



What Do We Know About Hinduism?; What Do We Know About Judaism?

Books Reviewed:

[What Do We Know About Hinduism?](#) [1]

Books Reviewed:

[What Do We Know About Judaism?](#) [2]

Issue:

[120](#) [3]

Reviewer:

[Clive Barnes](#) [4]

Editorial Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

2

Here are two paperback titles of a series that appeared in hardback four years ago. Each contains much that is interesting and attractively presented, with colour photographs: but the format is irritating and confusing. Each double page spread is headed by a question. Sometimes these questions have to be (almost) repeated, because there is more information than fits two pages: 'What are the main Gods and Goddesses?' 'Do Hindus worship other Gods?' Sometimes you know what the answer will be: 'Do Hindus like music and dance?' Well, yes; otherwise there will be two blank pages. Each title has a timeline. The Jewish timeline shows events in Judaism; these range from Noah's Flood to the founding of the state of Israel. Certainly, these are both 'events' of significance to Jews, but the first is a matter of faith and the second an historical fact, and there ought to be a distinction drawn between them. Also, is it true that all Jews believe that God created the world in six days (p15)? Has the theory of evolution had no impact on Judaism? These are examples of the difficulty of explaining something as complex and diverse as a religious faith within the constraints of this series format, even if you have authors of knowledge and ability. Children of this age ought to be introduced to the difference between, for instance, Orthodox and Progressive Judaism, but Fine has to scatter the explanations through several different spreads and when she comes up with a summary it goes over the head of her audience. I think I know what she means when she says, 'Progressive Jews believe that being Jewish gives them a common culture?' but I don't think many 12 year olds will. Ganeri's experience as a writer of information books for children shows, perhaps in a clearer, more approachable, text: but sometimes I wanted more explanation. Why is there only one temple in the whole of India dedicated to Brahma, the creator God?

Running Order:

4

Links:

- [1] <http://www.booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/what-do-we-know-about-hinduism>
- [2] <http://www.booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/what-do-we-know-about-judaism>
- [3] <http://www.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/120>
- [4] <http://www.booksforkeeps.co.uk/member/clive-barnes>