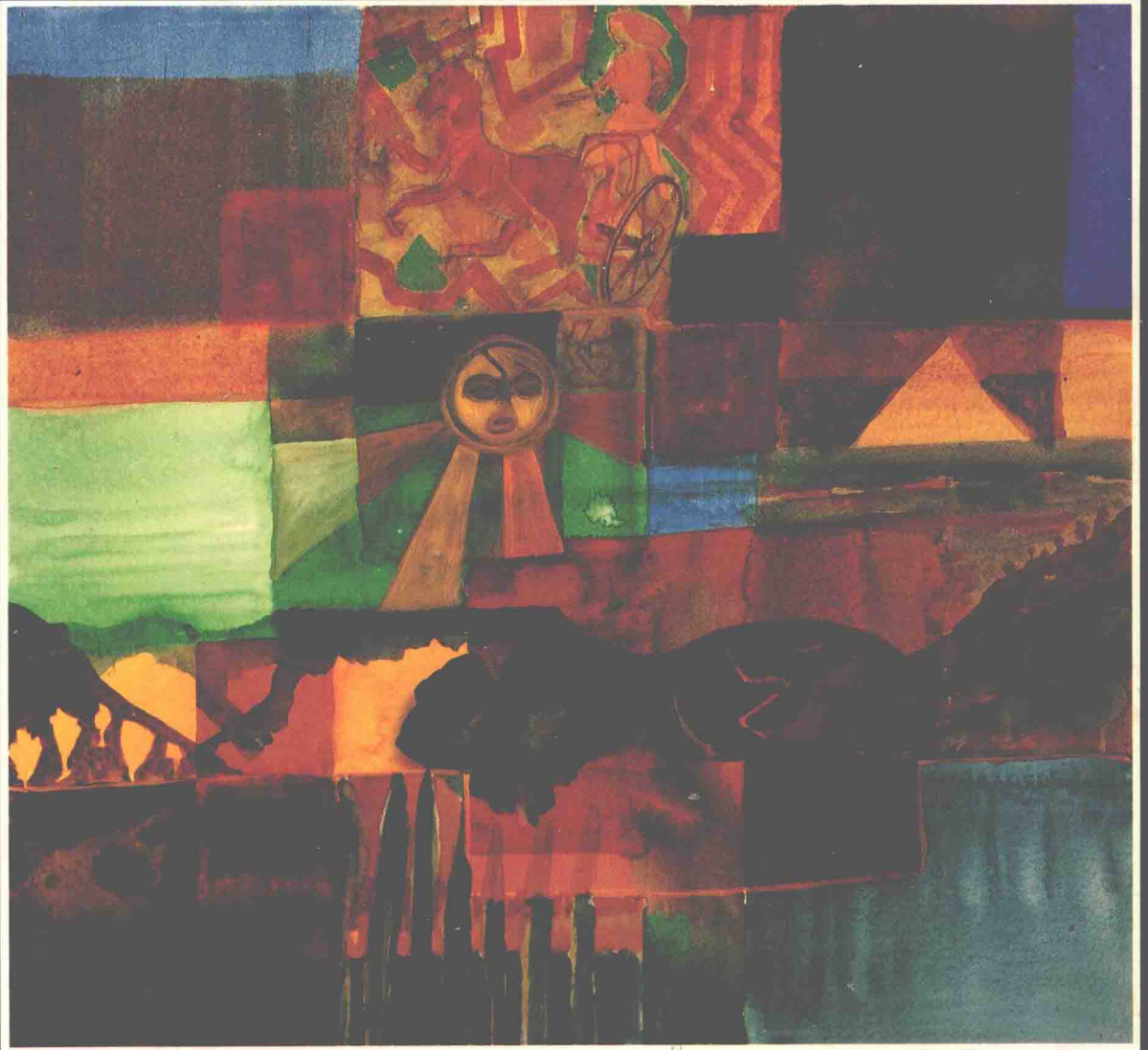


LIVING RELIGIONS



MARY PAT FISHER
ROBERT LUYSTER

LIVING RELIGIONS

MARY PAT FISHER
ROBERT LUYSTER



PRENTICE HALL
Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 07632

Copyright © Mary Pat Fisher, 1991



Prentice Hall Inc
A Division of Simon & Schuster
Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey 07632

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, in any form or by any means, without permission in writing from the publisher.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3

ISBN 0-13-538604-7

This book was designed and produced by
CALMANN AND KING LTD, LONDON

Designer Karen Osborne
Picture researcher Sara Waterson
Maps by Eugene Fleury

Typeset by Black Box Graphics, Maidenhead
Printed in Hong Kong

Cover: MC 32985 – Michael Chase (living artist), *Sun God and Charioteer*. Private Collection/Bridgeman Art Library.

Half title: The Jain saint Bahubali is honored by a colossal 57-foot-high statue. A Great Head-Anointing Ceremony is held every ten to fifteen years in which pots of precious milk, sandalwood, goldfoil, and gemstones are poured over the image. Photograph courtesy Gurmeet Thukral.

Frontispiece: As part of the holy festival of Galungan, a procession of women carry offerings into Pura Puseh, Desa Sempidi, near the Holy Springs of Sempidi. Photograph courtesy Werner Forman Archive.

The authors and publishers would like to thank all those who gave permission to use text and photographs in this book. Text sources are credited fully in the Notes, pages 349 to 356, and photographic sources on page 361. Every effort has been made to trace copyright holders and we apologise in advance for any unintentional omissions. We would be pleased to insert the appropriate acknowledgement in any subsequent edition of this book.

LIVING RELIGIONS



XV
SPN
0001



CONTENTS

PREFACE 8

1 THE RELIGIOUS RESPONSE 10

- Why are there religions? 10
- Modes of knowing: reason and intuition 22
- Understandings of the Divine 24
- Worship and symbol 26
- Women and the feminine in religions 27
- Fundamental and liberal interpretations 29
- The dark side of organized religion 29
- Suggested reading 31

2 INDIGENOUS SACRED WAYS 32

- Barriers to understanding 32
- Cultural diversity 35
- The circle of right relationships 36
- Living Indigenous Sacred Ways* 39
- Spiritual specialists 43
- Contemporary rituals 49
- The Sun Dance Way of Self-Sacrifice* 54
- Suggested reading 57

3 HINDUISM 58

- Pre-Vedic religion 58
- Vedic religion 60
- Timeline* 61
- Spiritual disciplines 74
- Living Hinduism* 82
- Major theistic cults 83
- Major philosophical systems 85
- Popular forms of worship 87
- Modern world Hinduism 90
- Suggested reading 93

4 JAINISM 94

- The Tirthankaras and Mahavira 94
- Freeing the soul: the ethical pillars 95
- Spiritual practices 98
- Living Jainism* 99
- World Jainism 102
- Suggested reading 102

5 BUDDHISM 103

- The life of Buddha 103
- Timeline* 104
- The Dharma 107
- Living Buddhism* 116
- Life in a Western Zen Monastery* 130
- Buddhism in the West 132
- Suggested reading 133

6 TAOISM AND CONFUCIANISM 134

- Ancient traditions 134
- Taoism – The Valley Way 135
- Living Taoism* 143
- Tao-chiao: Taoist religion 144
- Confucianism – perfect virtue 146
- Suggested reading 152

7 SHINTO 153

- The way of the Kami 153
- Shinto today 160
- Living Shinto* 161
- Suggested reading 163

8 ZOROASTRIANISM 164

- Origins in ancient Iran 164
- Zarathushtra's mission 165
- Post-Zarathushtran history 166
- Zoroastrian teachings 167
- Spiritual practices 170
- Living Zoroastrianism* 172
- Zoroastrianism today 173
- Suggested reading 174

9 JUDAISM 175

- A history of Israel 175
- Timeline* 177
- Torah 203
- Sacred practices 207
- Holy days 210
- Contemporary Judaism 213
- Living Judaism* 214
- Suggested reading 217

10 CHRISTIANITY 218

- The evidence of the Bible 218
- The life of Jesus 219
- Timeline* 220
- The teachings of Jesus 227
- Christian Love in Action* 230
- The Early Church 231
- The Eastern Orthodox Church 236
- Medieval Roman Catholicism 240
- The Protestant Reformation 246

- The Roman Catholic Reformation 249
- The impact of the Enlightenment 250
- Vatican Councils I and II 251
- Sacred practices 252
- Contemporary trends 261
- Living Christianity* 266
- Suggested reading 267

11 ISLAM 268

- The Prophet Muhammad 268
- Timeline* 274
- The Qur'an 275
- Living Islam* 277
- The central teachings 278
- The Sunni-Shi'ite split 282
- Sufism 285
- The Five Pillars and jihad 289
- The spread of Islam 294
- Relationships with the West 299
- Muslim resurgence 301
- Suggested reading 306

12 SIKHISM 307

- The sant tradition 307
- Guru Nanak 308
- The succession of gurus 309
- Central beliefs 312
- Sacred practices 313
- Living Sikhism* 314
- Sikhism today 317
- Suggested reading 319

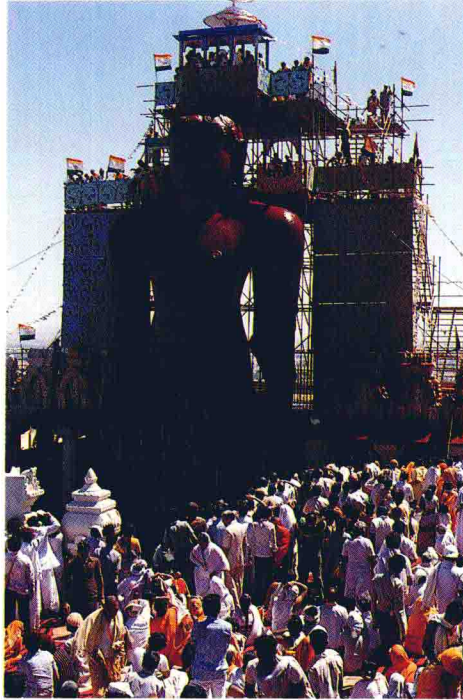
13 NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS 320

- Millenarian movements 321
- Personal spiritual empowerment 323
- Charismatic teachers 328
- Group dedication 331
- The occult 332
- Mysticism 335
- Metaphysical study 337

- Nature spirituality 338
- Universalist religions 342
- Interfaith dialogue 345
- Suggested reading 348

NOTES 349**GLOSSARY** 357**CREDITS** 361**INDEX** 362

LIVING RELIGIONS



100
SPN
100



LIVING RELIGIONS

MARY PAT FISHER
ROBERT LUYSTER



PRENTICE HALL
Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 07632

Copyright © Mary Pat Fisher, 1991



Prentice Hall Inc
A Division of Simon & Schuster
Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey 07632

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, in any form or by any means, without permission in writing from the publisher.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3

ISBN 0-13-538604-7

This book was designed and produced by
CALMANN AND KING LTD, LONDON

Designer Karen Osborne
Picture researcher Sara Waterson
Maps by Eugene Fleury

Typeset by Black Box Graphics, Maidenhead
Printed in Hong Kong

Cover: MC 32985 – Michael Chase (living artist), *Sun God and Charioteer*. Private Collection/Bridgeman Art Library.

Half title: The Jain saint Bahubali is honored by a colossal 57-foot-high statue. A Great Head-Anointing Ceremony is held every ten to fifteen years in which pots of precious milk, sandalwood, goldfoil, and gemstones are poured over the image. Photograph courtesy Gurmeet Thukral.

Frontispiece: As part of the holy festival of Galungan, a procession of women carry offerings into Pura Puseh, Desa Sempidi, near the Holy Springs of Sempidi. Photograph courtesy Werner Forman Archive.

The authors and publishers would like to thank all those who gave permission to use text and photographs in this book. Text sources are credited fully in the Notes, pages 349 to 356, and photographic sources on page 361. Every effort has been made to trace copyright holders and we apologise in advance for any unintentional omissions. We would be pleased to insert the appropriate acknowledgement in any subsequent edition of this book.

CONTENTS

PREFACE 8

1 THE RELIGIOUS RESPONSE 10

- Why are there religions? 10
- Modes of knowing: reason and intuition 22
- Understandings of the Divine 24
- Worship and symbol 26
- Women and the feminine in religions 27
- Fundamental and liberal interpretations 29
- The dark side of organized religion 29
- Suggested reading 31

2 INDIGENOUS SACRED WAYS 32

- Barriers to understanding 32
- Cultural diversity 35
- The circle of right relationships 36
- Living Indigenous Sacred Ways* 39
- Spiritual specialists 43
- Contemporary rituals 49
- The Sun Dance Way of Self-Sacrifice* 54
- Suggested reading 57

3 HINDUISM 58

- Pre-Vedic religion 58
- Vedic religion 60
- Timeline* 61
- Spiritual disciplines 74
- Living Hinduism* 82
- Major theistic cults 83
- Major philosophical systems 85
- Popular forms of worship 87
- Modern world Hinduism 90
- Suggested reading 93

4 JAINISM 94

- The Tirthankaras and Mahavira 94
- Freeing the soul: the ethical pillars 95
- Spiritual practices 98
- Living Jainism* 99
- World Jainism 102
- Suggested reading 102

5 BUDDHISM 103

- The life of Buddha 103
- Timeline* 104
- The Dharma 107
- Living Buddhism* 116
- Life in a Western Zen Monastery* 130
- Buddhism in the West 132
- Suggested reading 133

6 TAOISM AND CONFUCIANISM 134

- Ancient traditions 134
- Taoism – The Valley Way 135
- Living Taoism* 143
- Tao-chiao: Taoist religion 144
- Confucianism – perfect virtue 146
- Suggested reading 152

7 SHINTO 153

- The way of the Kami 153
- Shinto today 160
- Living Shinto* 161
- Suggested reading 163

8 ZOROASTRIANISM 164

- Origins in ancient Iran 164
- Zarathushtra's mission 165
- Post-Zarathushtran history 166
- Zoroastrian teachings 167
- Spiritual practices 170
- Living Zoroastrianism* 172
- Zoroastrianism today 173
- Suggested reading 174

9 JUDAISM 175

- A history of Israel 175
- Timeline* 177
- Torah 203
- Sacred practices 207
- Holy days 210
- Contemporary Judaism 213
- Living Judaism* 214
- Suggested reading 217

10 CHRISTIANITY 218

- The evidence of the Bible 218
- The life of Jesus 219
- Timeline* 220
- The teachings of Jesus 227
- Christian Love in Action* 230
- The Early Church 231
- The Eastern Orthodox Church 236
- Medieval Roman Catholicism 240
- The Protestant Reformation 246

- The Roman Catholic Reformation 249
- The impact of the Enlightenment 250
- Vatican Councils I and II 251
- Sacred practices 252
- Contemporary trends 261
- Living Christianity* 266
- Suggested reading 267

11 ISLAM 268

- The Prophet Muhammad 268
- Timeline* 274
- The Qur'an 275
- Living Islam* 277
- The central teachings 278
- The Sunni-Shi'ite split 282
- Sufism 285
- The Five Pillars and jihad 289
- The spread of Islam 294
- Relationships with the West 299
- Muslim resurgence 301
- Suggested reading 306

12 SIKHISM 307

- The sant tradition 307
- Guru Nanak 308
- The succession of gurus 309
- Central beliefs 312
- Sacred practices 313
- Living Sikhism* 314
- Sikhism today 317
- Suggested reading 319

13 NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS 320

- Millenarian movements 321
- Personal spiritual empowerment 323
- Charismatic teachers 328
- Group dedication 331
- The occult 332
- Mysticism 335
- Metaphysical study 337

- Nature spirituality 338
- Universalist religions 342
- Interfaith dialogue 345
- Suggested reading 348

NOTES 349**GLOSSARY** 357**CREDITS** 361**INDEX** 362

Preface

Religion is not a museum piece. It is alive in people and places around the world. *Living Religions* is a sympathetic approach to what is living, and significant in the religious traditions of our world. It provides a clear, straightforward account of the development, doctrines, and practices of the major faiths practiced today. Our emphasis throughout is on the personal consciousness of believers and their own account of themselves, their religion, and reality at large.

Distinguishing features

Among the special features of this text are personal interviews with followers of each faith, providing first-person accounts of each religion as perceived from within. These are presented at length in boxes and also in excerpts woven throughout the text.

In addition, we have incorporated extensive quotations from primary sources to give a direct perception of the thinking and flavor of each tradition. Particularly memorable brief quotations are set off in boxes.

We also use illustrations to convey a living sense of each tradition. The book incorporates 41 color and 165 black and white illustrations, with an emphasis on contemporary religious life. Narrative captions that accompany them offer a deepened insight into the characteristics and orientation of each tradition and the people who practice it.

Three of our chapters are especially unique. The first chapter – “The Religious Response” – is a thoughtful exploration of religion in general. Religion is presented as a valid account of reality that takes many forms. This chapter includes a discussion of women and the feminine in religions, an area to which little attention has been paid in past surveys of world religions. It also examines the controversial side of religions, for they have at times evoked the lowest as well as the highest aspects of human nature.

The second chapter offers a sensitive, profound portrayal of the little-understood indigenous religions. We have tried to bypass the many misleading accounts of indigenous traditions written by outsiders, and to get at the heart of how real people experience their close-to-nature spiritual ways. As our world totters on the brink of ecological collapse, it is especially important that these surviving members of the ancient ways be heard correctly.

The final chapter is an original framework for understanding new religious movements. It is a rich, accurate, and up-to-date discussion of the novel and important religious trends of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, ending with interfaith dialogue.

Learning aids

We have tried to present each tradition clearly and without a clutter of less important names and dates. Key terms are defined when they first appear and also in an extensive glossary. Maps are used to give a sense of geographical reality to the historical discussions, as well as to illustrate the present distribution of the religions.

The history of each of the major religions is recapitulated in a time-line in the history section of that chapter. The simultaneous development of all religions can be compared in the overall time-line at the back of the book.

We assume that readers will want to delve further into the literature. At the end of each chapter, we offer an annotated list of books that might be particularly interesting and useful in further study of that religion.

Acknowledgements

In order to try to understand each religion from the inside, we have been travelling for many years to study with devotees and teachers of all faiths, and to interview them about their experience of their tradition.

The book has also been supported by a team of authorities in specific traditions: Robert Bee (Professor of Anthropology at the University of Connecticut, specializing in indigenous sacred lifeways), Reb Zalman Schacter-Shalomi (Professor Emeritus of Jewish Mysticism and Psychology of Religion from Temple University and a leader in the Jewish Renewal movement), Julia Gatta (Episcopal priest, spiritual director at Berkeley Divinity School at Yale, lecturer on ascetical theology at Yale Divinity School, member of the ecumenical committees of the National and World Council of Churches), and Willem A. Bijlefeld (Distinguished Senior Professor of Islamic Studies at the Hartford Seminary and editor of *The Muslim World*). They have shared resources, helped to frame the content, and reviewed and revised the chapters in their particular areas, offering invaluable aid for which we are deeply grateful. We authors nevertheless bear responsibility for the contents.

Living Religions has been extensively reviewed by professors teaching courses in world religions. They include: George Braswell of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Howard R. Burkle of Grinnell College, James Carse of New York University, Frances Cook of University of California, Ronald Flowers of Texas Christian University, Rita Gross of University of Wisconsin, Willard Johnson of San Diego State University, Anjum Khilji of Institute for Parapsychology at Durham Technical Community College, Dennis Klass of Webster University, Robert Minor of University of Kansas, Kusumita P. Pederson of New York University, Lynda Sexson of Montana State University, Paul Schwartz of San Francisco State University, and Herb Smith of McPherson College. In addition, Reverend Stan Possell, Rabbi Steven Razin, Mohammad T. Mehdi, and Prajapati O'Neill have read and commented on specific chapters. Their many suggestions and insights have been extremely valuable, and we would like to thank all of them.

Probably most important to the spiritual validity of the book are those many devotees, teachers, and scholars from each religion who were enthusiastic about the possibility of presenting their path truthfully and who gave generously of their own time, insights, and books. Some are quoted in the text; many more have helped. We would particularly like to thank those who appear in the featured interview boxes. All these people have offered great riches of information and experience, and for this we are sincerely grateful.

It has been an inspiring, deeply enriching journey.

Mary Pat Fisher
Robert Luyster