



# Fields of Blood: Religion and the History of Violence

By Karen Armstrong

Anchor. Paperback. Condition: New. 528 pages. From the renowned and best-selling author of A History of God, a sweeping exploration of religion and the history of human violence. For the first time, religious self-identification is on the decline in American. Some analysts have cited as cause a post-911perception: that faith in general is a source of aggression, intolerance, and divisivenesssomething bad for society. But how accurate is that view With deep learning and sympathetic understanding, Karen Armstrong sets out to discover the truth about religion and violence in each of the worlds great traditions, taking us on an astonishing journey from prehistoric times to the present. While many historians have looked at violence in connection with particular religious manifestations (jihad in Islam or Christianitys Crusades), Armstrong looks at each faithnot only Christianity and Islam, but also Buddhism, Hinduism, Confucianism, Daoism, and Judaismin its totality over time. As she describes, each arose in an agrarian society with plenty powerful landowners brutalizing peasants while also warring among themselves over land, then the only real source of wealth. In this world, religion was not the discrete and personal matter it would become for us but rather something that permeated all aspects of society....



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