

The Reader's Review 319/94

as a cultural system. By viewing Islam from its margins one becomes aware of the greater diversity available in the religion, the edge creates the center.

QUEST FOR THE RED SULFUR

The Life Of Ibn 'Arabi

Author: Claude Addas
Publisher: Islamic Texts Society (Atrium)
Price: \$ 19.95, Sewn Tradepaper, 386 Pages
ISBN: 0-946621-45-4

SEAL OF THE SAINTS

Prophethood And Sainthood In The Doctrine Of Ibn 'Arabi

Author: Michel Chodkiewicz
Publisher: Islamic Texts Society
Price: \$ 17.95, Sewn Tradepaper, 200 Pages
ISBN: 0-946621-40-3

Rating: Excellent
Audience: General, Religious Studies
Popularity: Steady, Classic

THE SUFI PATH OF KNOWLEDGE

Ibn Al-'Arabi's Metaphysics Of Imagination

Author: William C. Chittick
Publisher: SUNY
Price: \$ 24.95, Tradepaper, 166 Pages
ISBN: 0-88706-885-5

Rating: Excellent
Audience: General
Popularity: Steady

Review: During the high culture of Islamic expansion conflicting ideas about the nature of the essence of God and the extent of free will and the eternal nature of the Koran stimulated philosophical discussion and created a variety of dissenting schools of thought. In the 12th and 13th centuries Islamic mysticism, or Sufism, found literary expression in the poetry of Ibn 'Arabi (1165-1240) and a philosophic precision which has set the limit of all future developments in Islamic mysticism. Some have claimed that Ibn 'Arabi's logos doctrine represents the last creative innovation of the idea. There has been a widening interest in the vast works of this mystic in the last several decades. There is even an international society devoted to the discussion and dissemination of his ideas, centered at Oxford, UK. Addas' biography is likely to be the definitive study of the life of Ibn 'Arabi for some years to come. She is the first scholar to systematically comb his main writings for his many autobiographical digressions to give

a critical account of his life. She corrects many errors often repeated from references from which sources were not checked. She has refined his chronology of his many travels. Given the still nascent state of Ibn 'Arabi studies in the West, it is certain that some of her conclusions will require refinement as the mass of unpublished manuscript material by and about the Sheik comes to light.

Chodkiewicz (Addas' father) is the foremost scholar working on Ibn 'Arabi interpretation in Europe. This study was written to clarify Ibn 'Arabi's doctrines about the nature of sainthood and prophethood which have formed a much repeated basis for criticism of his orthodoxy down through the centuries. Chodkiewicz manages to clarify the position of the Great Sheik, and to show that traditional interpretations of his position, both pro and con, have introduced distortions into his subtle position. This work could have profound effect on the Muslim assessment of Ibn 'Arabi. Chittick's work has been available a couple of years and scholarly reviews are just beginning to appear. It is the most sustained effort to make the important mystical thought available to a modern audience. It is certain that the Sufism of the Sheik will attract first rate minds in religious studies and hermeneutics. Highly recommended.

SIGNS OF THE UNSEEN

The Discourses Of Jalauddin Rumi

Author: Jalauddin Rumi
Translator: W.M. Thackston, Jr.
Publisher: Threshold Sufi Classics
Price: \$ 15.00, Tradepaper, Sewn, 260 Pages
ISBN: 0-9396660-34-2

Rating: Excellent
Audience: General
Popularity: Steady, Classic

DELICIOUS LAUGHTER

Author: Jalaluddin Rumi
Translator: Coleman Barks
Publisher: Maypole Books
Price: \$ 7.50, Tradepaper, 146 Pages
ISBN: 0-9618916-1-0

Rating: Excellent
Audience: General
Popularity: Steady

RUMI

These Branching Moments

Translator: John Moyne, Coleman Barks
Publisher: Cooper Beech Press
Price: \$ 6.95, Tradepaper, 40 Poems