



Tales of the Dervishes: Teaching Stories of the Sufi Masters Over the Past Thousand Years

Idries Shah

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Dervish tales are more than fable, legend, or folklore. For centuries dervish masters have instructed their disciples by means of these teaching stories, which are said to increase perception and knowledge and provide a better understanding of man and the world. In wit, construction, and piquancy, they compare with the finest tales of any culture. Idries Shah spent many years traveling through three continents to collect and compare oral versions of these remarkable stories. This anthology, presented in the dervish manner, contains stories drawn from the repertoires of dervish masters over a period of more than a thousand years.

Tales of the Dervishes: Teaching Stories of the Sufi Masters Over the Past Thousand Years Details

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From Reader Review Tales of the Dervishes: Teaching Stories of the Sufi Masters Over the Past Thousand Years for online ebook

Anchal Sharma says

Soulful collection of teachings by the sufi masters...Good read!

Nadim says

I need to re-read this. The world got quicker while I slowed down.

Peter says

This is the latest volume in the reissue of Idries Shah's books, and like the previous ones, a pleasure to handle and a delight to read, such care has gone into its production. But the main value is we can again reread these extraordinary tales. Or, if you haven't yet encountered them, a great adventure potentially awaits you. There are many, many stories here, some only a page long, others four or five pages. The writing is a master class in lucidity and compression. I cannot summarise them. Just do yourself a favour and read it.

Rez says

Loved the spiritual experience.

rachid idjiou says

idries shah collected tales , teaching stories of the Sufi master over the past thousand years. He selected from the Sufi classics, from oral tradition , from unpunished manuscripts and school of sufi teaching in many countries .Book tales of the dervishes contain many beautiful story, spiritual tales. I recommend you to read it.

Keefe says

Bagus sekali, awalnya buku ini adalah ragam manuskrip timur tengah yg di terjemahkan ke Bahasa Indonesia menjadi kumpulan cerpen klasik para sufi yg sangat menginspirasi kehidupan manusia dan menghibur, walau pengetahuan saya terbatas dan kurang memahami beberapa cerpen didalamnya. ^^

John Handforth says

An amazing collection of Sufi teaching stories (including folktales, fables, and true accounts) spanning over a thousand years. Immensely entertaining, they also have the effect of activating the mind to think in new directions and hold a broader, potentially liberating range of concepts. Sufism is an action philosophy designed to outwit the 'commanding self' which prevents most of us from having a breakthrough into higher consciousness. This is a fascinating read for anyone.

Justin says

I liked this book better than Shah's other Sufi teaching stories

Sobia Nawab says

This book belonged to my late father-in-law. So I kept it as keepsakes. It was an old old book, he probably had it for many decades, I'm sure I had an emotional connection with the book and its contents because I absolutely LOVED it!

Every story in its simplicity and wisdom brought smile to my face. It was a pleasure reading this book.

Grady McCallie says

This short collection gathers parables from a variety of Sufi teachers and traditions. Idries Shah retells them in modern English, and humor and pragmatic wisdom shines through. His notes frequently claim that a tale has multiple layers of meaning. Some were entirely lost on me; in other cases, I could see one or two layers, but missed any others.

Collectively, many of the tales build towards a certain ethical fatalism: we ought to do what we can to help other human beings and make their lives better, but it is also important to recognize that we can save others from themselves -- they have to want to become wise, and in some cases have to figure it out mostly on their own. Similarly, we shouldn't expect our own spiritual growth to follow a linear path: key insights or a period of challenges may prepare us to be useful in unexpected ways in the future. Overall, the parables collected here emphasize patience, persistence, and basic decency, and appear to have little use for dogma or sectarianism. The extent to which that represents Idries Shah's vision of wisdom versus the actual heart of the dervishes' teachings is unclear, but it's a text that will repay multiple readings.

Kevan Bowkett says

A beautiful collection of "Teaching-Stories of the Sufi Masters over the Past Thousand Years." This book is a gift, for its wonderfully-told tales, for its wit and wisdom. It seems almost superfluous to try to comment on the book; the best thing is to get a copy and immerse yourself in this splendid and startling world. Great stories include "The Tale of the Sands," "The Candlestick of Iron," "Fatima the Spinner and the Tent" (which

is also available in an illustrated edition from Hoopoe Books: <http://www.hoopoekids.com/catalog.htm>), "The Man with the Inexplicable Life," "The Indian Bird," and "When Death Came to Baghdad" -- and this is merely an arbitrary selection out of a casket of treasures. Highly recommended.

Book Wormy says

A collection of stories, fables or fairytales, depending how you view them, that the dervishes use to guide the Sufis to the correct way to live your life for the benefit of humanity not just yourself.

I like the historic details added after each story.

Steve Cran says

Sufism is the mystical side of Islam. Often times great truths are funneled into us through simple sounding fairy tales collected all over the Islamic world. Some of these tales are populated with strange animals and Jinn. These tales are not meant to be taken literally, but rather taken as symbolically. Hearing the tales, if one is trained properly enables one to evolve. There are many Sufi orders in the Middle East, they each have levels and various initiations which is appropriate for mystical orders. The Mason probably got their levels from the Sufis.

Dervishes were the mystics often described like beggars, walking around in rags. Often times these hidden saint would bestow a miracle or a blessing or even some charity upon those that were worthy and deserving. Sometimes these mystics possessed great powers. This gem of book, now possibly dated as it is old is an entertaining read. If you have the wisdom and the insight read the tales and plumb the depths of wisdom.

One such story titled "How to Catch Monkeys" tells how a hunter puts a cherry in a bottle and waits for a monkey to try to get it out. The monkey gets his hand stuck and never gets the cherry. He is caught by the monkey hunter. There is deeper meaning to this tale that comes out of Afghanistan,

"The Cure of Human Blood" talks about instant spiritualization. A ruler in Constantinople is wasting away from a disease and the only cure is to kill young children and bathe in their blood. The king at first wants to do this and then decides not to. He is cured. What cures him? Prayers, righteousness???

"The Bird and the Egg" has an orphaned flying bird hatch the egg of a bird that can fly. The flightless bird cannot teach flight but the young bird is grateful to this non flyer and believes he will learn to do it himself one day by his own efforts.

Fun little book of tales.

Köksal Kök says

üslubu harika, menkûbeler su gibi akıyor. sizi orta çağı'nın mistik örneçilerinde, dergahlarında, tapınaklarında, çöllerinde büyük bir merakla gizemle gezdiriyor.

eserin, büyük bir araştırmacı oldu?u anlaşıyor. anadolumuzun erenleri, menkıbeleri de sık sık karışmaz?ya çok?yor kitapta. ayrıca yazarın bilgi birikimine de hayran oldum.

James Klagge says

I love tales. About 25 years ago I agreed to lead the "First 15 Minutes" time of children's (3-10 year-olds) Sunday School at my church, and decided to tell stories and sing songs. I did this, nearly weekly, for about 10 years. In addition to Bible stories I also used other stories. I made a point of reading stories from non-Western traditions, and occasionally I could use them. But very commonly I found them weird or just not useful for what I wanted to accomplish. Perhaps that just shows the limitations of my approach. But they usually didn't really resonate with me, and so I didn't feel moved to share them.

I suppose this book followed the same pattern. Out of 82 tales, I marked 11 that seemed engaging (to me). I continue to read tales from other traditions, but I'm not easily engaged by them.

I read this in connection with the history of Iran in the last 50 years (Children of Paradise) that I just finished. These tales are from the Sufi tradition, which is a mystical form of Islam. As I understand it, while Sufis see themselves as compatible with all forms of Islam, the Sunnis and Shiites tend to see them as heretical. So Sufis have been persecuted by Islamic governments. This is also true of Iran. So while stories nourish the Judaic and Christian traditions, it is not clear that they nourish Muslims. If so, that's sad.
