



Vision of Islam (Visions of Reality)

By Sachiko Murata, William Chittick

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Something is lost when Western thinkers approach Islam. They seem to see the religion in historical and cultural terms, obscuring Islam's own internal logic and its true beauty and spirituality. This clearly written introduction to Islam changes that, vividly explaining the Islamic perspectives that have rung true for Muslims for nearly 1400 years.

The book covers the four dimensions of Islam as outlined in the Hadith of Gabriel: practice, faith, spirituality, and the Islamic view of history. Drawing on the Koran, the sayings of the Prophet and the great authorities of the tradition, the text introduces the essentials of each dimension and then shows how it has been embodied in Islamic institutions throughout history.

(2017-02-27)

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

Most English-language introductions to Islam (and to Christianity and Judaism as well) scant the intellectual and spiritual; instead, they stress the externals—the things one must do to be saved, to be justified, to be upright before God and one's fellows. Basic doctrine, moral teaching, and ritual obligations are, as Murata and Chittick point out, all that the ordinary Muslim believer, prospective convert, and casually interested non-Muslim observer really need to know. The authors (comparative studies, SUNY at Stonybrook) provide a systematic and thorough handbook of basic Islamic theology on many topics, such as the nature of God and man, revelation and scripture, prayer and the interior life, and mysticism and devotion. For serious students of Islam (and its relationship to Judaism and Christianity) who are undaunted by technical terminology, this work is the book to have. For academic libraries and public libraries with substantial collections in religion. *James F. DeRoche, Alexandria, Va.*

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Review

This lucid and compelling account of Islam is written from what might be called a phenomenological perspective. Because its principal aim is to present Islam as a living faith from a Muslim perspective as reflected in the classical texts of the tradition, Murata and Chittick (comparative studies, SUNY, Stony Brook) go to some length to differentiate their work from the numerous historical, critically oriented introductions to Islam that have appeared over the last several decades....The book is intended to serve as an introductory text in undergraduate college and university courses on Islam, but it can serve equally well as an introduction to Islam for a more general readership. Useful glossary of technical terms; brief set of notes. Recommended to all college and university libraries as well as to public libraries concerned to maintain up-to-date information on major living religions.

(M. Swartz, Choice 2017-02-27)

This work is one of the most successful introductions to Islam for a Western audience. A comprehensive study, which beginning from within the precinct of the revealed truths of the faith expands in ever widening circles to embrace the whole vision of Islam.

(Seyyed Hossein Nasr, George Washington University 2017-02-27)

This is a book that every introductory course on Islam should attempt to incorporate. It describes and elucidates extremely well the integrity and coherence of Muslim faith and piety and how they relate to practice and culture.

(William A. Graham, Center for Middle Eastern Studies, Harvard University 2017-02-27)

About the Author

Sachiko Murata completed her B.A. in family law at Chiba University in Japan, worked for a year in a law firm in Tokyo, and then went to Iran to study Islamic law. She completed a PhD in Persian literature at

Tehran University in 1971, and then transferred to the faculty of theology, where she was the first woman and the first non-Muslim to be enrolled. She finished her MA in Islamic jurisprudence in 1975, and while continuing work on her PhD dissertation in law she became a research associate at the Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy. Her work on her second PhD was cut short by the revolution. Since 1983 she has taught religious studies at Stony Brook University.

Murata has published many scholarly articles and a number of books. These include *Isuramu Hôriron Josetsu* (Iwanami, 1985), the translation of a major text on the principles of Islamic jurisprudence from Arabic into Japanese; *The Tao of Islam: A Sourcebook on Gender Relationships in Islamic Thought* (SUNY Press, 1992); *Chinese Gleams of Sufi Light: Wang Tai-yü's Great Learning of the Pure and Real and Liu Chih's Displaying the Concealment of the Real Realm* (SUNY Press, 2000); and with the collaboration of William C. Chittick and Tu Weiming, *The Sage Learning of Liu Zhi: Islamic Thought in Confucian Terms* (Harvard University Press, 2009).

Murata has been the director of Japanese Studies since its founding in 1990 and regularly teaches Introduction to Japanese Studies, Japanese Buddhism, Feminine Spirituality in World Religions, and Islam and Confucianism.

Born and raised in Milford, Connecticut, William C. Chittick did his B.A. in history at the College of Wooster (Ohio) and then went to Iran, where he completed a Ph.D. in Persian literature at Tehran University in 1974. He taught comparative religion in the humanities department at Aryamehr Technical University in Tehran and, for a short period before the revolution, was assistant professor at the Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy. He returned to the United States in January, 1979. For three years he was assistant editor at the *Encyclopaedia Iranica* (Columbia University), and from 1983 he has taught religious studies at Stony Brook University.

Chittick is author and translator of 30 books and 150 articles on Islamic thought, Sufism, Shi'ism, and Persian literature. His more recent books include *In Search of the Lost Heart: Explorations in Islamic Thought* (State University of New York Press, 2012), *The Self-Disclosure of God: Principles of Ibn al-'Arabi's Cosmology* (State University of New York Press, 1998), *Sufism: A Short Introduction* (Oneword, 2000), *The Heart of Islamic Philosophy* (Oxford University Press, 2001), *The Elixir of the Gnostics* (Brigham Young University Press, 2003), *Me & Rumi: The Autobiography of Shams-i Tabrizi* (FonsVitae, 2004), and *Science of the Cosmos, Science of the Soul* (Oneworld, 2007).

Chittick regularly teaches Islam, Islamic Classics, and other courses in religious studies. On occasion he directs qualified students in the reading of Arabic or Persian texts.

(2017-02-27)

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