

HINDUISM

Hinduism, religion that originated in India and is still practiced by most of its inhabitants, as well as by those whose families have migrated from India to other parts of the world (chiefly East Africa, South Africa, Southeast Asia, the East Indies, and England). The word *Hindu* is derived from the Sanskrit word *sindhu* (“river”—more specifically, the Indus); the Persians in the 5th century BC called the Hindus by that name, identifying them as the people of the land of the Indus. The Hindus define their community as “those who believe in the Vedas” or “those who follow the way (dharma) of the four classes (*varnas*) and stages of life (*ashramas*).”

Hinduism is a major world religion, not merely by virtue of its many followers (estimated at more than 700 million) but also because of its profound influence on many other religions during its long, unbroken history, which dates from about 1500 BC.

The corresponding influence of these various religions on Hinduism (it has an extraordinary tendency to absorb foreign elements) has greatly contributed to the religion's syncretism—the wide variety of beliefs and practices that it encompasses. Moreover, the geographic, rather than ideological, basis of the religion (the fact that it comprises whatever all the people of India have believed and done) has given Hinduism the character of a social and doctrinal system that extends to every aspect of human life.

inhabitant		The inhabitants of the village (= the people who live there) protested against the new road.	stanovalec, prebivalec
derive	to get or obtain (something) (from something else)	The institute derives all its money from foreign investments.	dobiti; izhajati
estimate	an approximate calculation or judgment of the size, value, amount, cost, etc. of something	We'll accept the lowest of three estimates for the building work.	oceniti, soditi
profound	felt or experienced very strongly or deeply; extreme	His mother's death when he was aged six had a very profound effect on him.	globokoumen, globok, nedoumljiv
tendency	If you have a particular tendency, you are likely to behave in that way or like that particular thing.	His tendency to exaggerate is well known.	težnja, nagnjenje
syncretism			
encompass	to include (esp. a variety of things)	The US proposed the creation of a free trade zone encompassing the entire Western hemisphere.	