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Sufism: A Beginner's Guide



Synopsis

William C. Chittick, the leading scholar in the field, offers a compelling insight into the origins, context, and key themes of this fascinating movement. After a general overview of the tradition, he draws upon the words of some of the greatest Sufi writers – among them Ibn Arabi, Baha Walad and Rumi himself – to give a fresh and revealing perspective on the teachings and beliefs of Sufism and its proponents. Covering everything from the history and growth of Sufism to its place in the modern world, this sympathetic book will be appreciated by anyone interested in Sufism, from complete beginners to students, scholars and experts alike.

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Customer Reviews

Sufism, although specific to Islam, is in reality the unifying meaning beneath all of God's religions. Chittick's introduction is a great survey of the Sufi way of looking at reality especially since he takes the perspective of the great masters and mostly lets them tell us what Sufism is all about. Translations of Rumi and Ibn 'Arabi and some lesser know masters such as Sam'ani are included. I found reading these translations very enjoyable. I also found the bibliography very helpful since it lists some excellent sources for further study of Sufism. I would strongly recommend this book to anyone who is interested to learn about Sufism's reality, as it was known traditionally rather than the modern misconceptions of it.

A fascinating, lucid and illuminating book full of memorable quotes and images. A profound journey into the heart of Islam and a rewarding read. Merits repeated study and reflection. Contains a concise, but penetrating and constructive comparison of Ibn Arabi and Rumi leading to a deeper

understanding of both. The opening chapter on the three fundamental aspects of religion: action, mind and heart, corresponding to islam, iman and ihsan, is itself worth the purchase of the book and provides an essential key to understanding and appreciating the nature of Sufism. The final chapter on the paradox and symbolism of the veil is a revelation. A book to be savoured, both educational and inspirational.

This book gives a definition and general history of what sufism can best be described as, the spiritual aspects of Islam (it would be best to know some general things about Islam before reading this book), poems and writings by some famous sufis such as Rumi and Ibn Arabi, etc. William Chittick does write beautifully and found this book spiritually inspiring. However, I found a few of the concepts mentioned to be a little over my head such as the chapter about the lifting of the veils that surround God(swt).

This book may completely change the way you see things. It is about the Sufi(Islamic) conception of God, Creation, etc and is useful for both Muslims and Non-Muslims in understanding the philosophy and rich scholarship of Sufism. The author approaches it from a very orthodox and traditional view, unlike the "New Age Sufism" that is prevalent in some circles. Also, the author is a reputable scholar who has mastered the languages of classical Sufi writers.If you are interested in Islam or Sufism and approach things with an unbiased point of view, you owe it to yourself to read this book. I borrowed it from a public library and now I plan on buying it.This book is not about politics or "why I am right, and you are wrong". Buy this book only if you are interested in learning about Sufism/Islam directly from its sources.

I wanted to learn about the Sufi beliefs. This looked like a good basic book on the subject - and so far it is proving to be just that. Clear and concise, it is easy to understand and is factual, which is exactly what I wanted. I haven't finished it yet, but I must say the book arrived quickly and was in perfect condition. Thanks!

This is a wonderfully thorough explanatory guide on the very unifying subject of Sufism or Islamic mysticism. I definitely recommend the author. I have also read The Sufi Doctrine of Rumi which was, in my opinion, a masterpiece on the subject.

In my honest opinion, this book offers the best insight into the Sufi world and explains some of the

common misconceptions about Sufism as well as some of its history. Highly recommend.

I had this book as reading assignment for a college course. It is a good look at Sufism.

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