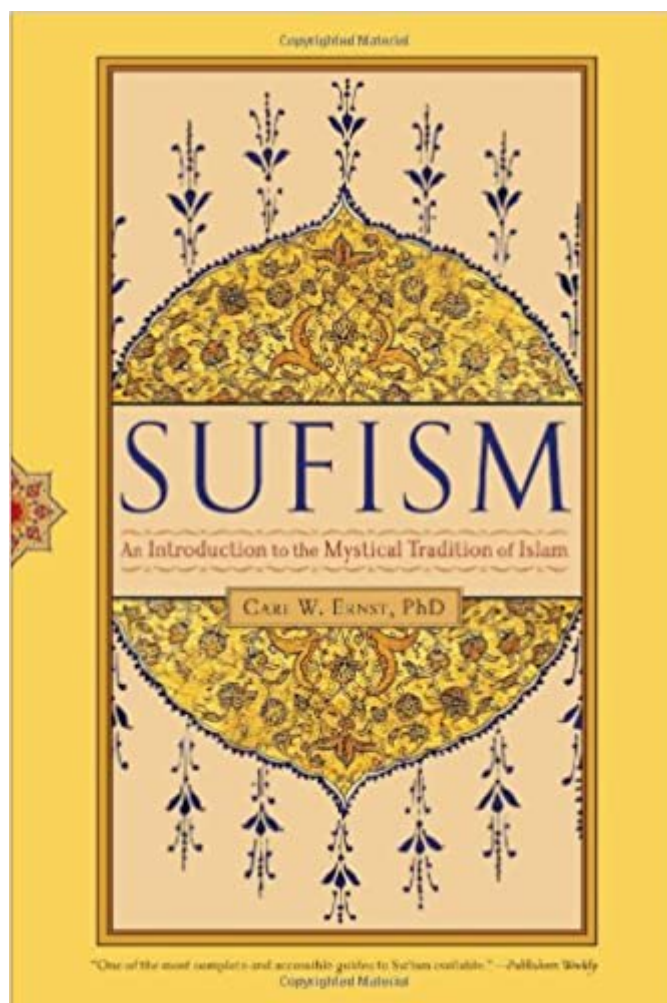


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Sufism: An Introduction To The Mystical Tradition Of Islam



Synopsis

The Sufis are as diverse as the countries in which they've flourished—from Morocco to India to China—and as varied as their distinctive forms of art, music, poetry, and dance. They are said to represent the mystical heart of Islam, yet the term Sufism is notoriously difficult to define, as it means different things to different people both within and outside the tradition. With that fact in mind, Carl Ernst explores the broadest range of Sufi philosophies and practices to provide one of the most complete and comprehensive introductions to Sufism available in English. He traces the history of the movement from the earliest days of Islam to the present day, along the way examining its relationship to the larger world of Islam and its encounters with both fundamentalism and secularism in the modern world.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Ernst gives us one of the most complete and accessible guides to Sufism

available." Publishers Weekly "Ernst succeeds admirably in completing our understanding of Sufism. He covers its beginnings, its basic philosophies, and its place in Islam, keeping the discussion at a basic level so that anyone can read and understand his work. Recommended for all libraries." Library Journal "Displays a clarity and an intellectual rigor that elucidates the many mysteries of the Sufi traditions—taking the reader on a serene journey through the fragrantly spiritual gardens which permeate the Sufi tradition." Parabola "If you were to read only one book on Sufism, this would be the leading candidate." Richard Smoley and Jay Kinney, authors of *Hidden Wisdom: A Guide to the Western Inner Traditions* "Not only a welcome introduction to the key tenets of Sufism—it also offers an impartial perspective on the

important question of how Sufism relates to Islam and the broad sociopolitical realities of our time." — Kabir Helminski, author of *The Knowing Heart: A Sufi Path of Transformation*

Carl W. Ernst, Ph.D., is professor and chair of the Department of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. A specialist in Islamic mysticism, he has spent research tours in Pakistan, India, and Turkey. He is also the author of *Words and Ecstasy in Sufism* and the translator of *The Unveiling of Secrets: Diary of a Sufi Master* by Ruzbihan Baqli.

****1/2 A very fine introduction to the history, essential devotional forms, and poetry of the various cultures of mystical Islam, this book should lead to further study of Sufi philosophy and metaphysics, the particular exercises or specific practices and approaches in dhikr, and the various states toward religious union and other deep experiences. Author Ernst provides an excellent discussion on the intercessional role of Sufi saints and how other Muslims regard it in disdain to the point of shrine destruction, details of the initiation ritual, and how Sufism and especially its musical aspects entered popular Western culture. As a Zen practitioner and student of comparative religion, the various parallels and similarities were of especial interest. Well-written and easy to comprehend, this book should answer many questions. Indeed, many other scholarly books on Sufism, while offering fine detail and analysis, sometimes forget the larger readership. Back material includes reference notes, a select bibliography for advanced study, and a select discography of music and rites.

Well written , intellectually enjoyable

The best by the master of clear thinking, touched by spiritual awe when deserved. Cannot recommend it highly enough for colleges and the open-minded non-specialist readers. Thank goodness for Professor Ernst; Islamic Studies in English as we know it now was first taught and written by him.

I bought it to study and to learn about this sect of religion along with another book on Zoroastrianism. Great to compare and contrast differences.

Good book but doesn't give enough details

A comprehensive account of what is sufism, it's philosophy and its practice summed up in less than

240 pages, easy to read and understand. A great addition to explain the history of Sufism from its inception.

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