

The translation of this extensive work has been a real labor of love for both the translator, who has spent a lifetime in the study of Guénon's works, and the editor, himself one of the foremost traditional authors. The result is an English text reflecting the lucidity and clarity of the original French, qualities which characterize Guénon's writings in general. It is a major addition to the English corpus of his work, one that it is hoped will kindle enough interest to bring back into print many of Guénon's books rendered earlier into English but now unavailable.

In any case the translator and editor as well as the publishers are to be congratulated for making this work available in English. The hardcover edition of the book is well-printed with a handsome cover characteristic of the Quinta Essentia imprint. One only wishes that Dr. Lings could have dealt in greater length with Guénon's significance. Perhaps he will do so in a future work, in response to the need in the English-speaking world for the reassertion of the call of tradition in general and the teachings of Guénon in particular.

(S. Hossein Nasr)

**Faith and Practice of Islam: Three Thirteenth Century Sufi Texts.** Translated, Introduced, and Annotated by William C. Chittick, SUNNY Press, Albany 1992; xv + 306 pages; no price.

With this volume C. W. Chittick introduces, translates and annotates three Persian Sufi texts written in the middle of the 7th century AH (13th century AD). All three texts are succinct compendia of Islamic teachings and were written in Konya, Anatolia, by a resident scholar who, perhaps erroneously (cf. appendix, pp. 255-262), is believed to have been Sadr al-Din al-Qunawi (d. 673/1274), the star disciple of Ibn al 'Arabi (d. 638/1240). The value of the three treatises lies in their clear focus on the essentials of Islam, as explained from the perspective of Ibn al 'Arabi's Sufism, and in the elegant simplicity with which the author presents his ideas in beautiful Persian. While the first treatise, *Matali`-i-iman* (The Rising Places of Faith) was edited by Chittick himself in *Sophia Perennis* 4/1 (1978), 57-80, the second treatise, *Tabsira al-mubtadi wa-tadhkirat al-muntahi* (Clarifications for Beginners and Reminders for the Advanced), was edited by Najaf 'Ali Habibi in *Ma`arif*<sup>1</sup> (1364/1985), 69-128, and the third treatise, *Manabij-i Sayfi* (The Easy Roads of Sayf al-Din), by Najib Ma'il Hirawi as a separate volume in Tehran: Mawla, 1363/1984. Useful textual emendations to the Persian editions of the second and third treatise are given by Chittick in an appendix to the present volume (pp. 263-270). While the first two treatises were written for Muslims seeking a succinct and simple introduction to the principal dimensions of their faith, the third was addressed to a particular government official of an Anatolian Saljuq court. This man, a certain Sayf

al-Din Tughril, took Islam with sufficient seriousness to desire both an initiation into its basic tenets as well as more detailed guidance toward its faithful practice.

Parts II and III of Chittick's work include the translations of the texts (pp. 35-164) which, together with the author's very helpful annotations (pp. 181-253), could stand by themselves as a separate volume. Chittick again shows himself to be a skilled translator who has a fine and accurate grasp of Persian and a clear idea of the type of English necessary to make a medieval text accessible to the contemporary reader. Part I ("Islam in Three Dimensions," pp. 1-23) and Part IV ("Sufism and Islam," pp. 165-179) serve as a frame for the translated treatises and include Chittick's general reflections on the relationship of orthodox and mystical Islam and on the nature of Islam as a religion and Sufism as a mysticism. In defining Sufism as the third dimension of Islam, the perfection which completes Islam, as works and Islam as faith, Chittick concludes that the authentic Sufi is "the perfect Muslim," and Sufism, simply put, is the "full and complete actualization of the faith and practice of Islam" (p. 178). While the three texts may be understood as an illustration of this broad definition of Sufism, the author's general reflections lack some of the scholarly sophistication that undergirds his annotated translations. In the opinion of this reviewer, Sufism deserves a more historical and source-critical analysis to account for its own specificity.

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**The Tao of Islam: A Sourcebook on Gender Relationships in Islamic Thought.** By Sachiko Murata, Albany SUNNY Press, 1992; x plus 397 pp. n.p.

With *The Tao of Islam* Sachiko Murata has provided important resource material for those in the field of medieval studies, Islamic studies, and women's studies. The book is dense and demanding. It plunges the reader into the subtle language and vivid imagination of philosophers and mystics of medieval Islam—representatives of what Murata calls Islam's "sapiential tradition"—as they engage in Qur'anic commentary and metaphysical speculation about cosmic and human realities in terms of gender relationships and symbolism. She presents lengthy excerpts from works of well known Muslim writers and teachers (e.g., Qushayri, Kashani, Ibn 'Arabi, Rumi, Qunawi) that treat the fundamental realities of God, world, and the human being in a manner analogous to the Taoist philosophers who saw bipolar relationships operating at all levels of created reality and who used the basic symbolism of male/female "qualities" and relationships