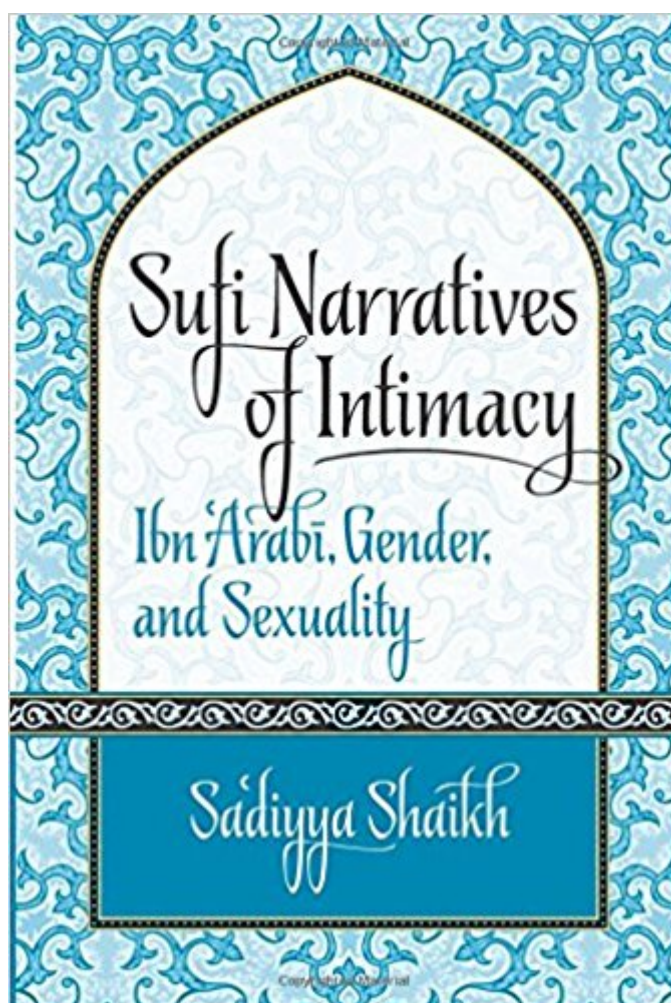


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# Sufi Narratives Of Intimacy: Ibn 'ArabÄ«, Gender, And Sexuality (Islamic Civilization And Muslim Networks)



## Synopsis

Thirteenth-century Sufi poet, mystic, and legal scholar Muhyi al-Din ibn al-'Arabi gave deep and sustained attention to gender as integral to questions of human existence and moral personhood. Reading his works through a critical feminist lens, Sa'diyya Shaikh opens fertile spaces in which new and creative encounters with gender justice in Islam can take place. Grounding her work in Islamic epistemology, Shaikh attends to the ways in which Sufi metaphysics and theology might allow for fundamental shifts in Islamic gender ethics and legal formulations, addressing wide-ranging contemporary challenges including questions of women's rights in marriage and divorce, the politics of veiling, and women's leadership of ritual prayer. Shaikh deftly deconstructs traditional binaries between the spiritual and the political, private conceptions of spiritual development and public notions of social justice, and the realms of inner refinement and those of communal virtue. Drawing on the treasured works of Sufism, Shaikh raises a number of critical questions about the nature of selfhood, subjectivity, spirituality, and society to contribute richly to the prospects of Islamic feminism as well as feminist ethics more broadly.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Through an attentive reading of references to women and gender across Ibn 'Arabi's corpus, Shaikh uses the monumental Sufi thinker's work to argue for a comprehensive rethinking of the gendered theological anthropology that is foundational to various systems of Muslim ethics.--Journal of Religious Ethics[A] pioneering study. . . [that] begins to open new vistas in the study of this complex

and difficult author.--Times Literary SupplementElegant in its prose and complex in its arguments, this book is a very significant, thoughtful contribution to an emerging tradition of engaged and self-reflective Muslim scholarship on pre-modern texts in conversation with questions, approaches, and concerns of contemporary Muslim societies. . . . Highly recommended. Lower-level undergraduates through researchers/faculty; general readers.--ChoiceA very important, and . . . seminal book which should be read by anyone concerned about gender relationships, whether they are within the Islamic tradition or not.--Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi SocietyInnovative and unique. . . A groundbreaking feminist study. . . rich, original, and illuminating.--Religion and GenderShaikh's groundbreaking Sufi Narratives of Intimacy not only makes a significant contribution to the growing body of scholarship on issues of gender and Islam, but also serves as an eloquent and accessible introduction to the life and work of Muhyi al-Din ibn Arabi, unquestionably one of the most important voices in the Islamic tradition.--American Journal of Islamic SciencesThe most theoretically informed and conceptually innovative approach to this fascinating material to date.--Journal of Sufi Studies

Sa'diyya Shaikh has written a brilliant and exciting work of engaged scholarship that has few equals, if any. Her book--a pioneering endeavor in Islamic as well as feminist studies--is a most fruitful engagement between current Islamic feminist concerns and gender discourses of Ibn 'Arabi, a towering intellectual figure of the Sufi tradition.--Ahmet Karamustafa, Washington University in St. LouisA revolutionary work of scholarship. Sufi Narratives of Intimacy should become the indispensable starting point for all theologically oriented studies of gender in Islam. This is a work that cannot be ignored--it should become a classic of Sufi studies.--Vincent J. Cornell, Emory University

Much of the current dialog from and about Islam assumes a very rigid and narrow perspective on the roles available to women in Islam. This book reexamines these assumptions and shows alternative views, using data from highly respected sources. It is a very important book for anyone seeking a balanced view of Islam and women's roles and position. It is written at a college level, so for some people it would not be an easy read, but the writing is clear and straightforward so it is not hard to follow.

A great misunderstanding of Ibn Arabi's teachings due to a strong feminist bias.

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