

How did you come to Sufism?

My own background is best summarized as a lifelong quest for the Real. My relationship to Sufism is strongly mediated through the *philosophia perennis*, specifically in the context of the Traditionalist School of comparative religion, represented by such luminaries as Seyyed Hossein Nasr.

What was the process of putting together this anthology like?

The process involved a tremendous amount of reading in the primary literature of Sufism as well as significant pondering upon the “deep structure” of Sufism’s path of return to God.

What is the importance of tawḥīd — divine unity — in the life, practice, and spirituality of Sufis?

Tawḥīd is really the core of both Islam in general and of Sufism in particular. Its aim and fruition is to clarify the overwhelming, singular Divine reality in all its ramifications—most immediately the necessary unification of the self and its scattered attentions before this reality, and ultimately the realization of the self as at once voided in the face of the Divine transcendence and subsumed in the face of the Divine immanence.

How does this anthology serve to correct mis-conceptualizations of Sufism?

The most typical misrepresentation of Sufism is that it is not authentically Islamic, whether this is claimed by Muslim fundamentalists, Muslim modernists or Western spiritual seekers. However, scholarly consensus has long recognized Sufism as intrinsic to Islam. Sufi writings are, in fact, profoundly grounded in Islam’s foundational sources, as the anthology readily serves to demonstrate.

Who will this book appeal to and why?

This book is, in essence and in the context of Sufism, a distillation of the path of return to God. As such, it may serve at once as both orientation and inspiration. My fondest hope is that it may assist individuals in their spiritual wayfaring. I hope the book may appeal to Western spiritual seekers who may be attracted to a spiritual way that nourishes the conjoined perspectives of both love and knowledge. I hope it may also appeal to Muslims who may be caught in a dry, legalistic understanding of their faith with perhaps little notion of the spiritual depths it possesses.

Of course, an anthology such as this cannot capture every subtlety of a lived path such as Sufism no matter how wise its contents, but they are nevertheless precious for all that.