

William C. Chittick. *In Search of the Lost Heart: Explorations in Islamic Thought.* Edited by Mohammed Rustom, Atif Khalil, and Kazuyo Murata • Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2012 • 411 pp. • 978-1-4384-3935-8.

In Search of the Lost Heart is an edited anthology of articles and essays written by William C. Chittick, the renowned scholar of Sufism and Islamic philosophy, specifically of the Akbarian tradition. In and through themselves, the chapters offer insight into particular aspects of Islamic thought; in selecting them from Chittick's enormous oeuvre, editors Mohammed Rustom, Atif Khalil, and Kazuyo Murata have shaped them into a work that exceeds their individual contributions as previously published texts. Moreover, the articles chosen for this edited volume are from writings that are not easily accessible in either print or digital form, and so it includes chapters that will be new to even those familiar with Chittick's corpus.

I venture to surmise that the editors held a certain hadith in mind while compiling and editing this volume: *man 'arafa nafsahu fa-qad 'arafa rabbahu*, "whoever knows himself knows His Lord." A consistent thread that weaves in and out of the chapters of the book's four parts ("Sufism and the Islamic Tradition," "Ibn al-'Arabī and His Influence," "Islamic Philosophy," and "Reflections on Contemporary Issues") is the importance of self-knowledge within the Islamic intellectual tradition. In fact, the title of the book is the name of its final chapter, a comparison (with historical foundations) between the Islamic tradition and Confucianism, which comparison is a sort of exegesis on the famous quote from the Confucius sage Mencius (d. 289 BCE): "The way of learning is nothing other than to seek for the lost heart" (313). According to Mencius, most humans have forgotten how to achieve *ren*, the key concept in the Confucian tradition which signifies humanity, human-heartedness, humaneness, or benevolence—in other words, our true human nature. Thus, the Confucian tradition teaches us how to be human, and the lost heart is nothing other than our true human nature. It is entirely apropos that this chapter concludes the eponymous book, for the former is a concise summary of the theme found in many of the book's chapters: knowledge of the self.

The first three parts offer a coherent picture of the psychology, anthropology, cosmology, theology, philosophy, and "mysticism" of the Islamic tradition, all of which categories are intricately interrelated and can be understood as aspects of the Islamic worldview. In these sections, you will not find an outline of philosophy and theology as found in other books on the topic; there are no detailed discussions on the various schools of theology and how they differed in understanding the attributes of God or the un-/createdness of the Qur'ān, for example, or on the so-called formative period of

Islamic philosophy with reference to issues such as free will and predestination, bodily resurrection, the formation of a state, or logic. We are offered, instead, an account of how theology, philosophy, and the Sufi tradition coalesce to form an anthropocosmic vision of reality through the language of the Islamic religious tradition, both its practices and beliefs.

For example, the first chapter (“Islam in Three Dimensions”—namely *islām*, *īmān*, and *ihsān*) is an elaboration of the meaning of the Islamic tradition through Qur’ānic terms known as the spiritual virtues. This elaboration is set within the context of the various religious sciences, in particular the four main divisions of the jurists, philosophers, theologians, and Sufis. This article thus gives an intelligible framework through which to understand the rest of the first part (and even the rest of the book). Part one contains chapters that address the inner meanings of the *ṣalāt* (addressing the human person as a microcosm), the significance of weeping and laughing in the Qur’ān and Hadith (interpreted through a Sufi lens), the influence of Sunni (Shādhilī) Sufism on the main Shī’ite prayer, the transformative knowledge of *tawhīd* in the writings of Shams-i Tabrīzī, and the role of love in the Sufi tradition. In this part, a certain Sufi cosmology and anthropology are being explicated wherein everything in the universe has a proper role to play, and human beings have a particularly unique role of coordinating and harmonizing all of creation by focusing on the kernel (love and mercy) of the husk (rituals and law) of religion in order to reach the kernel of the kernel, without ever neglecting the husk in the process.

The second part contains chapters concerning the seminal figure of the Islamic intellectual and spiritual heritage and his later influence: Muḥyī d-dīn ibn al-‘Arabī, also the focus of much of Chittick’s own career. In this part, the main themes turn to *wahdat al-wujūd*, *al-mabdā’ wal-ma‘ād* (the Origin and Return), and the practical benefits of knowledge within the Akbarian tradition, with chapters too on Qūnawī, Farghānī, Jāmī, and Khwāja Khurd. It is in this part that the principal theme of self-knowledge is highlighted in manifest ways, in addition to the importance of the self-disclosure of the divine names in the world. One might argue that all practical implications in this part reference the divine names in not only the world but also in the heart of the faithful believer, which heart encompasses God. The importance of realizing (*tahqīq*, *tahaqquq*) this anthropocosmic situation is paramount in acting rightly by giving all things in the world their due (*haqq*).

The third part then turns to Islamic philosophy. The editors enclosed this part by two chapters that help explicate the relationship of Sufism to philosophy. The first chapter (“Rūmī and the Wooden Leg of Reason”) sheds light on exactly what of the philosophical tradition Rūmī fulminates against in his writings. Rūmī expresses that the goal of human life is to be as completely human as possible; thus, his problem with the philosophers (and the theologians)

is that they spend so much time honing their methodology that they blow out the transforming fire of love within them, consequently ignoring this goal. Rūmī has nothing against the philosophical worldview that is explained in this part of the book, but rather balks at the inordinate amount of time some philosophers spend on perfecting their discipline and trying to one-up their opponents. (It goes without saying that this applies to the modern academy as well.) The further chapters here specifically detail, among others, Bābā Afḍal's psychology, Mullā Ṣadrā on perception, and the role of eschatology in Islamic thought. The last chapter in this part ("The Goal of Philosophy") connects the philosophical worldview with the Sufi goal of self-knowledge. If philosophy is the study of *wujūd qua wujūd*, then it is *ipso facto* the study of the self *qua* the self, whence the Ṣadrīan epistemological thesis of the unity of the intellect and the intelligible within the human person (*ittiḥād al-ʿāqil wal-maʿqūl*). In other words, "Islamic cosmology...was always concerned with the depths of reality, and the depths of reality are inseparable from the human self" (273). In this respect, knowledge that does not help us understand who we are is not, according to this worldview, in fact knowledge.

The fourth part ("Reflections on Contemporary Issues") applies the Islamic worldview, outlined in the first three parts, to the situation of the modern world. More specifically, in accordance with the theme of self-knowledge, this fourth part addresses the condition of the modern human person and the ways in which a proper comprehension of the self in relation to God or the Ultimate Reality (or, alternatively, the relation of microcosm to macrocosm) is the *sine qua non* for finding solutions to modern issues such as war, conflict, the environment, and religious pluralism. The first chapter ("The Metaphysical Roots of War and Peace") is a brilliant recapitulation of the first three parts within the context of the current global situation of conflict; it applies the understanding of the multiplicity of divine names in the cosmos to the situation of horizontal and vertical opposition, the former arising as a result of the engendering command (*al-amr al-takwīnī*; some names "oppose" other names) and the latter being when human beings ignore the prescriptive command (*al-amr al-takhlīfī*). The chapter on the environment ("Harmony with the Cosmos") is a clever exposition on the divine name *al-Muḥīṭ*, "He who surrounds." In other words, God is the Envioner or even the Environment, since "surrounding" is the Latinate meaning of the English word. Consequently, the human person's role as vicegerent and servant of God necessitates a proper relationship with the world as a manifestation of God: giving al-Ḥaqq His due (*ḥaqq*).

In Search of the Lost Heart serves, as precisely indicated in the subtitle, as an exploration in Islamic thought (not a detailed exposition of the history of theology, philosophy, or Sufism). It might be most useful in serving as

supplemental reading for a course on Islamic intellectual thought in that it offers students a grasp of the practical import of the Islamic sciences. More generally, it is an excellent foray into the Islamic intellectual tradition and will undoubtedly spark an interest in many a newcomer to the field.

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