

necessary to force clearly Sanskrit terms into Tamil transliteration (*ditcitar/dikṣitar*), or to provide Tamil forms for more popularly known Sanskrit words (Citamparam/Cidambaram), even though the Tamilization of Sanskrit terms is common practice in the philosophical literature of the Tamil-based *Śaiva Siddhānta*. This tendency of Younger's is likely to confuse both Western and Indian Indologists.

Notwithstanding these critical observations, the book is both informative and intellectually stimulating, and an important step in the concrete demonstration of the interface between specific religious traditions in the land of the Tamils. It is a comprehensive study suitable for a general audience of Indologists.

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*Mysticism: Experience, Response, and Empowerment.* By Jess Byron Hollenback. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996. ISBN 0-27-101552-7. Pp. x+646.

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The notion that visionary experiences are an inadequate type of mystical consciousness has been a persistent theme throughout twentieth-century studies of mysticism. Thinkers such as Otto, Forman, and Stace have considered paranormal phenomena such as visions, locutions, and illuminations to be of little or no importance to our understanding of mysticism. Hollenback's *Mysticism: Experience, Response, and Empowerment* has been designed to correct this slight.

Furthermore, a broad comparative, historical, and transcultural account of mysticism has been sorely needed. The wealth of scholarly material created over the last several decades has made such seminal works as Underhill's *Mysticism* and James's *Varieties of Religious Experience* outdated. More recent studies of mysticism suffer from narrow confinement to one theme in mysticism, inadequate comparative analyses, or are fraught with ethnocentric biases. However, Hollenback's work avoids these shortcomings.

Hollenback defends a modified version of contextualism. Contextualists believe that mystical experiences are largely dependent on cultural and historical factors within the mystic's religious environment. In contrast, the essentialist position states that there is a common universal core of mystical experience that transcends the cultural, historical, and religious milieus. Essentialists believe that such environments enter the picture only after the mystical experience, and are in no way relevant during the experience. Hollenback is not willing to go so far as to say that all types of mystical experience are culturally conditioned (607); he believes that there are common patterns to mystical experience and that there are universally applicable methods or techniques for achieving mystical levels of consciousness.

Hollenback outlines five objectives for his study. The first is to "present a broad comparative historical treatment of mysticism" (24) of interest to schol-

ars and generalists alike. While scholarly works either downplay or ignore the historical and contextual factors that shape a mystic's experience, Hollenback emphasizes their importance.

The second objective is to explain the ever-present role of recollection—the one-pointed concentration of mental and emotional attention—in the creation of mystical states of consciousness and in the various types of paranormal phenomena that often occur in conjunction with them. Furthermore, the need to preserve this recollection experience plays a pivotal role in the way the mystic interacts with the world.

The third objective is the most original part of the study. Hollenback demonstrates the significance of *enthymesis*, or what he calls the “empowerment” of thought, will and imagination, that shapes the visionary landscapes, ensures that a mystic's experiences will seem to confirm empirically the truths that his religious tradition proclaims in its myths and scriptures, and transforms the imagination and will into “organs of supernormal perception” (25). Empowerment is the simultaneity between thinking and being that functions during the mystical experience. This simultaneity involves the shaping of the mystic's visions and spiritual environment by his or her thoughts and desires. Thus, the paranormal is an essential part of mysticism and should not be ignored in any study. The empowered imagination as a source of knowledge and active involvement is the highlight of this work.

Hollenback's fourth objective is to examine the paranormal phenomena that seem to pervade many accounts of mysticism. There are too many references to such phenomena as telepathy, clairvoyance, out-of-body experiences, and the perception of auras in the biographical and autobiographical writings of mystics from diverse religious backgrounds to be easily dismissed. Furthermore, what these supernormal phenomena have in common with mystical states of consciousness is that they all originate within the recollective act (278). Through the recollective act, when the mystic is psychologically prepared to have a mystical experience, he or she is also ready to bring about the supernormal faculties that he or she may possess. This link of commonality shifts the focus of paranormal phenomena from merely “bizarre marginalia” to “exaggerated processes of psychological and perceptual activity.”

As his fifth objective, Hollenback examines mysticism from a cross-cultural perspective. While other works have confined themselves to a particular aspect of mysticism in only one of the main universal religions—Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, or Hinduism—this work also includes accounts of mysticism among the Lakota, the Australian Aborigines, and the Inuit. In fact, a quarter of the book is devoted to the experiences of Black Elk, an Oglala Lakota mystic. The inclusion of Black Elk serves two purposes: to guard against any ethnocentrism that often creeps into works of comparative mysticism, and to demonstrate that the contextualist thesis also describes tribal religions, where salvation is confined to tribal members and where there is an absence of proselytization (306).

Hollenback largely achieves the above objectives. *Mysticism: Experience, Response, and Empowerment* is easy to read and informative. Students will get a

thorough account of what constitutes mysticism and mystical experience; scholars will appreciate a reconsideration of the largely ignored area of paranormal psychology and its effect on mystical experience. While some of the episodes described in the mystic's writings may be difficult to believe, this seems a necessary risk given Hollenback's reliance on autobiographical accounts. Furthermore, there is a tendency for Hollenback to draw too often from the experiences of Christian mystics. This work complements James's and Underhill's classic works, and in some instances surpasses them. *Mysticism: Experience, Response, and Empowerment* deserves a place on the bookshelf of every serious student of religious studies.

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*With One Voice / B'Qol Echad: The Sermon on the Mount and Rabbinic Literature.* By Dennis Stoutenburg. San Francisco: International Scholars Publications, 1996. ISBN 1-883255-051-4. Pp. ix+163.

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Some of the most familiar words in the New Testament are found in the Sermon on the Mount, yet Matthew 5-7 has proved persistently difficult for interpreters. Acknowledging this difficulty, Dennis Stoutenburg's *With One Voice* provides a fresh approach to Sermon on the Mount research.

Stoutenburg is a Canadian scholar who received his postgraduate education at the *Université de Strasbourg*. In recent years he has continued studies during several trips to Israel, and is currently professor of New Testament and Jewish Studies at Providence College, Manitoba. This varied background is apparent in the academic competence which he demonstrates in his analysis of both Jewish and Christian texts.

In the opening section, Stoutenburg summarizes attempts to employ rabbinic literature and a Judaic perspective "as an interpretive grid" for study of the Gospels (10-21), cautioning against the traditional "parallels approach" (4, 85-87). He finds that this approach has often failed to define legitimate "parallels," and also makes uncritical use of both rabbinic literature (25-27) and the Gospels (22-23).

Stoutenburg argues that, despite past failures (inappropriate use of rabbinic literature in the study of the New Testament), "there remains a treasure of valuable resources in [rabbinic literature] for the explanation of the thought life which presupposes the writings of the NT" (81). Yet, Stoutenburg presents this positive word about parallels carefully: his emphasis on legitimate methodology includes examples of what true parallels are not (81-87). For instance, he cautions that various similar concepts found in Judaism and the church following the destruction of the Second Temple (70 CE)—especially in the area of individual and community prayer—may not in fact be highly significant. No matter how *apparently* synonymous, they "[do] not necessarily indicate any-