**Sex and Religion Teachings and Taboos in the History of World Faiths**

**[Dag Øistein Endsjø](http://www.reaktionbooks.co.uk/results.asp?sf1=contributor&st1=%22Dag%20216%20istein%20Endsj%20248%22)**

Sex. There is probably no other realm of human experience in which religious thinking and control has had such vast reach and powerful influence. Faiths of every sort have always held strong beliefs about different forms of sexual conduct. But there is nothing natural or self-evident about the ways in which various religions prescribe or proscribe and bless or condemn different forms of sexuality. Whether something is sacred or abhorrent depends entirely on how a religion defines it.  
  
*Sex and Religion* is a detailed guide to the ways in which faiths have sought to repress or celebrate as well as codify almost every kind of sexual relationship and act. Is sex before or outside marriage wrong or admissible? Should priests have sex? Can sex be a religious experience? Is interracial marriage against God’s will? Does mutual masturbation count as sex? Then there are the questions concerning everything from polygamy and contraceptives to fellatio and sex in heaven . . . This book reflects on these and other contentious areas in the ongoing interrelationship of sex and religion. It explains what people meant and mean by sex in a religious context, with whom it has been or is permissible to have sex, and what consequences there have been and are today for deviant and correct sex, for both the individual and society. The variety of religious codes is extraordinary. Where one faith makes much of the fact that promiscuity will lead to hurricanes and nuclear war, there is another that has a god who condemns sexual abstinence.  
  
A truly fascinating investigation of mores and meanings, rituals and rules in religions around the globe, this book will be of interest to anyone curious about the intersection of these fundamental aspects of human history and experience.