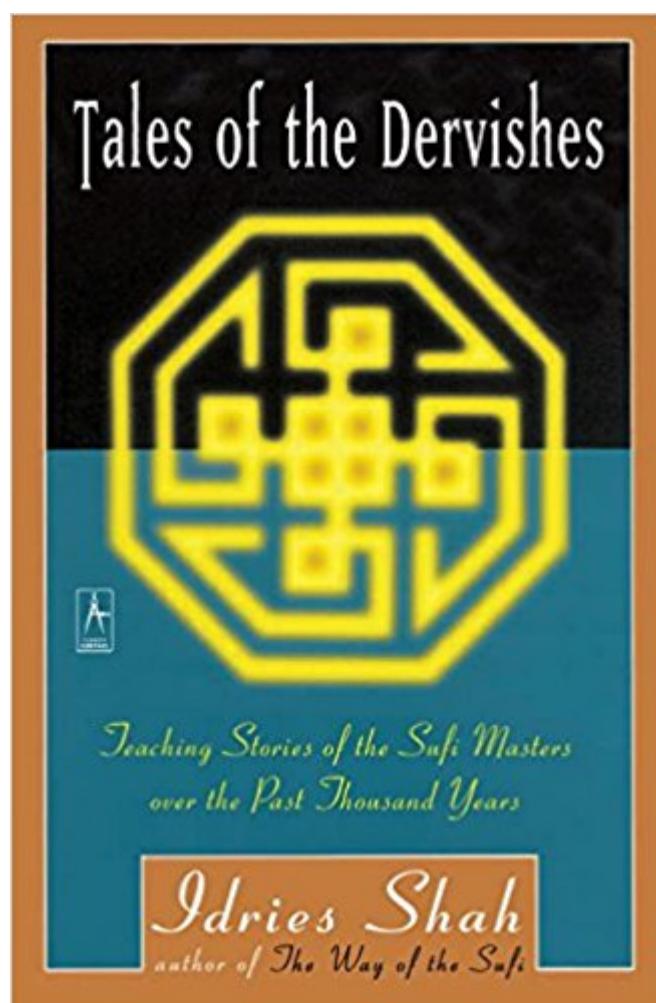


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Tales Of The Dervishes: Teaching-Stories Of The Sufi Masters Over The Past Thousand Years



Synopsis

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.

Book Information

Paperback: 221 pages

Publisher: Penguin/Arkana (October 1, 1993)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0140193588

ISBN-13: 978-0140193589

Product Dimensions: 5.1 x 0.6 x 4.7 inches

Shipping Weight: 6.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 37 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #310,526 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #96 in Books > Religion &

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Customer Reviews

"... a collection of diamonds ... incredibly well-crafted, multifaceted ... likely to endure in the manner of the Koran and the Bible." -- Professor Robert E. Ornstein, Ph.D., Psychology Today, July 1973"... challenges our intellectual assumptions at almost every point." -- The Observer"... equal, and sometimes surpass, in relevance, piquancy and humour, the best of the spiritual and ethical teachers of the West ..." -- Kirkus Review, November 5, 1969"... some really cracking tales ... full of wit, sophistication, irony and commonsense ... completely absorbing." -- Northern Despatch, October 20, 1967"... these teaching-tales could become a permanent part of the reader's experience ..." -- Geoffrey Grigson, Country Life, October 26, 1967"An astonishingly generous and liberating book ... strikingly appropriate for our time and situation ... a jewel flung in the market-place." -- Sunday Times"Beautifully translated . . . equips men and women to make good use of their lives." -- Professor James Kritzeck, The Nation"For every decade we live, we will find

another meaning in each story." -- Desmond Morris, BBC - The World of Books

As the urgency of our global situation becomes apparent, more and more readers are turning to the books of Idries Shah (1924-1996) as a way to train new capacities and new ways of thinking. Shah has been described as "the most significant worker adapting classical spiritual thought to the modern world." Shah was educated in both the East and West, by private tutors and through wide-ranging travel and personal encounters - the series of journeys which characterize Sufi education and development. In keeping with Sufi tradition, his life was essentially one of service. His knowledge and interests appeared limitless, and his activities and accomplishments took place in many different countries and in numerous fields of endeavor. Shah was Director of Studies of the Institute for Cultural Research, an educational organization sponsoring interdisciplinary and crosscultural studies of human thought; a founding member of the Club of Rome; a Governor of the Royal Humane Society and the Royal Hospital and Home for Incurables; and the founder of publishing house Octagon Press. Shah's landmark book, "The Sufis", invited readers to approach Sufi ideas and test them out. The evident and common sense made it clear that here was a sane, authoritative voice in the wilderness of the gobbledegookish mysticism of the sixties. The lively, contemporary books on traditional psychologies, literature, philosophy and Sufi thought that followed established a broad historical and cultural context for Sufi thought and action. These have so far sold over 15 million copies in 12 languages worldwide and have been awarded many prizes. They have been reviewed by The New York Times, The New Yorker, The Times, The Tribune, The Telegraph, and numerous other international journals and newspapers. University and college courses throughout the world are employing Shah's books, or works based on them, in a wide variety of disciplines including sociology, psychology and literature. In 1969, Idries Shah was awarded the Dictionary of International Biography's Certificate of Merit for Distinguished Service to Human Thought. Other honors included a Two Thousand Men of Achievement award (1971), Six First Prizes awarded by the UNESCO International Book Year (1972), and the International Who's Who in Poetry's Gold Medal for Poetry (1975). According to his obituary in the London Daily Telegraph "it is impossible to assess his influence, and his legacy is incalculable". He was, it is said, the Sufi Teacher of the Age. "The most interesting books in the English language." Saturday Review "A major psychological and cultural event of our time." Psychology Today "One is immediately forced to use one's mind in a new way." New York Times The instrumental function of Shah's work is now well established among people from all walks of life. Stockbrokers, scientists, lawyers, managers, writers, physicians, and diplomats have found Shah's literature for human development

"extraordinary". "It presents a blueprint of the human mental structure." Robert Ornstein, Ph.D.
"Extremely useful in teaching students about management and computers." Thomas Malone, MIT
"Idries Shah provides the unique perspective that allows us to assess real motivations and social biases in a more accurate light." E. Neilsen, Attorney at Law

This is a great collection of Sufi tales. They not only entertain, but contain lessons or meanings underlying the stories (often subtle), giving the reader something to explore afterwards by pondering what has been read. The tales are completely independent of one another, and since only a few are longer than a page or two, an individual tale can be read in a short sitting. Following each tale, the author has added a paragraph or two of commentary containing the provenance of the tale, and perhaps a hint or two of what it is trying to teach or what the reader is intended to think about. As the format lends itself so well to the practice, I have found it works well to read one early each day, and then spend a little time thinking about it. Although the writing style makes this very easy to read, it is not the kind of book one should read cover to cover in a single sitting. The reader will get the most benefit and pleasure from it by taking it a little at a time and then thinking about what has been read. Sufi masters used these tales to teach. Indeed, one of them (The Story of Fire) concludes with the following, which I think lays out this philosophy quite well: "You have to learn how to teach, for man does not want to be taught. First of all, you will have to teach people how to learn. And before that you have to teach them that there is still something to be learned. They imagine that they are ready to learn. But they want to learn what they IMAGINE is to be learned, not what they have first to learn. When you have learned all this, then you can devise the way to teach. Knowledge without special capacity to teach is not the same as knowledge and capacity." Most of these tales were completely new to me, but many readers with a Western background may find a couple of them familiar, such as The Blind Ones and the Matter of the Elephant and How to Catch Monkeys. I cannot say what the original source is, but do not find it surprising that a number of folk tales have experienced cultural bleed-through and are now part of more than one cultural tradition. This would be a great addition to your personal library, as many will want to read these tales more than once.

I like this book because it presents the teaching in a way that causes you to think about it indirectly. Sufis are famous for being obscure, and no one is more obscure than Idries Shah. But this book is just tantalizing enough to give the reader a 'hook' to grasp--that there might be another meaning. I would recommend it to Sufi seekers everywhere.

Stories that will shake your assumptions and strict belief in the established, conventional, trusted and safe relationship between cause and effect. These stories, if nothing else, open your mind to a different way of thinking. By doing that, it awakens parts of your brain that normally stay dormant. A fresh look at everyday occurrences, unquestioned practices and established thought-processes. It has an invigorating value. You don't have to 'believe' anything the author says: he is not selling anything, not even ideas. Just read and observe what happens to yourself, since these stories are about you.

After 10+ years of reading the stories in this book, I still come away with a different level of understanding of each story with each passing year. A master storyteller, Idries Shah's writing reaches right into the very thought processes that make you who you think you are and then snaps you into remembering who you really are on Earth and beyond. Like an onion, the stories all have multiple layers. Only with time do they reveal themselves. Good for the beginner as well as the most advanced --

Seller was thoughtful and honest. Product as described. Very happy to give an old book a new home. Postage was a little slow from UK to Aus but nothing unusual. Would use this seller again. Thank you :)

I first read TALES OF THE DERVISHES thirty years ago, and I've been re-reading them ever since. My daughter preferred these ancient stories to the standard Western fairy tales at bedtime, asking me to read them to her over and over again, which delighted me because I too found them spellbinding. It's easy to understand why they've endured a thousand years because they are perhaps the most beautiful and intriguing examples of the storytelling art that I've ever encountered.

No matter where you are on your own spiritual quest, you'll find something valuable in this book. Shah has collected tales that address nearly every aspect of Sufi spirituality, some of which are accessible to any curious person, and some of which are intensely profound and intended for the advanced dervish. Even so, all the stories are fascinating and poetic.

Idries Shah is a master teacher and these books, all of them, are invaluable if you have had moments of "wakefulness" and wish to prolong those moments...

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