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Providing detailed descriptions of the beliefs, rituals, history, and organization of the world's eight major religious traditions, including Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Confucianism, Taoism, and Shinto, this fully revised and updated edition is an easy-to-use comparative guide for anyone seeking basic religious literacy. Clearly and eloquently written by a scholar with more than 40 years of study and teaching experience, *The Handy Religion Answer Book* is organized into chapters on each major religion and contains a wealth of information about their history, beliefs, symbols, membership, leaders, observances, and customs. The reference answers more than 800 questions, such as What is the significance of the Star of David? How did so many different Christian churches come into being? What is the importance of the month of Ramadan? What is an Ayatollah? and Do Taoists believe in heaven and hell?, as well as new questions concerning religion and violence and suborganizations that claim affiliation with the major faith communities. A glossary of religious terminology, maps of the general coverage areas for each religion, and suggestions for further reading are also included.

Discovering God is a monumental history of the origins of the great religions from the Stone Age to the Modern Age. Sociologist Rodney Stark surveys the birth and growth of religions around the world—from the prehistoric era of primal beliefs; the history of the pyramids found in Iraq, Egypt, Mexico, and Cambodia; and the great "Axial Age" of Plato, Zoroaster, Confucius, and the Buddha, to the modern Christian missions and the global spread of Islam. He argues for a free-market theory of religion and for the controversial thesis that under the best, unimpeded conditions, the true, most authentic religions will survive and thrive. Among his many conclusions: Despite decades of faulty reports that early religions were crude muddles of superstition, it turns out that primitive humans had surprisingly sophisticated notions about God and Creation. The idea of "sin" appeared suddenly in the sixth century BCE and quickly reshaped religious ideas from Europe to China. Some major world religions seem to lack any plausible traces of divine inspiration. Ironically, some famous figures who attempted to found "Godless" religions ended up being worshiped as Gods. Most people believe in the existence of God (or Gods), and this has apparently been so throughout human history. Many modern biologists and psychologists reject these spiritual ideas, especially those about the existence of God, as delusional. They claim that religion is a primitive survival mechanism that should have been discarded as humans evolved beyond the stage where belief in God served any useful purpose—that in modern societies, faith is a misleading crutch and an impediment to reason. In *Discovering God*, award-winning sociologist Rodney Stark responds to this position, arguing that it is our capacity to understand God that has evolved—that humans now know much more about God than they did in ancient times.

Ten Great Religions is fascinating overview of 10 religions including Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, and more. A scholar's critical examination and comparison of the teachings of some of the world's major religions, primarily Christianity and Buddhism, to a lesser extent Islam and Judaism. The author's thesis is that no religion can claim to be the only true religion without involving human society either in bitter conflict or in merciless persecution. An eminent scholar's critical examination and comparison of the teachings of some of the world's major religions, primarily Christianity and Buddhism, to a lesser extent Islam and Judaism. The author's main thesis is From the challenges facing Christianity to the future of Islam in a multi-cultural world, this is a coherent introduction to the teachings and debates within the various traditions on the subject of religious pluralism. Drawing on a combination of scripture, scholarship and the words of great thinkers past and present, Harold Coward evaluates six major world faiths and their attitudes towards pluralism and religious tolerance. balancing the historical context of

each religion with its responses to the modern pressures of globalisation and multi-cultural living, he tackles complex and problematic areas in an accessible manner, to produce a succinct survey of the issues and arguments surrounding inter-religious relationships. Among the key topics covered are: Muslim relations with the West and white Christianity; the Jewish Diaspora within the multi-cultural world; assimilation and mutual criticism within Hinduism, Buddhism and Taoism; the future of religion: possibilities for reaching new levels of tolerance and understanding. A timely book, this introductory text should be of interest to students, academics and the general reader alike. The remarkable group of Japanese Buddhists who traveled to Chicago's Columbian Exposition to participate in the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions combined religious aspirations with nationalist ambitions. Their portrayal of Buddhism mirrored modern reforms in Meiji, Japan, and the historical context of cultural competition on display at the 1893 World's Fair. Japan's primary exhibit, the H?-?, or phoenix, Pavilion, provided an impressive display of traditional culture as well as apt symbolism: for Japan's modern rise to prominence, for Buddhist renewal succeeding devastating Meiji persecution, for Mah?y?na revitalization following withering attacks of Western critics, and for Chicago's own resurrection from the ashes of the Great Fire. This book examines the Japanese delegates' portrayal of Mah?y?na Buddhism as authentically ancient, pragmatically modern, scientifically consistent, and universally salvific. The Japanese delegates were active, and relatively successful agents who seized the opportunity of the 1893 forum to further their own objectives of promoting Japan and its Buddhism to the West, repairing negative evaluations of the «great vehicle» of Buddhism, differentiating Japanese Buddhism from the Buddhism of other countries, distinguishing their tradition as the evolutionary culmination of all religions, and shaping modern Buddhism in Asia and the West. The widespread influence of Buddhism is due in part to the skill with which a way of liberation was refined by its teachers and became accessible to people of diverse cultures. In this dynamic series of lectures, Alan Watts takes us on an exploration of Buddhism, from its roots in India to the explosion of interest in Zen and the Tibetan tradition in the West. Watts traces the Indian beginnings of Buddhism, delineates differences between Buddhism and other religions, looks at the radical methods of the Mahayan Buddhist, and reviews the Four Noble Truths and The Eightfold Path Examines primitive religion; Celtic, Greek, Babylonian. Egyptian, and Roman religions; Brahmanism; Janinism; Buddhism; Hinduism; Confucianism; Taoism; Judaism; Zoroastrianism; Christianity; and Mohammedanism. Buddhism is one of the oldest and largest of the world's religions. But it is also a tradition that has proven to have enormous contemporary relevance. Founded by Siddhartha Gautama, who came to be called the Buddha, the religion has spread from its origins in northeast India, across Asia, and eventually to the West, taking on new forms at each step of the way. Buddhism: What Everyone Needs to Know offers readers a brief, authoritative guide to one of the world's most diverse religious traditions in a reader-friendly question-and-answer format. Dale Wright covers the origins and early history of Buddhism, the diversity of types of Buddhism throughout history, and the status of contemporary Buddhism. This is a go-to book for anyone seeking a basic understanding of the origins, history, teachings, and practices of Buddhism. Contributors: John Butt (Buddhism), Elliot N. Dorff (Judaism), Carool Kersten (Islam), Kalyan Ray (Hindusim), David Kwang-sun Suh (Christianity) This book introduces students to five of the world?s great religions?Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam?with a special emphasis on each religion?s philosophy of service and call to serve. With excerpts regarding service and social responsibility from the sacred writings of each tradition, followed by questions for study and reflection, VISIONS OF SERVICE gives students a framework for considering the differences and commonalities among the religions on the subject of serving those in need and reflecting on their own experience of service. VISIONS OF SERVICE is ideal for religion courses in which service is a corequisite, and will be a useful guide to reflection for volunteers, service-learning students, and those in service professions. It will also be of interest to those in religious organizations who wish to contemplate their own tradition of service and learn more about other religions and their philosophies of service. Today, Buddhism is the world's fourth-largest religion, with over 576 million followers worldwide. Buddhists follow traditions and spiritual beliefs that were taught by Guatama Buddha, a revered wise man. Guatama Buddha lived in the

eastern part of the Indian subcontinent more than 2,400 years ago. Although born into a royal family, he became concerned with the problem of suffering in the world and spent years studying a variety of religions and philosophies. Eventually, he was "enlightened," and spent the rest of his life teaching people the path to true happiness. Buddhism soon spread throughout Asia, and today most Buddhists live in countries like China, Thailand, Japan, and Burma. This book describes the origins and history of Buddhism, and sheds light on some of this religion's most important beliefs, practices, and rituals. The MAJOR WORLD RELIGIONS series provides information about six of the most important religious faiths practiced around the world. More than 75 percent of the world's population over 5.2 billion people observes the tenets of one of these six religions. Each book in the series describes the important beliefs of a particular religion, along with information about its history, practices, and rituals. Each book in the series describes the important beliefs of a particular religion, along with information about its history, practices, and rituals. Each title in this series includes color photos throughout, and back matter including: an index and further reading lists for books and internet resources, a timeline and organizations to contact. Key Icons appear throughout the books in this series in an effort to encourage library readers to build knowledge, gain awareness, explore possibilities and expand their viewpoints through our content rich non-fiction books. Key Icons in this series are as follows: This is the first comparative study of the self and no-self in Hinduism, Buddhism, and Christianity. In spite of doctrinal differences within these three belief systems, they agree that human beings are in a predicament from which they need to be liberated. Indian religions, including Hinduism and Buddhism, share the belief that human nature is inherently perfectible, while the epistemological and psychological limitation of the human being is integral to Christian belief. Regarding the immortality of the human being, Hinduism and Christianity traditionally and generally agree that human beings, as atman or soul, possess intrinsic immortality. On the contrary, Buddhism teaches the doctrine of no-self (anatta). Further, in their quest to analyze the human predicament and attempt a way out of it, they employ different concepts, such as sin and salvation in Christianity, attachment (tanka) and enlightenment (nirvana) in Buddhism, and ignorance (avidya) and liberation (moksa) in Hinduism. This volume seeks to show that behind these concepts are deep concerns related to human existence and its relationship with the whole creation. These common concerns can be a basis for a greater understanding and dialogue between Christians, Hindus, and Buddhists. The historical foundations of this important world religion, including the life and teachings of Siddhartha Gautama, the historical Buddha, are explored. The authors examine the spread of Buddhism into Central Asia, and its diversification as it absorbed elements of the local religions. Numerous illustrations in both color and black-and-white depict objects relating to Buddhism as well as scenes of contemporary Buddhist life. Presenting scripture readings in the context of their usage within the major religious traditions themselves and taking account of recent scholarship on the role of scriptures in religion, this anthology allows students to encounter world religions in a direct and meaningful way. ANTHOLOGY OF WORLD SCRIPTURES is a collection of the most notable and instructive scriptures of the major living religions of the world: Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Shinto, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Also included are the most important scriptures of the new religious movements: Baha'i, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, the Christian Science Church, the Unification Church, and the Church of Scientology. Supported by introductions to the readings by the editor, this anthology provides the most comprehensive and pedagogically sound access to the sacred literature of the world available in a single volume. How do we make sense of the world's different religions? In this creative thought experiment, Peter Kreeft invites us to encounter dialogues on the major faiths with his characters Thomas Keptic, Bea Lever, and Professor Fesser. Ultimately Kreeft gives us helpful tools for thinking fairly and critically about competing religious beliefs and how they relate to one another. If the Western world knows anything about Zen Buddhism, it is down to the efforts of one remarkable man, D.T. Suzuki. The twenty-seven year-old Japanese scholar first visited the West in 1897, and over the course of the next seventy years became the world's leading authority on Zen. His radical and penetrating insights earned him many disciples, from Carl Jung to Allen Ginsberg, from Thomas Merton to John

Cage. In *Mysticism: Christian and Buddhist* Suzuki compares the teachings of the great Christian mystic Meister Eckhart with the spiritual wisdom of Shin and Zen Buddhism. By juxtaposing cultures that seem to be radically opposed, Suzuki raises one of the fundamental questions of human experience: at the limits of our understanding is there an experience that is universal to all humanity? *Mysticism: Christian and Buddhist* is a book that challenges and inspires; it will benefit readers of all religions who seek to understand something of the nature of spiritual life. "An introductory survey of the whole field of study of religion and violence. It includes overviews of major religious traditions, and it analyzes patterns and themes relating to religious violence. It also explores major analytic approaches, and forges new directions in the study of this important emerging field"-- In this compact book, the authors reflect on the legacy of four great religious thinkers: Buddha, Jesus, Confucius, and Muhammad. They offer a brief biography of each founder, describing the events that most shaped his life, how his personal spirituality developed, how he lived and how he died, what kind of person he was, and finally, they briefly trace the course of each religious tradition after its founder's death. The Carmodys divide their topic into the major dimensions of spiritual life - nature, society, the self, and divinity - and provide clear and easy access to where each figure stands on enduring issues and how each compares with the others. An introduction to the life of the Indian Prince Siddhartha Gautama, who founded Buddhism in about 531 B.C. and became known as Buddha. With this historical introduction to Buddhism, the authors aim to portray the thoughts and actions of the followers of Buddha. The book covers ritual, devotionism, doctrine, meditation, practice, and institutional history. The Buddha's teachings center around two basic principles. One is the Four Noble Truths, in which the Buddha diagnoses the problem of suffering and indicates the treatment necessary to remedy this problem. The other is the Noble Eightfold Path, the practical discipline he prescribes to uproot and eliminate the deep underlying causes of suffering. The present book offers, in simple and clear language, a concise yet thorough explanation of the Eightfold Path. Basing himself solidly upon the Buddha's own words, the author examines each factor of the path to determine exactly what it implies in the way of practical training. Finally, in the concluding chapter, he shows how all eight factors of the path function in unison to bring about the realization of the Buddhist goal: enlightenment and liberation. *World Religions in Practice* introduces five of the world's great religions – Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam – and explores how they are lived and expressed in custom, ritual, and symbol. A major new textbook exploring the world's great religions through their customs, rituals and everyday practices – by focusing on this 'lived experience' it goes beyond many traditional introductions to religious studies. Adopts a directly comparative approach to develop a greater understanding of the nature of religion. Each chapter engages with an individual theme, such as birth, death, food, pilgrimage and ethics, to illustrate how religious practices are expressed. Broadens students' understanding by offering an impartial discussion of the similarities and differences between each religion. Includes chapter-by-chapter opening themes and summaries, and will be accompanied by a website at www.blackwellpublishing.com/gwynne featuring additional resources and study questions. This work seeks to answer questions about the great religious traditions in the contemporary age. It focuses upon those religions that continue to demand the attention of the Western world. Following an introduction on the philosophy of religion, attention is focused on Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam which are religions that have had (and probably continue to have) the greatest number of followers in Western society. In addition to the lasting impact that religion has had in society, we are witnesses to the development of secularism on the one hand and the revival of religious sentiment on the other, thus chapters on modernity, postmodernism, and 'fundamentalism' have also been included. The distinctive feature of the book is its modern feel. Each chapter brings the reader up-to-date with recent developments and commentaries upon recent religious thought, theology and religious-political movements. Moreover, the length of the chapters permits a detailed analysis which is so often lacking in books on world religions. In the words of the Dalai Lama, the purpose of religion is not to build churches and elaborate temples, but to cultivate positive human qualities such as tolerance, generosity and love. This text contains the four talks given by the Dalai Lama when he attended a meeting of

Buddhist and Christian monks at Gethsemani Abbey, Kentucky. The Dalai Lama shares his understanding of four major themes explored in the meeting: the practice of prayer and meditation in the spiritual life; the stages in the process of spiritual development; the role of the teacher and the community in the spiritual life; and the spiritual goals of personal and societal transformation. In each talk the Dalai Lama expresses the basic principles of Tibetan Buddhism and shows how they are applicable to daily practice for all spiritual seekers, regardless of their religious affiliation. Max Weber's early twentieth-century study of the religions and civilization of India is a great pioneering adventure in the sociology of ancient India. Weber's insight and analysis - especially his application of the sociological perspective to the work of classical Indologists and the religious texts available to him - were to add much to the store of the social scientist. Later, historians and archaeologists were to confirm a surprising number of Weber's theories. The central concern of this and other of Weber's studies of countries we today describe as "developing" was with the obstacles to industrialization and modernization. Weber anticipated by several decades a problem that has come to occupy the post-World War II world. Why had these countries failed to display the full consequence of these rationalizing tendencies which, to Weber's mind had so powerful an affinity with the scientific technical transformation of the West. He isolated religious institutions and the key social strata which mediate them to wider society as crucial for the original formation of social-psychological orientations to the practical concerns of life and, hence, for receptivity or resistance to industrialization.

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