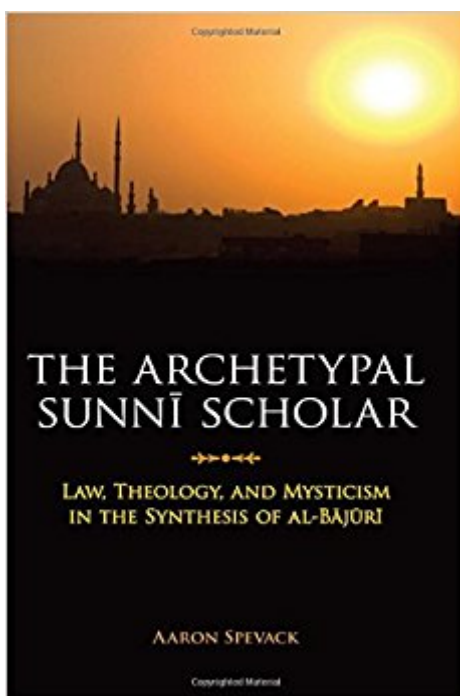


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The Archetypal Sunni Scholar: Law, Theology, And Mysticism In The Synthesis Of Al-Bajuri



Synopsis

This is a rare study of a late premodern Islamic thinker, Ibrahim al-Bāḥārī, a nineteenth-century scholar and rector of Cairo's al-Azhar University. Aaron Spevack explores al-Bāḥārī's legal, theological, and mystical thought, highlighting its originality and vibrancy in relation to the millennium of scholarship that preceded and informed it, and also detailing its continuing legacy. The book makes a case for the normativity of the Gabrielian Paradigm, the study of law, rational theology, and Sufism, in the person of al-Bāḥārī. Soon after his death in 1860, this typical pattern of scholarship would face significant challenges from modernists, reformers, and fundamentalists. Spevack challenges beliefs that rational theology, syllogistic logic, and Sufism were not part of the predominant conception of orthodox scholarship and shows this scholarly archetype has not disappeared as an ideal. In addition, the book contests prevailing beliefs in academic and Muslim circles about intellectual decline from the thirteenth through nineteenth centuries.

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Customer Reviews

Spevack's trailblazing book is a lucid survey and deep analysis of the works and ideas of al-Bāḥārī. Spevack shows precisely how al-Bāḥārī served as an archetypal Sunn scholar. In the process, he succeeds in evoking the subtlety, sophistication, and dynamism of the postclassical Islamic traditions of theology, mysticism, and jurisprudence. Robert Wisnovsky, McGill University Here is a readable and comprehensive introduction to the intellectual production of one of the last giants of the Sunn legal tradition in the nineteenth century. Sensitive to the scholar's strong affiliation with a millennium-long tradition, this introduction will be appreciated by seasoned scholars and newcomers

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Aaron Spevack is Assistant Professor of Religion at Colgate University. He translated and annotated Ghazali on the Principles of Islamic Spirituality: Selections from The Forty Foundations of Religion--Annotated and Explained.

Muslims often wonder what the traditional scholars were doing. This book is an excellent guide to current scholars as what their role should be as well to lay muslims who often have negative views of scholars and expect them more to be political activists rather preservers, interpreters and spiritual conduits of the Islamic tradition. Political activism cannot take on a proper role with balanced understanding of Islamic scholarship that is based in Iman, Islam and Ihsan. This books shows who these three simple terms we expanded, expounded and applied in the context of islamic scholarship tradition.

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