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Umar Ibn Al-Farid: Sufi Verse, Saintly Life (Classics Of Western Spirituality (Hardcover))



Synopsis

Umar Ibn al-Farid (b. 576 [hijri date]/1181 CE; d. 632 [hijri date]/1235 is the most venerated mystical poet in Arabic. An accomplished Sufi as well as a respected poet, his poetry blends the two traditions -- classical Arabic poetry and Islamic mysticism -- in a body of work with a distinctly devotional and mystical character. In a major contribution to the critically acclaimed and long lived Classics of Western Spirituality "TM" series, editor Th. Emil Homerin makes available here two of Ibn al-Farid's poems that have long been considered classics of Islamic mystical literature. The Wine Ode, a poem in praise of wine as well as a love poem, can also be seen as an extended meditation on the presence of divine love in the universe. The Poem of the Sufi Way, one of the longest poems ever composed in Arabic, and the most famous one rhyming in "T", begins as a love poem and then explores a number of crucial concerns confronting the seeker on the Sufi path. Both works have been treated for centuries in numerous mystical commentaries. Noteworthy as well in this volume is the addition of the Adorned Proem, a reverential account of Ibn al-Farid's life by his grandson. Individuals interested in the fields of mysticism and spirituality, as well as lovers of poetry, particularly love poetry, will find this to be fascinating reading. It will have great relevance, of course, for scholars and students of Arabic literature, Islam and mysticism.

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Customer Reviews

Thank you Dr. Homerin. I discovered Umar Ibn Al-Farid 15 years ago and he changed my life. At that

time I had only Arberry's dated translation of *The Poem of the Sufi Way* but none the less this remarkable mystical masterpiece sliced my soul like a razor. One of the few religious classics that uses erotic images addressed toward a female, it's a remarkable celebration of the creation and Dr. Homerin has made it accessible to everyone. Although there are two other works in this volume, it's the *Poem of the Sufi Way* that moves me most. I'd recommend trying to read it the first time in one sitting without looking at the foot notes or introduction. Then go back and read it again, this time looking at Homerin's notes. Then read it a third time straight through again. It's message pierces deep into the heart where the meanings are and at this point in our history it's not a bad thing to read a Muslim mystic who speaks so poignantly about the oneness of all things. Congratulations to the Paulist Press and Dr. Emil Homerin for this incredible and very timely publication. I actually wrote the Paulist press a decade ago and suggested that Farid would be an excellent addition to their "Classics of Western Spirituality" series so I'm very pleased with this new beautifully presented and wonderfully translated volume.

Homerin has performed a great service by making Ibn alFarid's life and work available to English readers in fine translations and commentaries. I have to wonder why westerners don't know more about the Sufi Moslems throughout history. Wouldn't a dose of this Umar cure Islamophobia?

The notes that accompany the text are very helpful for a better understanding of the poems. A translation by another author (Carlos Varona Nervi) that I have gives the same general meaning, so, although I have no knowledge of Arabic, I am satisfied that both are faithful to the original. I missed an introduction on the prosody of Arab poetry, though.

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