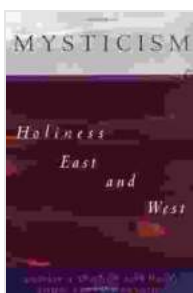


# Mysticism, Holiness, East, and West: A Spiritual Journey Through Time and Culture

Mysticism and holiness are two words that often conjure up images of otherworldly experiences and saintly figures. But what exactly do these terms mean, and how have they been understood in different cultures and throughout history? In his book *Mysticism, Holiness, East and West*, renowned scholar Huston Smith explores these questions, offering a comprehensive and thought-provoking look at the nature of mystical and holy experiences.

Mysticism is often described as a direct experience of the divine or ultimate reality. It is a path to transcendence, a way of going beyond the ordinary limits of human consciousness and connecting with something greater than oneself. Mystical experiences can take many different forms, from visions and dreams to states of ecstasy and union.

Smith argues that mysticism is not confined to any particular religion or culture. Rather, it is a universal human experience that has been found in all corners of the globe and throughout history. He identifies four main types of mystical experience:



## **Mysticism: Holiness East and West** by Denise Lardner Carmody

★★★★☆ 4.3 out of 5

Language : English  
File size : 3756 KB  
Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
Screen Reader : Supported  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 336 pages  
Lending : Enabled



- **Nature mysticism:** The experience of the divine through the natural world
- **Theistic mysticism:** The experience of the divine as a personal God
- **Philosophical mysticism:** The experience of the divine through reason and contemplation
- **Humanistic mysticism:** The experience of the divine through love and compassion

Holiness is often seen as the opposite of sinfulness. It is a state of purity, righteousness, and closeness to God. Holiness is not something that one can simply achieve through willpower or effort. Rather, it is a gift that is given by God.

Smith argues that holiness is not limited to a select few chosen individuals. Rather, it is a calling that is open to all people. He identifies three main aspects of holiness:

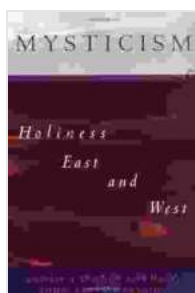
- **Moral holiness:** The practice of virtue and the avoidance of sin
- **Spiritual holiness:** The cultivation of a deep relationship with God
- **Communal holiness:** The building of a just and compassionate society

Smith's book explores the similarities and differences between mystical and holy traditions in the East and the West. He notes that there are many commonalities between the two traditions, such as the emphasis on

personal experience, the importance of love and compassion, and the recognition of the interconnectedness of all things.

However, there are also some significant differences between Eastern and Western mysticism and holiness. For example, Eastern traditions tend to place more emphasis on meditation and contemplation, while Western traditions tend to place more emphasis on prayer and devotion. Eastern traditions also tend to be more accepting of the diversity of religious experience, while Western traditions tend to be more exclusive.

Mysticism and holiness are two of the most important and enduring aspects of human experience. They offer us a way to connect with something greater than ourselves and to live lives of meaning and purpose. Huston Smith's book *Mysticism, Holiness, East and West* is a valuable resource for anyone who wants to learn more about these fascinating and transformative topics.



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