

BOOK REVIEWS

ANNEMARIE SCHIMMEL, *As Through a Veil: Mystical Poetry in Islam*, Lectures on the History of Religions sponsored by the American Council of Learned Societies, New Series, Vol. 12 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982). Pp. 221.

Hundreds of verses of poetry are quoted in this beautiful volume, which is only one of the most recent fruits coming out of this internationally renowned author's cornucopia of knowledge and learning. Shortly before *As Through a Veil* appeared, Professor Schimmel published a comprehensive book entitled *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* which included many pages of mystical poetry (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1975). Her masterpiece, *The Triumphal Sun: A Study of the Works of Jalaloddin Rumi*, appeared in 1978 (Persian Studies Series [London & The Hague: 1978]). Both books were followed by German editions (*Mystische Dimensionen des Islam* [Aalen: Qalandar Verlag, 1979]; *Rumi. Ich bin Wind und du bist Feuer. Leben und Werk des großen Mystikers*, Diederichs Gelbe Reihe 20 [Düsseldorf & Cologne, 1978]). A German anthology of texts from Islamic mysticism, published in 1982, gives further evidence of the polyglot author's translation abilities (*Garten der Erkenntnis. Texte aus der islamischen Mystik*, Diederichs Gelbe Reihe 37, 1982); and her German volume on the prophet Muhammad, published in 1981, also contains a variety of mystical verse (*Und Muhammad ist sein Prophet. Die Verehrung des Propheten in der islamischen Frömmigkeit*, Diederichs Gelbe Reihe 32, 1981). However, these are only the most outstanding of her previous publications dealing with mystical poetry of Islam. Her booklet on al-Hallaj, the great figure of early Arabic mysticism and one of the very few mystical poets who wrote in that language must also be mentioned (*Al-Halladsch. Märtyrer der Gottesliebe* [Cologne: Hegner Bücherei, 1968]). During her Ankara years, when she lectured on Islamic art and history of religions at the Faculty of Theology, Professor Schimmel published a rich anthology of Turkish poetry from the earliest to the most contemporary poets, which, of course also contained many mystical poems (for example, those of the popular bard Yunus Emre, some of whose verses have recently been used for an oratory by the Turkish composer Adnan Saygun (*Aus dem goldenen Becher. Türkische Gedichte vom 13. Jahrhundert bis in unsere Zeit* [Istanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1973])). Thus, the only difficulty the author may have been facing when she wrote these lectures was probably the *embarras de richesses*. Because of her profound knowledge, however, she never gets lost in trivial details. Her diction is always clear, charming, and well-balanced.

The book contains the following chapters: 1. Flowers of the Desert: The Development of Arabic Mystical Poetry (pp. 11–48); 2. Tiny Mirrors of Divine Beauty: Classical Persian Mystical Poetry (pp. 49–82); 3. Sun Triumphal—Love Triumphant: Maulana Rumi and the Metaphors of Love (pp. 83–134); 4. The Voice of Love: Mystical Poetry in the Vernaculars (pp. 135–170); 5. God's Beloved and Intercessor for Man: Poetry in Honor of the Prophet (pp. 171–211). Detailed notes, bibliography, and indices (pp. 213–359) are also included.

For anyone familiar with the author's previous books, the most interesting chapter of the present volume is probably the one dealing with mystical poetry in the vernaculars. Very

little has been written so far on that mode of mystical expression, the reason being that only a very few people know such languages as Sindhi, Pashto, Siraiki, and Punjabi. Nevertheless, popular mystical poetry is, at least in some cases, likely to appeal more strongly to the Western reader whose feelings may be estranged by the exalted glorification of the beautiful but cruel male friend found in classical mystical poetry. Bards of popular mysticism prefer to use images taken from passionate love relations between men and women. In addition to this, the local atmosphere often so prominent in folk literature also contributes to this poetry's being at times more vivid and closer to real life than high poetry. For instance, instead of the nightingale, so overpowering in the classical tradition, Turkish folk poetry may speak of "the elegant telli turna, the crane that dances in the Anatolian air" (p. 144). On the other hand, mystical folk poetry was not immune to decline and the author is fully aware that "the process of repetition and fossilization of forms, topics, and images is as visible as in high poetry" (p. 142).

One remarkable feature of this as well as of earlier books by Professor Schimmel is her almost boundless "understanding." Her warm emotions for the subjects and the people she is dealing with is apparently never subdued by any disenchanting historical realities, and the mystics' persuasion that Islam is the religion of love and Muhammad its most perfect incarnation is always referred to as a matter of fact. Westerners are "tinged by centuries-old prejudices," if they do not share the Muslims' love for their prophet. Is this the author's opinion or does she merely render without comment what Muslims believe? There are certainly many prejudices against Islam to be met with in Western countries. That Europeans have difficulties in sharing the Muslim's love for Muhammad results, however, not only from prejudices, but also from different heritages. Christian countries were attacked and conquered by Muslim armies for many centuries. In recent times, Muhammad Iqbal, the great Indo-Islamic philosopher-poet, sang the praise of these military conquests and regretted the loss of Spain and Sicily to the Christian *reconquista*. (On Muhammad Iqbal cf. A. Schimmel, "Gabriel's Wing: A Study into the Religious Ideas of Muhammad Iqbal, *Studies in the History of Religions*," Supplement to *Numen* VI [1963]; and her German anthology from the whole work of Iqbal, *Botschaft des Ostens. Ausgewählte Werke*, Literarisch-künstlerische Reihe des Instituts für Auslandsbeziehungen, Band 21 [Tübingen & Basel, 1977].) Christian feelings towards Muhammad were influenced by such recollections in the same way as Muslim feelings toward Europe are still influenced by their experiences of the colonial age or even the Crusades. Thus "prejudices" have to be overcome on both sides (which of course, the author would never deny). For the dialogue between Islam and Christendom, so necessary for our future coexistence, such books as those of Professor Schimmel are of the highest possible value, since they accept the partner without any reserve.

Love for her subject characterizes the author; her affinity is the affinity of the heart. Her approach is therefore almost a mystical one and, no doubt, the most appropriate for dealing with mystical poetry. However, for all her enthusiasm Professor Schimmel is never carried away. Her book is the result of a rare balance between heart and reason, enthusiasm and scholarship, beautiful like the miracle of a saint.

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JAMES M. GRIFFIN and DAVID J. TEECE, eds., *OPEC Behavior and World Oil Prices* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1982). Pp. 231.

This book, with the exception of the editors' Introduction and Conclusions, is the result of a May 1981 conference hosted by the Center for Public Policy at the University of

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A history of mystical Islamic poetry, not only in Arabic and Persian, but also in the popular folk traditions of regional vernacular languages, including a chapter on Rumi and Sufi poetry. Get A Copy. Amazon. A history of mystical Islamic poetry, not only in Arabic and Persian, but also in the popular folk traditions of regional vernacular languages, including a chapter on Rumi and Sufi poetry. Related Religion Books: How To Make And Liberty: A History Of Luciferian Goetia. The Qur'an: A Historical-critical Beyond The Synagogue Gallery. Traditional Islam in the Modern World. The Vision and Promise of Sufism, Islam 5 Mystical Tradition. Seyyed hossein nasr. HarperOne. Islam by Annemarie Schimmel stands out, and more recently there has appeared The Shambhala Guide to Sufism by Carl Ernst. By contrast, the present book seeks to introduce the reader to the inner teachings of Sufism in the manner of classical Sufi works but in a contemporary language. It has, moreover, played a crucial role in the encounter and dialogue between Islam and other religions and cultures. Although attacked since the nineteenth century by both modern-ists and puritanical reformists in the Islamic world, Sufism is still very much alive in most Muslim countries. Islam, major world religion that emphasizes monotheism, the unity of God (Allah in Arabic), and Muhammad as his final messenger in a series of revelations. As the literal word of God, the Quran makes known the will of God, to which humans must surrender (lending the name Islam, meaning "surrender"). The will of Allah, to which human beings must submit, is made known through the sacred scriptures, the Quran (often spelled Koran in English), which Allah revealed to his messenger, Muhammad. The history of the various peoples who embraced Islam is covered in the article Islamic world. The foundations of Islam. The legacy of Muhammad. The history of Islam concerns the political, social, economic and cultural developments of Islamic civilization. Most historians accept that Islam originated in Mecca and Medina at the start of the 7th century CE. Muslims regard Islam as a return to the original faith of the prophets, such as Jesus, Solomon, David, Moses, Abraham, Noah and Adam, with the submission (Islam) to the will of God.