

MYSTICISM, SACRED AND PROFANE

R. C. Zaehner, professor of oriental religions and ethics at the University of Oxford, is well-known for his researches in the field of Iranian traditions, Zoroastrianism, Manicheism etc. By these researches he has been led to discriminate real spiritual communion from its outward appearances and its accompanying human sensations, so as to raise the moral issue of transcendental experience vs. its counterfeit, i.e. all human attempts at a travesty of the real thing under false pretences.

In his recent work *Mysticism, Sacred and Profane: An inquiry into some varieties of Supernatural Experience* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1957, pp. XVIII-256) Zaehner probes deep into some items of modern psychologic experience in the light of the comparative history of religions. The immediate occasion for his book has been provided by Aldous Huxley's well-known work *The doors of perception*, which Zaehner seems to take as the standard of human faking of supersensible experience. He looks at it as one of the outstanding documents of our age and weighs it on the scales of critical thought and mystical Christianity.

Aldous Huxley is one of those typically modern intellectuals who, unwilling to give up either trying to understand Man's fundamental problems or applying agnosticism's peculiar methods in doing so, are going to any lengths to bring about a solution to them in keeping with the times — that is, positivistic, oversimplified and untraditional. He is certainly known to the reader not only as a writer of celebrated novels but also (*Time must have a stop*) as a thinker ready to grapple with such problems as survival after death and the pattern of a mystical life adapted to our times — and all this with the spirit of a child of his own age, unwilling to forfeit any of the whims, any of the vitalistic, naturalistic and materialistic fads of today's mentality. Obviously a self-contradictory attitude.

Zaehner remarks in this connection that mysticism cannot be aimed at with an essentially anti-mystical mentality. Self-discipline in inner life may be rooted in self-consciousness. Man's present achievement, and be the more intense and creative. But then this self-consciousness must consist in inner freedom, in spiritual activity in which man is independent of any support of a sensible nature.

In *The doors of perception* Aldous Huxley shows the typical attitude of a spirit substantially bound to the outward awareness of

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that Egypt possessed any mystical tradition whatsoever Jeremy Naydler's radical reinterpretation of the Pyramid Texts the earliest body of religious literature to have survived from ancient Egypt places these documents into the ritual context in which they belong Until now the Pyramid Texts have been viewed primarily as royal funerary texts that were used in the liturgy of the dead pharaoh or to aid him in his afterlife journey This emphasis on funerary interpretation has served only to externalize what were actually experiences of the living not the dead king In order to understand the character and significance of the extreme psychological states the pharaoh experienced states often involving perilous encounters with alternate realities we need to approach them as spiritual and religious phenomena that reveal the extraordinary possibilities of human consciousness It is the shamanic spiritual tradition argues Naydler that is the undercurrent of the Pyramid Texts and that holds the key to understanding both the true nature of these experiences and the basis of ancient Egyptian mysticism

Religion in a Pluralistic Society J.S. Pobee,2023-08-28 *Infinite Paths to Infinite Reality* Ayon Maharaj,2018

This pioneering study examines the philosophy of the nineteenth century Indian mystic Sri Ramakrishna bringing him into dialogue with Western thinkers Sri Ramakrishna's expansive conception of God as the impersonal personal Infinite Reality Maharaj argues introduces a new paradigm for addressing central issues in the philosophy of religion Aldous Huxley Between East and West ,2021-11-01 Although the title of this volume is Aldous Huxley between East and West the order of the articles found within goes from West to East which naturally imitates Huxley's own progress especially since he went to the trouble of stepping out as far West as possible before starting for the East Indeed one could argue that he was already on his way there before he left for California a continuous journey perhaps since from the Californian shores of the Pacific the East is the further West After the Introduction which places Huxley between East and West the book starts with a consideration of Huxley's family connections then goes onto his earliest fictions his interest in science and the issue of modernity and his experiments with drama and their inherent philosophical concerns The poetry with which he began his writing career is then viewed as a link between his earlier Western self and his later Oriental interests suggesting that the latter was always inherent in the former A number of considerations of the Utopian themes in Huxley's middle and later fiction leads the volume to a climax with four articles surveying the foibles and the wisdom of Huxley's encounter with Eastern religious thought and philosophy his misunderstandings as well as ours of what actually he had learned and wished to pass on to the Western world

Mysticism William J. Wainwright,1981 *Mysticism and the Mystical Experience*

Donald H. Bishop,1995 *Mysticism and the Mystical Experience* examines both the variety and universality of mysticism both currently and historically It considers how various authors have defined mysticism and raises questions about acceptable definitions It also considers the nature of the mystical experience its prerequisites and results and takes up the arguments of proponents for and against the claim of a single universal mysticism in contrast to a multiplicity of mysticisms **BOOK JACKET**
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