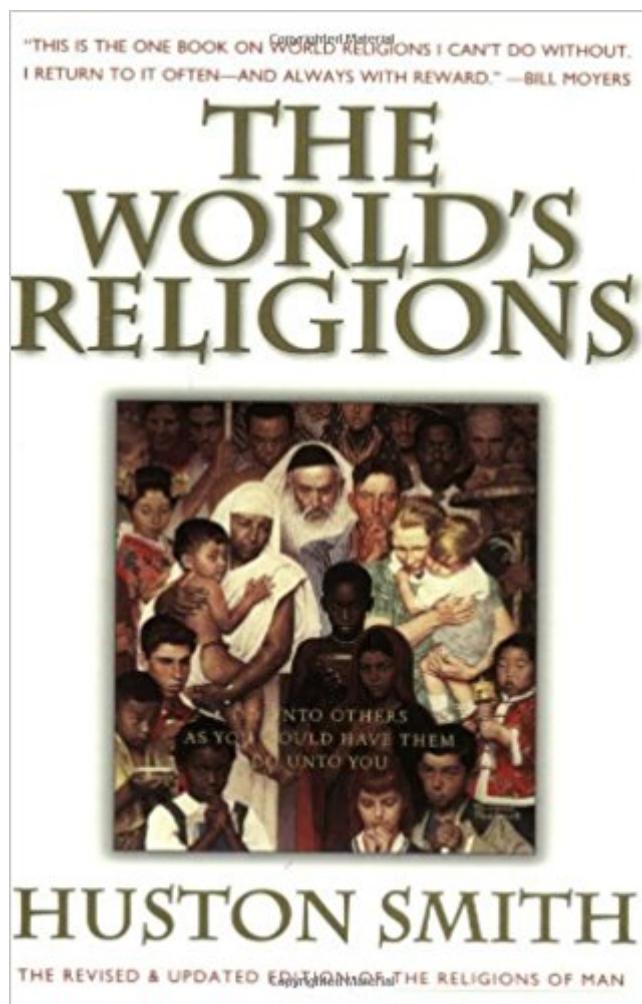


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# The World's Religions: Our Great Wisdom Traditions



## **Synopsis**

Originally titled *The Religions of Man*, this completely revised and updated edition of Smith's masterpiece, now with an engaging new foreword, explores the essential elements and teachings of the world's predominant faiths, including: Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Islam, Judaism, Christianity, and the native traditions of the Americas, Australia, Africa, and Oceania. Emphasising the inner -- rather than institutional -- dimensions of these religions, Smith devotes special attention to Zen and Tibetan Buddhism, Sufism, and the teachings of Jesus. He convincingly conveys the unique appeal and gifts of each of the traditions and reveals their hold on the human heart and imagination.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

The World's Religions, by Huston Smith, has been a standard introduction to its eponymous subject since its first publication in 1958. Smith writes humbly, forswearing judgment on the validity of world religions. His introduction asks, "How does it all sound from above? Like bedlam, or do the strains blend in strange, ethereal harmony? ... We cannot know. All we can do is try to listen carefully and with full attention to each voice in turn as it addresses the divine. Such listening defines the purpose of this book." His criteria for inclusion and analysis of religions in this book are "relevance to the modern mind" and "universality," and his interest in each religion is more concerned with its principles than its context. Therefore, he avoids cataloging the horrors and crimes of which religions have been accused, and he attempts to show each "at their best." Yet The World's Religions is no

pollyannaish romp: "It is about religion alive," Huston writes. "It calls the soul to the highest adventure it can undertake, a proposed journey across the jungles, peaks, and deserts of the human spirit. The call is to confront reality." And by translating the voices of Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Confucianism, Christianity, and Judaism, among others, Smith has amplified the divine call for generations of readers. --Michael Joseph Gross

"Huston Smith's classic on the world's religions has justifiably become as venerable as the old texts he studies. . . . I urge all readers to make it the core of their home library." -- Thomas Moore, author of *Care of the Soul* and *The Soul of Sex*"Intelligent, clearly written...reveals the spirit of each faith." -- New York Times"Intelligent, clearly written...reveals the spirit of each faith." -- -- New York Times"Intelligent, clearly written...reveals the spirit of each faith." -- -- The New York Times Book Review"The best one-volume book on world religions remains Huston Smith's THE WORLD RELIGIONS." -- Library Journal"This is not only the best book of its kind, there is nothing else in its league." -- -- Stephen Mitchell"This is one book on world religions I can't do without. I return to it often--and always with reward." -- Bill Moyers"This is one book on world religions I can't do without. I return to it often--and always with reward." -- -- Bill Moyers"Intelligent, clearly written...reveals the spirit of each faith." -- Thomas Moore, author of *Care of the Soul* and *The Soul of Sex*"Huston Smith's classic on the world's religions has justifiably become as venerable as the old texts he studies. I'm thrilled to see it enjoying yet another incarnation. It is more important today than it was in its first printing, and I urge everyone to make it the core of their home library." -- The New York Times Book Review"This is not only the best book of its kind, there is nothing else in its league." -- Stephen Mitchell

Huston Smith gives a short but detailed view of the major religions of the world. A major criticism is that he glosses over the indigenous religions of the world; I don't think it is as bad as others make it out to be. He himself seems aware that many of these smaller religions are not at all related in any way or from, but has no other way to go about including them. He also seems to be aware of the audience that he is writing for: Western audiences. This is probably part of his glossing over about indigenous cultures as the Western mind is more likely to group them together anyways. Each overview is wonderful and leaves the reader curious for more. Smith also emphasizes the beliefs and mindsets of each religion and not simply a laundry list of what they believe to be true or false. In this approach, the reader can "get into the mind" of another belief system and this makes it much more understandable and interesting. If personal beliefs are properly suspended, you can

understand that many other major belief systems offer many views about life that may also enhance your own views. I'd recommend this book to anyone that has any curiosity about other worldwide religions. It is a good overview, and can be referenced well past a first read.

The book offers a different way of approaching the subject. Rather than deal with the external facts about each religion: places and ways of worship, laws, devotions, it stress the beliefs and philosophy behind each one and finds the commonalities that all religions share. it is a more philosophical book than most. If that is what you are looking for, you will enjoy this book.

Huston Smith does a break job breaking down the world's religions. We were assigned this book in my philosophy class to learn about the eastern religions but I could not put the book down. If you are remotely interested in learning about other cultures and their beliefs, I highly recommend this title.

Huston Smith does such a WONDERFUL job correctly and accurately representing and explaining the basic belief systems of religions from around the world. The author uses a straightforward, factual style to describe each religion, and, so, this book can be readily used as a reference source/guide--just put it on the bookshelf right next to your trusted dictionary. I purchased the very first edition for my husband, who then used the book to choose a religion for himself. It is very clear from reading this book that Huston Smith's only agenda is to create better understanding within his reader of the diverse faiths that exist.

Awesome book to have. Will keep me busy for quite awhile. Came as described. Came before the promised date.

When looking for an introductory book that would cover a broad spectrum of religions, I was apprehensive of buying one that was either so detailed as to be boring or so superficial as to not serve my purpose. The World's Religions, however, manages to be just the right fit. It's written in an interesting tone and covers most of the important aspects of every religion. More importantly, it discusses them with a structure that makes them easier to comprehend and you leave the book having understood rather than browsed through. I am an Indian and I was naturally curious about his treatment of religions that have an Indian origin. Authors who do not belong to the culture they are writing about sometimes fail to do justice to their topic in the eyes those who belong to that culture.

Smith's treatment of Hinduism and Buddhism is, however, surprisingly concise and good. While, occasionally, he does tend to offer opinions instead of facts but the style of writing makes it easy to distinguish one from the other. His treatment of the religions I was unfamiliar with, Christianity, Judaism and Islam among others was also satisfactory in that it gives one a very good overview and is just thorough enough for one to realize which aspects would be interesting enough for further reading. Be careful, however, that this is more an introduction to the principals and the ideas behind every religion and is NOT an account of either their historical origins and development or their current status and challenges. The only gripe I had from the book was it's lack of pointers to resources where I could pursue those lines of study. Most of the sources he points to are, like his own work, works on ideas behind religions. Highly recommended for a general reader who wants to have a broad understanding of the major religions.

Very well written. Smith sometimes emphasizes on imagery when detailing the history of a particular religion, but beyond that, there's a lot of valuable information here. I don't recommend this for anyone looking for "The Truth." It seems better tailored for those seeking general knowledge on any of the religions contained in the writing. Apologists seeking to learn to better defend their own worldview may find some valuable info here, though I don't think this is quite the book for building an apologist either.

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