

Recent Religion - March 2021

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The Availability of Religious Ideas / Ramchandra Gandhi; Arindam Chakrabarti
Permanent Black in Association with Ashoka University, Ranokhet,
UttaraKhand, India 2019

pb.; 144p.; 22cm
Includes Index
9788178245409
\$ 10.00 / null
300 gm.

When first published in 1976, Ramachandra Gandhi's the availability of religious ideas was described thus by John Hick, Professor of Theology at Birmingham University: "This is an unusual and a genuinely original book... On The basic problem of our existence as persons in community. The author embodies both the spiritual tradition of India (for something of the spirit of his grandfather, Mahatma Gandhi, is powerfully present in his outlook) and the intellectual tradition of the West (for he holds an Oxford doctorate...) with this double focus he explores philosophically, and in a way which shows the influence of Wittgenstein, what it is to be a conscious person in community and shows how the religious ideas of the soul, of God, prayer, immortality, the mystical and miraculous are generated by a kind of moral necessity..."

This reprint includes a new introduction by the eminent philosopher Arindam Chakrabarti (currently Professor at stony Brook University), who knew Ramachandra Gandhi and is an admirer of his work

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Religion and Secularities: Reconfiguring Islam in Contemporary India / Sudha Sitharaman, Anindita Chakrabarti

Orient Blackswan Private Limited, Hyderabad, Telangana, India 2020
hb.; xviii; 222p.; 23cm
Includes Index
9789390122004
\$ 20.00 / HB
600 gm.

The resurgence of religion and its militant mixing with politics is now a ubiquitous feature of our times. Since 9/11, discussions on religion, particularly Islam, have been characterised by debates surrounding the rise of political Islam, war on terror and the ascent of religious politics globally. Islam, particularly, appears as the bearer of a frightening tradition, and stereotypes render it an anathema in the modern world. The notion of a unitary, timeless and unchanging religion has been reinforced not only by sections of academia and the media, but also through the Muslim communities' interpretations and representations of their own religion.

Religion and Secularities challenges these quotidian 'facts' about Islam. It brings together a collection of essays focusing on the reconfiguration of Islam in the world's largest democracy, India. Investigating the relationship between religion, civil society and the state, this volume explores the nation's long history with Islam as well as the categorisation of Muslims as a minority community.

Based on ethnographic studies conducted in different regions of the country—from Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal to Karnataka and Kerala—this volume addresses the diverse issues of religious piety that include community activism and civic participation; disputes and debates around visitation to historic-religious sites; the changing contours of matrilineal practices in a Muslim community; and how Muslim women negotiate personal/Islamic law in a plural judicial landscape. The essays highlight the impossibility of understanding contemporary Islam outside the logic of modern, secular-liberal governance—a standpoint that helps take the secularism debate forward.

This volume will be valuable for students and scholars of sociology, social anthropology and religious studies.

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