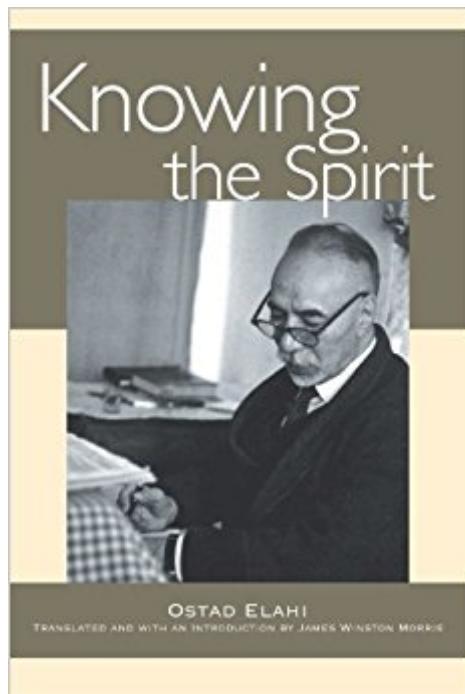


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Knowing The Spirit



Synopsis

Ostad Elahi's Knowing the Spirit provides a concise and remarkably illuminating philosophic account of our unique place in the universe: of the creative expressions of the divine Spirit throughout nature, and of the process of the soul's deepening perfection through all the challenges and lessons of our existence in this world and beyond. This revealing book draws together in a single vision those symbolic teachings and spiritual insights familiar to many Western readers today through the classical mystical poetry of Rumi, Hafez, and Attar. The historical context and language of this study are marked by the confluence of classical Islamic philosophy and spirituality, including Sufi thought, and their scriptural sources. But Elahi's thought integrates those influences and marks them with the magisterial imprint of his own profound spiritual experience and characteristic simplicity, openness, and directness of expression. This volume offers a singular masterpiece of recent spiritual thought, opening up fundamental human perspectives and possibilities too often clouded by the distractions of current events. The emphatic universality of both the subject and presentation of Knowing the Spirit points the way to unsuspected bridges between different civilizations and religious traditions, indeed to the prospect of an inclusive "science of spirituality" based on the common ground of each person's spiritual life and experience.

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Customer Reviews

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Ostad Elahi (1895-1974) was born in Iran and was equally renowned as a master musician, distinguished jurist, and a remarkable philosopher and spiritual teacher. James Winston Morris is Professor in the Department of Theology at Boston College. He is the author and editor of many books, including *The Master and the Disciple: An Early Islamic Spiritual Dialogue*; *Orientations: Islamic Thought in a World Civilisation* and *The Reflective Heart: Discovering Spiritual Intelligence in Ibn 'Arabi's Meccan Illuminations*.

This book has only been recently been translated into English. It is a thought-provoking and very interesting 'essay' on the topic of the spirit. It is presented in a very organized fashion and the author sets forth multiple views on the topics being described. What is most impressive about this work is that the author does not insist on any particular view but rather allows the reader to make their own conclusions on topics that are controversial. The organization of the sections of the book and the precise build-up from the beginning to the end of the book leads the reader very clearly through the thought process that the author used. I am happy to have the opportunity to read this in English and hope that more of his work will be translated as well.

A great read for those interested in a summary review of some of the most fundamental existential questions facing the human kind, such as the identity and "proof" of the existence of the creator, the nature of the self and life after death. The translator's notes and additions help make this complex text on such heavy subjects accessible to all. Most interestingly, the author does not appear to insist

on any particular fact or conclusion, but instead presents certain theories and invites the readers to reflect upon what has been presented and to draw their own conclusions. The emphasis put on reflection and evidence of the senses, as well as logic and rational reasoning, presents a novel framework for approaching and tackling these controversial issues. More than a definitive answer to the questions discussed, the book presents a starting point for embarking on a path to discovery and gaining self-knowledge and hints at the practical implications of these esoteric subjects (the "now what?" aspect, if you will). I recommend it, though I should note that the book presupposes familiarity with certain philosophical concepts and theories, particularly those advanced by Islamic philosophers, such as Avicenna and Mullah Sadra.

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