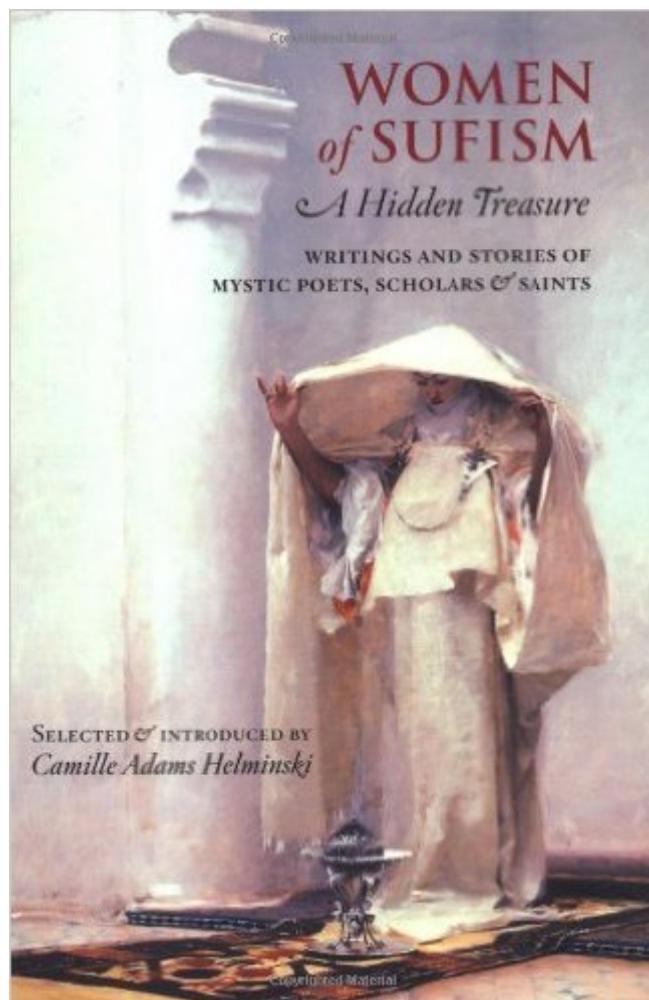


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Women Of Sufism: A Hidden Treasure



Synopsis

The luminous presence of women who follow the Sufi Wayâ "the mystical path of Islamâ "is brought to life here through their sacred songs and poetry, their dreams and visions, and stories of their efforts as they witness the Truth in many realms. These writings reflect the honor and respect for the feminine in the Sufi worldview, and they are shared in the spirit of inspiration and hope for the flourishing contributions of women to the spiritual development of humanity. Spanning the centuries, from the time of the Prophet Muhammad to the present day, the selections are by or about an array of Sufi traditions in different parts of the world, from Asia, Africa, and the Middle East to Europe and Americaâ "from beloved members of the Prophet's family to the mystic Rabi'a al-Adawiyya to the modern scholar Annemarie Schimmel. Biographical anecdotes and personal memoirs provide a glimpse into the experience of great saints and contemporary practitioners alike, while providing an introduction to the principles and practices of Sufism.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I am amazed at how women's spiritual lives from the past keep resurfacing to inspire us today. In Women of Sufism, Helminski has selected stories, dreams, prayers and visions of female saints through the ages, from the time of the first Sufi women in the seventh century through to the present day. The stories span the many regions of the world where Sufism has been practised, including Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Europe. The mystic women documented in this anthology weave their spiritual knowledge into their family life, their household tasks, daily actions, and even into their carpets and wall hangings. They are strong in their devotion and let nothing deter them from their

personal connection with the Beloved. The stories give a sense of the importance and acceptance of women as teachers. The titles of the chapters are themselves intriguing and give a glimpse of what the stories hold: A Jewel of Knowledge, The Enraptured Ones, My Soul is a Woman, Mother Love and The Fragrance of Prayer are just a few. The book contains many short, penetrating stories about Rabi'a al-Adawiyya, an eighth-century mystic. In the chapter A Doorkeeper of the Heart, one of my favourite tales illustrates how Rabi'a's saintliness did not depend on showiness: "One day Hasan of Basra saw Rabi'a down by the riverside. He came and sat beside her, spread his prayer-rug on the surface of the water, and said, 'Come sit with me and pray.' 'Do you really have to sell yourself in the market of this world to the consumers of the next?' said Rabi'a. Then she unrolled her own prayer-rug in thin air and sat on it. 'What you can do fish can do, Hasan, and what I did any fly can do. Our real work is beyond the work of fish and flies.

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