

Paths to the Heart: Sufism and the Christian East

Paths to the Heart: Sufism and the Christian East, written by some of the world's leading authorities on the mystical and contemplative dimensions of Islam and Eastern Christianity, collects the essays that were delivered for a major national conference, held at the University of South Carolina, October 18-20, 2001.

Concerning this conference, Bruce Clark of *The Economist* wrote: "The peace of the world in the new century may depend in no small measure on the ability of the Islamic world and historically Christian countries to communicate with one another...the finest thinkers in both religions have drawn on a common pool of imagery—the language of the heart—as they try to describe what is ultimately beyond words: the human encounter with God."

What is being said about *Paths to the Heart*?

"*Paths to the Heart* is both timely and timeless. Timely in that the essays assembled here were delivered at a conference devoted to dialogue between scholars of Islam and scholars of Christianity held just a month after September 11, 2001. Timeless in that the conference participants reflect profoundly upon the 'perennial wisdom' that can be seen in the convergence of two distinct spiritual traditions: Sufism and the Hesychast tradition of Eastern Orthodoxy. These essays eloquently probe, synthesize, and comment on the practices by which Sufi and Hesychast masters have taught generations of followers to discover within the heart the loving presence of God. This book is a spiritual treasure to be read and to be lived."

— **Albert J. Raboteau**, Henry W. Putnam Professor of Religion, Princeton University

"The peace of the world in the new century may depend in no small measure on the ability of the Islamic world and historically Christian countries to communicate with one another. Perhaps the best hope for deeper understanding between Christians and Muslims lies in the fact that the finest thinkers in both religions have drawn on a common pool of imagery—the language of the heart—as they try to describe what is ultimately beyond words: the human encounter with God."

— **Bruce Clark**, International Security Editor, *The Economist*

"Speaking to both novices and adepts who are studying and/or practicing the Orthodox Christian and Sufi ways, this book opens the way for a deep healing of the wounds of ignorance that have arisen out of the clash between these two great traditions."

— **Alan Godlas**, Professor of Islamic Studies, University of Georgia



“Written by authors who are at once eminent scholars and earnest souls, the essays in *Paths to the Heart* evince a rare combination of intellectual rigor, breadth of spirit, and deep personal faith. Together these writers confirm for us that genuine love of the other is as much mediated by wisdom and truth as are wisdom and truth by this love.”

— **Scott C. Alexander**, Director of Catholic-Muslim Studies, Catholic Theological Union

“Professor Cutsinger is to be congratulated for having organized such a memorable interchange of opinions at the level of all that is most profound in the human soul.”

— **Martin Lings**, formerly Keeper of Oriental Manuscripts in the British Museum and author of *Muhammad: His Life Based on the Earliest Sources*

Is Paths to the Heart a book about Christianity or Islam?

It certainly has a lot of Christian material in it, with several members of the Greek Orthodox clergy and other Christian writers as contributors. However, the book is equally about Islam, specifically about the mystical dimension of Islam, Sufism. Several renowned authorities on Sufism are also represented in the book. Most important, the book is about finding real spiritual fraternity that transcends sectarian differences. On both sides, the Christian and the Muslim, the writers search for common ground and in finding it prove the vastness and timelessness underlying both traditions.

Which readers will want to own this book?

Certainly, scholars looking for new insights into commonalities between Eastern Orthodox and Sufi practices and beliefs will be very interested in *Paths to the Heart*. However, most readers will probably be fairly well-educated people who are interested in learning more about the largely forgotten intellectual depths of Christianity, or they will be readers interested in “the transcendent unity of religions,” a central theme in Traditionalist/Perennialist thought. Many people are searching for ways to understand the truth in and value of other traditions while at the same time deepening their appreciation for their own tradition. This is precisely the experience offered to readers by this book. Some readers may be exploring the Eastern Orthodox Church, which is little known to many in the West, along with its unique spiritual practice of “the Jesus Prayer.”

How is Paths to the Heart organized?

The book is divided into three sections, with several essays in each, balanced between Christian and Muslim perspectives. The sections are

- ❖ “Dimensions of the Heart,”
- ❖ “The Path of Remembrance,” and
- ❖ “Toward and Esoteric Ecumenism.”

The book ends with concluding thoughts by Huston Smith, the famous scholar of religions, and a transcript of a fascinating panel discussion with all of the contributors.

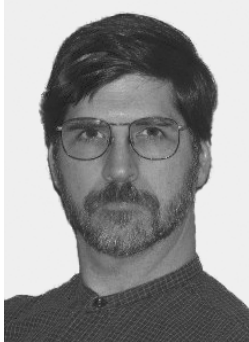
What are other publication details?

The book is available now, in September of 2002. It has 288 pages, and has a suggested retail price of \$19.95.

Editor of
Paths to the Heart: Sufism and the Christian East

James S. Cutsinger

James S. Cutsinger is Professor of Theology and Religious Thought at the University of South Carolina and is an important contemporary author on spirituality, particularly within the Christian tradition. He is also emerging as one of the most widely recognized authorities on the Traditionalist school of comparative religious thought. Professor Cutsinger currently serves as secretary to the Foundation for Traditional Studies and is the recipient of numerous teaching awards (for example, he was honored in 1999 as a Michael J. Mungo University Teacher of the Year). He offers courses at both the undergraduate and graduate levels in Religious Studies at USC.



In addition to the recently completed *Paths to the Heart*, Professor Cutsinger is now working with World Wisdom on the long-term project of editing revised editions and anthologies of the works of Frithjof Schuon, the late philosopher, poet, and artist of whom Professor Cutsinger is one of the world's best known interpreters. In addition, Professor Cutsinger is editing an anthology of Christian mystical writings, *Not of This World*, which will be presented from a perspective of the transcendent unity of denominations and will include selected writings of Christian sages and saints from the Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Evangelical and Celtic branches of the Christian tradition.

Professor Cutsinger is a nationally known advocate of Socratic Teaching based on the classics. His consulting work has included curriculum development and design, contributions to great books seminars for professionals, and workshops in discussion-based pedagogy. He has also served as director of three National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Seminars.

Previous books by James S. Cutsinger

The Form of Transformed Vision: Coleridge and the Knowledge of God, Foreword by Owen Barfield (Mercer University Press, 1987)

Advice to the Serious Seeker: Meditations on the Teaching of Frithjof Schuon (State University of New York Press, 1997)

Reclaiming the Great Tradition: Evangelicals, Catholics, and Orthodox in Dialogue, ed. (InterVarsity Press, 1997)



Other contributors of essays in *Paths to the Heart*

Kallistos Ware is Spalding Lecturer in Eastern Orthodox Studies at Oxford University, Bishop of Diokleia in the Orthodox Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain, and a monk of the Monastery of St. John the Theologian in Patmos. He is the author of *The Orthodox Church* (1963; revised 1993), *Eustratios Argenti: A Study of the Greek Church under Turkish Rule* (1964), and *The Orthodox Way* (1979; revised 1995). Bishop Ware has translated the *Philokalia*, *The Festal Menaion*, and *The Lenten Triodion*, and is co-editor of the journal *Sobornost*.

Gray Henry lectures and writes on the spirituality of the world's sacred traditions, and is founder and trustee of the Islamic Texts Society and former director of Quinta Essentia Publications. She currently directs Fons Vitae Press as well as being a consulting editor for the journal *Parabola*.

Seyyed Hossein Nasr is one of the world's most recognized authorities on Islam. He is University Professor of Islamic Studies at George Washington University and the author of over 30 books and three hundred articles on topics ranging from comparative religion to traditional Islamic philosophy, cosmology, art, ecology, and mysticism. His books include *Ideals and Realities of Islam* (1966), *Knowledge and the Sacred* (the 1981 Gifford Lectures), *Sufi Essays* (1991), and *Religion and the Order of Nature* (1996).

William C. Chittick is a professor in the Department of Comparative Studies at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. Among his publications are *The Sufi Path of Love: The Spiritual Teachings of Rumi* (1983), *The Psalms of Islam* (1988), *The Self-Disclosure of God: Principles of Ibn al-'Arabi's Cosmology* (1998), *Sufism: A Short Introduction* (2000), and *The Heart of Islamic Philosophy: The Quest for Self-Knowledge in the Teachings of Afdal al-Din Kâshânî* (2001).

Vincent Rossi is Director of Education for the American Exarchate of the Jerusalem Patriarchate of the Orthodox Church. He also serves as the U.S. Director of the U.K.-centered Religious Education and Environment Program. Author of two books and nearly a hundred articles on theology, spirituality, and the environment, he was the founder and for twelve years the editor of the journal *Epiphany*.

John Chryssavgis is Professor of Theology and former Dean at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology. He is the author of several books and numerous articles on Orthodox spirituality, including *Ascent to Heaven* (1989), *The Desert is Alive* (1994), *The Way of the Fathers* (1998), and *Soul Mending: The Art of Spiritual Direction* (2000).

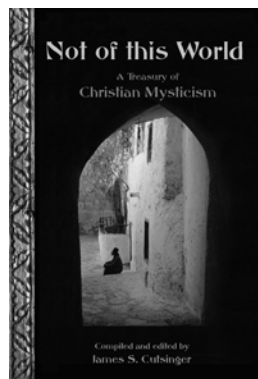
Reza Shah-Kazemi is a Research Associate at the Institute of Ismaili Studies in London. His publications include *Paths to Transcendence: Spiritual Realization according to Shankara, Ibn Arabi, and Meister Eckhart* (forthcoming), and he is currently working on a new English translation of the Imam Ali's *Nahj Al-Balagha*.

Peter Samsel holds a doctorate in physics and is an independent scholar living in upstate New York.

Huston Smith has been the Thomas J. Watson Professor of Religion and Distinguished Adjunct Professor (Emeritus) of Philosophy at Syracuse University. His many books include *Forgotten Truth: The Common Vision of the World's Religions* (1976), *Beyond the Post-Modern Mind* (1989), and *Why Religion Matters: The Fate of the Human Spirit in an Age of Disbelief* (2001). His classic study *The World's Religions* is used as the primary source for many courses on comparative religion. Dr. Smith's discovery of Tibetan multiphonic chanting was lauded as "an important landmark in the study of music," and his film documentaries of Hinduism, Tibetan Buddhism, and Sufism have all won international awards.

What is being said about Prof. Cutsinger's forthcoming publication

Not of This World: A Treasury of Christian Mysticism



"Increasingly as a composer, I want to 'hear' God, and tend to be wary of yet another book on mysticism in any Tradition. However, James Cutsinger in *Not of This World* allows the masters of the Christian Tradition to speak on their own terms, thus permitting us to 'hear' God through their unique perspective."

— **Sir John Tavener**, composer and author

"Cutsinger has assembled a dazzling chorus of voices to explore the mysteries of Christian gnosis and deification. His selection is daring (where else can one find Boehme, Dante, and C.S. Lewis side-by-side?) and his taste superb. I can't think of a better collection to place in the hands of anyone seeking to explore the Christian mystical tradition."

— **Philip Zaleski**, editor of *The Best Spiritual Writing* series (Harper San Francisco), and Senior Editor of the journal *Parabola*

"At a time when the Christian tradition is under siege by the profane ideologies of modernity, and when Christian institutions themselves are torn by doubt and division, this anthology serves as an urgent reminder of that quintessential wisdom which cannot be compromised by the vicissitudes of time. From the days when the Master Himself walked the shores of Galilee down to our own time the Christian mystics have been living exemplars of a transformative and sapiential spirituality wherein both love and knowledge perform their mysterious alchemy on the soul. Professor Cutsinger is to be warmly commended for his judicious selection of mystical writings and for an arrangement which enhances their perennial themes. Here, in a single volume, may be found many Christian refractions of that ever-present Light which irradiates all integral traditions."

— **Kenneth Oldmeadow**, La Trobe University, Bendigo, and author of *Traditionalism: Religion in the Light of the Perennial Philosophy*

"This is a wonderful compilation of sacred texts from a wide variety of sources, showing the profundity of Christian spirituality. It serves as a perfect antidote to modern Christian exegesis that is little more than secular humanism wrapped up in scriptural phraseology."

— **Rama P. Coomaraswamy**, author of *The Destruction of the Christian Tradition*

"*Not of This World* is indeed a spiritual treasury garnered from near and far reaches of the Christian tradition, ancient, medieval, and modern, Eastern and Western, Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant, with the special merit of integrating contemplative asceticism or mysticism and what might be called a metaphysical perspective into a living whole. The introduction to this splendid collection is in itself a little jewel. "

— **Ralph Slotten**, Professor Emeritus, Dickinson College

"Beautifully crafted and skillfully structured, this vademecum of spiritual insights and counsels will be treasured by all Christian readers who are drawn toward the inner dimension of their tradition."

— **Patrick Laude**, Georgetown University, and author of *The Way of Poetry*

World Wisdom

