

A BASIC INTRODUCTION TO **HINDUISM**

IS **HINDUISM** A RELIGION ?

The most **correct answer** to this question is **NO HINDUISM IS NOT A RELIGION**.

WHAT IS **HINDUISM** ?

The thousands of different man-made traditions and cultures followed by the people living beyond **Indus River** can be called as **Hinduism**. The best **English connotation for** the Sanskrit **or** Hindi **or** Persian word **Hinduism** would be **Indianism**. We can understand that **Indianism** would just be like saying something like **Americanism**, which would merely mean and refer to the traditions or cultures followed by people living in the region of America and this would not be the name of a religion as such. **In this context**, any person irrespective of his/her religious background following the traditions and cultures of the said region will be called a **Hindu** and its English connotation will be **Indian**.

PROMINENT SOURCES ON THE TERM HINDUISM & HINDU

- According to **Essentials Of Hinduism** by Swamy **Vivekananda**, on **page: 6**, it is mentioned that **Hinduism** is a **misnomer** and it should actually be referred as **Vedantism** meaning a religion that believes in Vedas as Revealed Books of God. **Swami Vivekananda** says that the **followers of this religion** should be referred to as **Vendantists** meaning those who believe Vedas as Revealed Books of God.
- **Pandit, Jawahar Lal Nehru**, the **First Prime Minister of Independent India**, in his famous book, entitled, **Discovery of India**, **pages: 73 to 75** says, that the word **Hindu** was first used in a Tantrik book of the 8th century and there the word **Hindu** **is not referred to a religious section but rather to a group geographically located**. In the same book on **page : 37**, **Nehru says that it is hardly possible to define Hinduism or indeed to say definitely whether it is a religion or not in the usual sense of the word**.

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- **Encyclopedia Of Religion And Ethics**: Vol: 6 line: 690, says that the word '**HINDU**' was **first used** by **Muslims** after their advent in India.
- **Encyclopedia Britannica**: Vol: 20 page: 581 *New edition*, says that the word '**HINDU**' was **first** coined by the **British** in 1830 C.E. for the people living in regions beyond Indus river.

MODERN UNDERSTANDING OF THE TERM HINDUISM

In the modern context **Hinduism** is believed to be the **religion followed by** the majority (about **80% plus**) **people living in India** and they **call themselves as Hindus** and they **religiously claim** to believe in Revealed Scriptures and in Scriptures written by human beings with spiritual insights.

End of Notes