

Islamic principles and codes derived from other sources. The central issues uniting the case studies are the uses of ambiguity, the tendency for groups of Muslims to define boundaries when placed under stress and a new role of ordinary people in defining ordinary codes of behavior.

The editor's analysis of the rich evidence and of the interpretations offered by the contributors leads to the conclusion that

there may be two basic strategies for dealing with divergent values and practices. On the one hand, ambiguity is highlighted, leading to the incorporation of diversity. On the other hand, purification and systematization are stressed, leading to debate articulations, and the exclusion of values that are felt to challenge the integrity of Islam. These essays illustrate the ways in which, when ambiguity is valued, actors use rhetorical strategies to take advantage of this ambiguity, reconciling what would otherwise be opposing values. These essays also illustrate, however, that when articulation and systematization are of concern, *shari'at* is called into play. With the urge for consistency come characteristically Islamic strategies, forums, and limits for debate, all ultimately connected to the definition and interpretation of *shari'at*. (21–22)

Among comparable collective works and published proceedings of conferences the present volume stands out as a model of careful editing and handsome as well as solid material production. It marks a worthy sequence to the volume edited by B. D. Metcalf mentioned earlier.

Notes on the contributors, including, helpfully, their chief publications, numerous illustrations and tables, a substantial glossary of selected terms and a detailed index all enhance the value of the volume which makes a substantial and stimulating contribution to the study of Islam in South Asia and of Islam in general. This edited volume demonstrates in an impressive way that the study of Islam by now has irreversibly moved to an approach that integrates the methodologies of all the disciplines relevant in this field, whether they are based on the analysis of texts, films, statistics and other related materials or on empirical observation and field work as practiced in social anthropology and the related sciences.

#### REFERENCE CITED:

METCALF, Barbara D., ed.

1984 *Moral conduct and authority: The place of adab in South Asian Islam*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

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GOLD, ANN GRODZINS. *Fruitful Journeys. The Ways of Rajasthani Pilgrims*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988. xviii+333 pages. Photographs, maps, glossary, bibliography, index. Hardcover, no price. ISBN 0-520-05670-1.

In the last ten years pilgrimage has come increasingly under study by anthropologists, historians, geographers, and other students of religious behavior. Ann Gold's book on pilgrims from the Indian state of Rajasthan marks a milestone in the development of pilgrimage studies by taking the simple (though largely unprecedented) step of focusing on pilgrimage from the perspective of pilgrims themselves. What we get is a unique and valuable "bottom up" view of the religious traffic that is so integral to the regional and national religious cultures of India.

Village studies—that backbone of the anthropology of India—frequently overlooked the journeys that drew villagers to sacred centers beyond the village. That is understandable. Pilgrimages are irregular events, and so have not seemed to warrant the attention of scholars predisposed to seeking out the form and structure of social life. Ann Gold turns this neglect inside out. Hers is a study of the pilgrimage practices of one village in Rajasthan, focusing on the various sorts of pilgrimages the villagers undertake to regional and national shrines. As she says: "pilgrims must be understood first as householders" (34).

The book is concerned with the religious life of the village, and the ways in which sacred journeying plays a role within village life. This perspective necessitates, at the outset, an examination of the religious life of the village, especially of the shrines and rituals within the village, and the various actors (seen and unseen) that are held by the villagers to cause human welfare or misfortune. This aspect of the book is valuable ethnography, sensitively written, with commendable (depending on one's taste for the trend to "reflexivity" in today's anthropology) recognition of the author's particular position in the village, and the impact this might have on the data being reported.

The ethnographic material is good, balancing analytical generalization with some vibrant individual case studies. For example, in dealing with the relationship of death to pilgrimage, the author provides a good overview of the cultural pattern of journeying to supra-regional shrines to deposit the bones of the ancestors in the sacred rivers ("sinking flowers," in the idiom), but also follows in-depth the case of the death of a single individual and the pilgrimage rites that ensue.

Gold draws a simplified typology of pilgrimage types, as represented in the practices of the Rajasthani villagers. They distinguish semantically as well as in practice between *yatra* (i.e., journeys undertaken to the higher-level "crossing places" of Hinduism) and *jatra* (i.e., sacred journeys to regional shrines that are "gods' places"). The pan-Hindu shrines tend to be visited for death-related practices and more general spiritual or religious purposes, while the regional shrines are clearly the site of instrumental actions, where pilgrims seek cures, the birth of sons, the fulfilment of vows or other divine interventions related to the "sorrow and troubles" of mortal life. There is a third type of shrine mid-way between these two which Gold characterizes as "shelter" shrines.

There is a theoretical intent to this study. At the outset Gold sets out her intention to examine how ideology expresses itself in phenomenon. The ideological notion she starts with, and pursues throughout the text, is *moksha*, or release, meaning the final liberation from the cycle of birth, death and rebirth. She seeks the expression of this concept in the practice of pilgrimage, but does not find a clear and unequivocal relationship. However, this focus did lead her to uncover and examine the subject of the relationship between pilgrimage and death. For example, when "sinking the flowers" of the deceased at a pilgrimage site, the villagers expressed the notion that they were seeking to put the deceased to rest. *Moksha* in this sense is not a release from rebirth but preventive of the condition of wandering, still attached to the

former life and perhaps plaguing those left behind in the form of a ghost.

Most pilgrims held that visiting *tirthas* (sacred fords) does not give ultimate *moksha*, but most agreed that it was of merit. It was extremely surprising in the light of textually expressed values to read how universal was the idea that bathing in a pilgrimage site was of little spiritual or instrumental religious value, while generosity was held up as especially efficacious and meritorious:

Pilgrimage helps to loosen all kinds of bonds, but not because the waters of *tirthas* cleanse the results of bad deeds from men's souls; not one person among my informants evinced any trust in such reputed powers of *tirtha* baths. Rather, pilgrimage helps because the cumulative effect of being removed from daily routines and attachments at home, of taking many powerful *darshans* of the gods, of voluntarily enduring hardships on the road, and above all of putting out money both for the sake of these experiences (the initial fare) and during them (the constant drain of rupees and paise into the outstretched hands of *pandas* and beggars) is decidedly good for the soul. The effect is one of lightening; the returning pilgrim should be thinner and poorer. (263)

Neither Gold nor the pilgrims neglect the view that the highest goal of pilgrimage is not simply the going to the place but the encounter with the divine face that is more likely to occur there. Stress is also placed on inner resolution (the "pilgrimage within") that ought equally to accompany an earthly or a spiritual quest as the source of a pilgrimage's—and a life's—greatest blessings and accomplishments.

For all of its virtues, this study has its flaws. On finishing the book the reader is left feeling less than fully satisfied. Some of this results from the perspective adopted in the study: there is no great and masterly system of thought and action to satisfy the academic reader because village-dwelling peasants are not so inclined. Their goals are instrumental and fragmentary, and this the study reflects. But one also gets the sense, in part because of Gold's honest self-assessment of herself as a fieldworker, but also because of the material presented and discussed, that the subject was too large in several dimensions to be effectively digested in an eighteen-month stint of fieldwork by an anthropologist who clearly had her difficulties with the fieldwork experience.

The book shines brightest when the author deals with the subject of death and pilgrimage. She uncovers several critical pairings and transactions that underly the villagers' practices: the bones of the ancestors are deposited at the Ganges River, and fertility-giving sacred water is brought back to the village. "Flowers" (meaning the bones of the dead) are exchanged for "flowers" (meaning sons), thus not only balancing the books but working to ensure the continuity of life through the death that punctuates it.

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HOCKINGS, PAUL. *Counsel from the Ancients. A Study of Badaga Proverbs, Prayers, Omens and Curses.* With an Outline of the Badaga Language by Christiane Pilot-Raichoor. Trends in Linguistics, Documentation 4. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1988. xiv+796 pages. Figures, tables, appendices, bibliography, glossary and concordance, index. Cloth