



# **“Sustainability, Resilience, Ethics and Social Responsibility in Eurasia Community amidst a Global Covid Pandemic”**

## **Ethics: the Hinduist perspective**

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# Key concepts in Hinduism since the *Upaniṣads*

- *duḥkha* ‘existential suffering’
- The world is change: *jagat* ‘what moves’, *prakṛti* ‘transformation’
- A key question: is there a universal ‘true/reality’ (*satya*)?
- How to define *brahman*: *tad* ‘that’, *tad ekam* ‘the one’, *tad anantam* ‘the unlimited’, *nirguṇa* ‘lacking any quality’...

# Key concepts in Hinduism since the *Upaniṣads*

- ***saṃsāra*** ‘cycle of rebirth’
- ***mokṣa*** ‘liberation from the cycle of rebirth’
- ***ātman*** ‘the part of *brahman* that is in each human being’

# The three ways to liberation since the *Bhagavadgītā*

- *jñānayoga* ‘yoga of knowledge’,
- *karmayoga* ‘yoga of (unselfish) action’,
- *bhaktiyoga* ‘yoga of devotion’.

# The four *ashramas* (stages of life)

- *brahmacārin* 'student',
- *gṛhastha* 'householder',
- *vanaprastha* 'hermit',
- *saṃnyāsin* 'ascet'

# The four *purusharthas* (fundamental goals of life)

- *moksha* 'delivrance',
- *dharma* 'duty',
- *artha* 'wealth',
- *kama* 'love'

# Some key concepts of Hinduism

- ***Dharma*** 'religious duty':

*svadharma* (conduct that is right for one's *jati* or station)

*ashramadharma* (conduct that is right for his stage of life)

*kuladharma* (conduct that is right for his own family)

*appadharma* (conduct that is right in moment of crisis)

# Castes in India: religious basis

*Bhagavadgītā* 41-44 (transl. by J. Mascaró):

[41] The works of Brahmins, Kṣatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras are different, in harmony with the three powers of their born nature.

[42] The works of a Brahmin are peace; self-harmony, austerity, and purity; loving-forgiveness and righteousness; vision and wisdom and faith.

[43] These are the works of a Kṣatriya: a heroic mind, inner fire, constancy, resourcefulness, courage in battle, generosity and noble leadership.

[44] Trade, agriculture and the rearing of cattle is the work of a Vaishya. And the work of the Shudra is service.

# Castes in India: religious basis

*Law Code of Manu* [transl. by G. Buhler]

2.155. The seniority of Brahmanas is from (sacred) knowledge, that of Kshatriyas from valour, that of Vaisyas from wealth in grain (and other goods), but that of Sudras alone from age.

# Castes in India

Upper castes ( <i>dvija</i> 'twice born')	<i>brahmans</i> priests
	<i>kṣatriyas</i> 'warriors'
	<i>vaiśyas</i> 'merchants, cattle-herders and artisans'
Low caste	<i>śūdras</i> 'servants'
No caste	<i>dalits</i>

# Brahmans



Temple at Bubhaneshwar

# Indian constitution and castes

- 15.** (1) The State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them.
- (2) No citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them, be subject to any disability, liability, restriction or condition with regard to—
- access to shops, public restaurants, hotels and places of public entertainment; or
  - the use of wells, tanks, bathing ghats, roads and places of public resort maintained wholly or partly out of State funds or dedicated to the use of the general public.



# Tradition vs. innovation

Societies change, but there are limits to change.

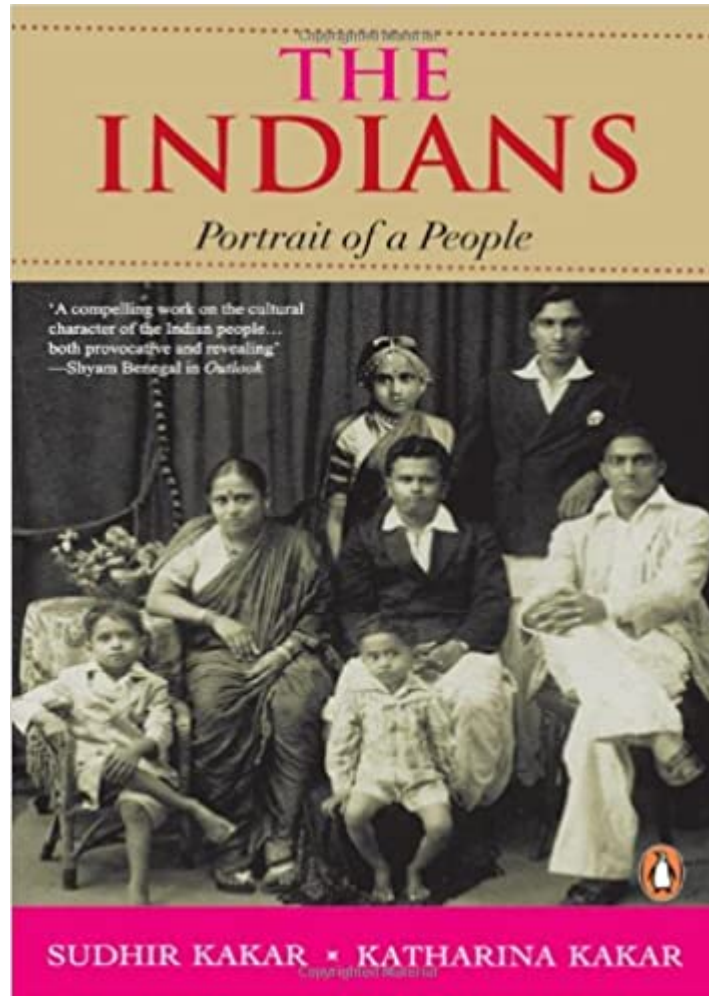
Certain traits, which are the products of centuries of conditioning, do not change, and it is these that provide the distinct cultural label to a people. Others can be diluted or modified. Some new ones can, perhaps, be added, but they are mostly 'adds-on', scaffolding on a largely unalterable edifice. **It is this combination of (mostly) the old, and something of the new, that people carry as their cultural baggage in the journey towards the future.**

(P. K. Varma, *Being Indian*, New Delhi 2004)

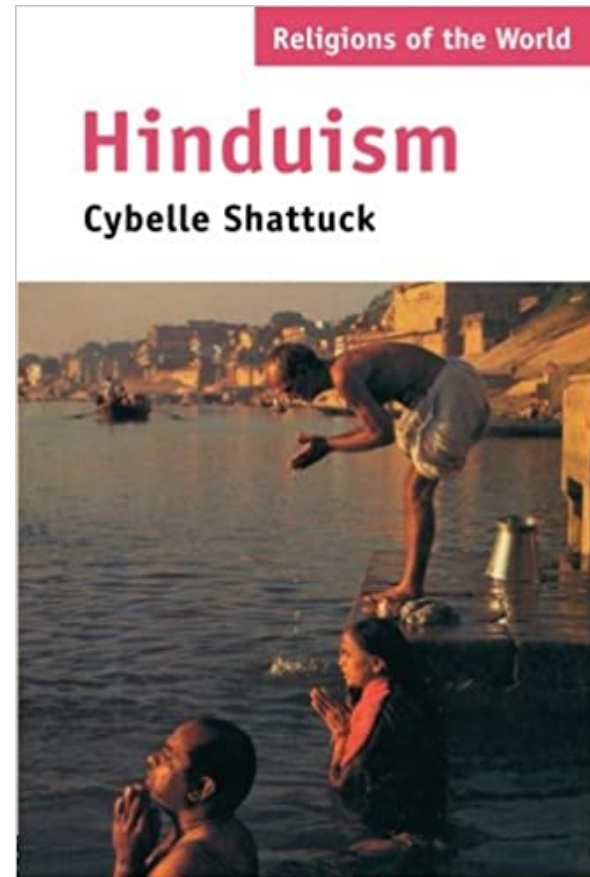
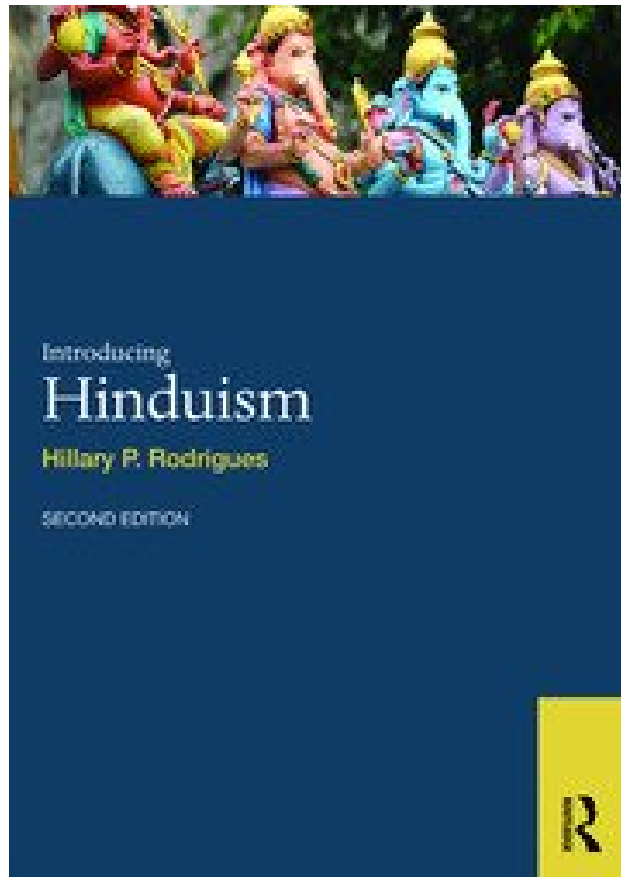
# A few key points for reflection in today's world

- absence of 'orthodoxy' and 'orthopraxis'
- *ahimsā* "non-violence"
- fraternity between all living beings
- notion of *dharma* as 'knowing one's position in the universe'

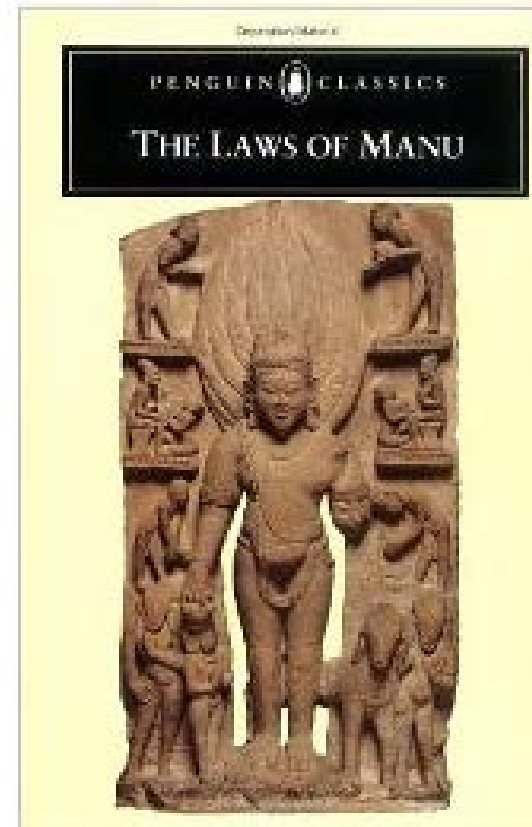
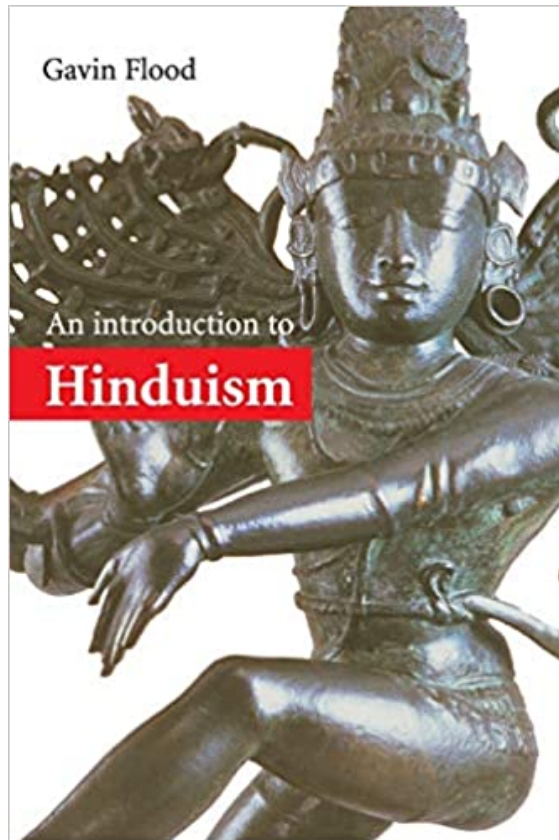
# Recommended readings (I)



## Recommended readings (II)



## Recommended readings (III)



## Recommended readings (IV)

