each other's faith.

To guard against any factual error, texts were shown to scholars of respective religions before these were finalised for publication.

— K S Bhalla

Hinduism

THE RELIGION OF
INFINITE ADAPTABILITY
AND DIVERSITY



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Major Religions in India

India is the home of philosophy, religion and spirituality. It is the birthplace of some of the most renowned religions of the world which spoke of the purpose of life and of God in different languages and showed various paths to salvation. A few non-Indian religions which entered India at various points of history brought in a new line of thought and made a significant contribution to the enrichment of spiritual environments. In the midst of growing number of religions, India produced spiritual masters of exceptionally high order who proclaimed that all religions were true, if followed in the right spirit and that they all lead to the same goal.

"Major Religions in India" gives a thumb-nail sketch of the origin, growth, beliefs, scriptures, shrines, traditions and practices of six major religions, namely,

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The book is informative. It brings out positive aspects of these religions with a view to promoting among their followers and others a respect for and an understanding of each other's faith.

About the author

Kartar Singh Bhalla is deeply involved in the study of various religions. He is Honorary Consul General of the Republic of Nauru in India since 1985, Secretary General of the Honorary Consular Corps Diplomatique-India, Member of Governing Board, Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia and the Pacific (Affiliated to United Nations). He was Parliamentary Consul to the Parliament of Nauru. His writings include "Let's know Sikhism" and "Festivals of India".



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