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INTRODUCTION

We go about our daily lives understanding almost nothing of the world. Except for children, few of us spend much time wondering why nature is the way it is; where the [universe] came from, or whether it was always here.¹

— Carl Sagan

Today, almost no one asks whether a particular belief is true; the question is whether it is “meaningful to me.” Thus, we have a blizzard of conflicting claims. We have moved away from the belief that everyone has a right to his or her own opinion, towards the notion that every opinion is equally “right.” Every point of view, since it arises from one’s own feelings, is just as valid as another. Whatever a person feels is the truth becomes the truth for him or her.²

As our calendar continues to move forward, the belief in one absolute truth becomes less and less important in society. Thus, an increasingly popular view of God today can be seen clearly in the words of one journalist:

For much of my life I was a skeptic. In fact, I considered myself an atheist. To me, there was far too much evidence that God was merely a product of

CHAPTER
ONE

THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS

*HOW DID THE
WORLD'S MAJOR
RELIGIONS COME
INTO BEING?*

While philosophy and religion are often looked to for moral guidance, major claims concerning the cause, nature, and purpose of the universe cannot go unnoticed. When science falls short, people turn to the suppositions of philosophy or to the supernatural of religion. What is life's ultimate purpose? Is God the Creator Almighty?

Undoubtedly, many modern people would boldly demand that such questions lie outside the realm of science, and are therefore unanswerable. Of course, others

might claim that Hinduism or Buddhism or Islam or Judaism or Christianity contains all the correct answers.

But what really determines the credibility of any one religion or belief system is the underlying foundation upon which it is built. Just as a house's stability can only be as dependable as the foundation upon which it is constructed, so a belief system may only be as reliable as the foundation upon which it is based.

In addition to summarizing some central doctrines, this first chapter briefly explains how several of the larger world-wide religions, or belief systems, came into being.¹

HINDUISM

"The history of Hinduism began in India about 1500 B.C. Although its literature can be traced only to before 1000 B.C., evidence of Hinduism's earlier [background] is derived from archaeology, comparative philology, and comparative religion."² According to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Hinduism "is both a civilization and a congregation of religions; it has neither a beginning or founder, nor a central authority, hierarchy, or organization. Every attempt at a specific definition of Hinduism has proved unsatisfactory in one way or another, the more so because the finest scholars of Hinduism, including Hindus themselves, have emphasized different aspects of the whole."³

As a religion, Hinduism involves a combination of diverse doctrines and ways of life; orthodox Hinduism includes an extraordinarily wide selection of beliefs and practices. Hinduism can include:

- pantheism — belief which identifies the universe with God
- polytheism — the belief in many gods
- monotheism — the belief that there is only one God

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- agnosticism — the belief that the ultimate cause and the essential nature of things are unknown or unknowable or that human knowledge is limited to experience
- atheism — the denial or disbelief in the existence of any God or gods
- dualism — the belief that there are two independent divine beings or eternal principles, one good and the other evil
- pluralism — recognizing more than one ultimate substance or principle
- monism — the belief in one ultimate substance or principle, such as mind or matter, or the ground of both

Hindus' "only universal obligation, if they are orthodox, is to abide by the rules of their caste [hereditary social divisions] and trust that by doing so, their next birth will be a happier one."⁴

BUDDHISM

Born about 560 B.C. as a prince, son of a king in India, Buddha was married at the age of 19 and had a son in his late twenties. With a growing interest in matters of religion, he left the life of a householder at that time, and went on to search for true salvation. For six years he searched along the two most widely recognized roads to salvation known to India: philosophic meditation and bodily asceticism (life without pleasures), but he yielded no results.

So Buddha decided to take a new approach. He entered into a process of meditation at the foot of a tree (a tree which came to be known most simply as the Bo-tree) and said to himself determinedly, "Though skin, nerves, and bone shall

"I strongly encourage anyone who is searching for the truth to read this book."

Grant R. Jeffrey, best-selling author and internationally renowned researcher

F O L I S H F A I T H

Everywhere one looks, tolerance of all world views is championed — all world views except those set forth in the Bible.

Judah Etinger has the singular ability to present truth in ways that speak to the hearts of both seekers . . . and those who will say they are not seeking God, or religion, or truth! In *Foolish Faith*, the author sheds light on the various world religions, philosophies, and evidences. His helpful, readable style helps seekers see a clear path to "the answer to it all."

Find the answers to the following questions within this book:

- Which of the world's religions is the correct one?
- Which is right: creation or evolution?
- Does the Bible support or contradict science?
- Does the Bible contradict itself?
- Is the Bible a reliable historical document?
- Did Christ really rise from the dead?

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