



Religious Studies and Comparative Methodology: The Case for Reciprocal Illumination

Arvind Sharma

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A contribution to the methodology of religious studies, this work discusses using comparison to provide mutual illumination among religious traditions while avoiding the problem of assimilating one tradition to another.

Comparison is at the heart of religious studies as a discipline and foundational to the field's methodology. In this book, Arvind Sharma introduces the term "reciprocal illumination" to describe the mutual enlightenment that can occur when a comparison is made between one tradition and another, one method and another, or between a tradition and a method. Developing the concept of reciprocal illumination through historical, phenomenological, and psychological methods, Sharma demonstrates how to use comparison, while avoiding the pitfall of treating it as merely raw material for higher order generalizations.

Arvind Sharma is the Birks Professor of Comparative Religion at McGill University. He is the author or editor of numerous books, including *Sleep as a State of Consciousness in Advaita Vedanta* and *Methodology in Religious Studies: The Interface with Women's Studies*, also published by SUNY Press.

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