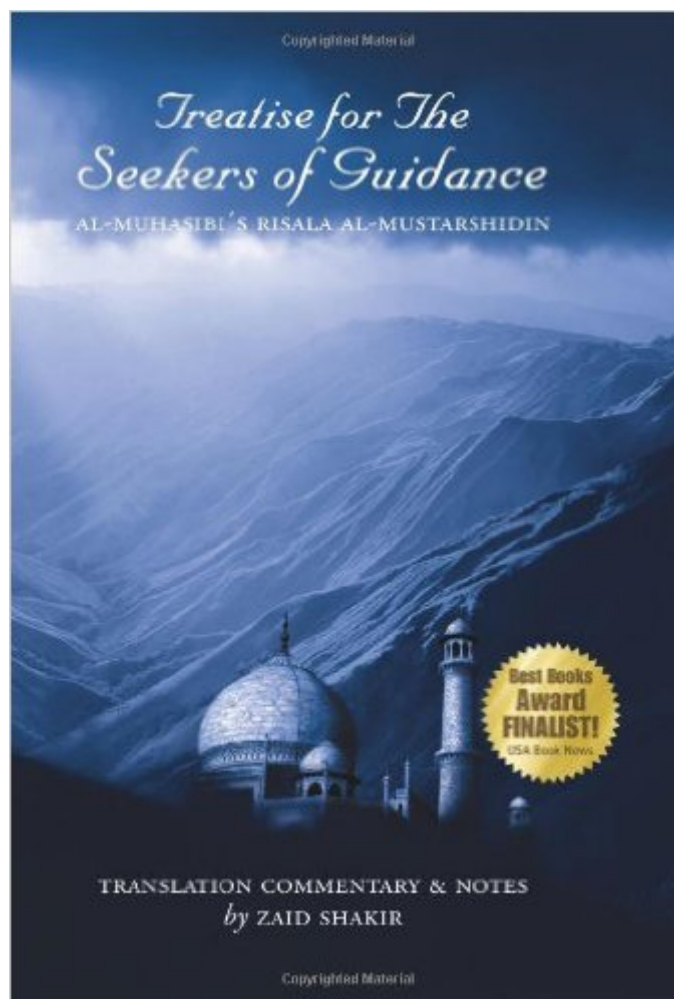


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Treatise For The Seekers Of Guidance



Synopsis

The translation, notes, and commentary of Imam al-Harith al-Muhasibiâ™s Risala al-Mustarshidin (Treatise For The Seekers Of Guidance) by Zaid Shakir is intended to serve as a laymanâ™s guide to Islamic spirituality. Al - Muhasibi presents most of the major ideas that would both serve as the basis for a full program of spiritual development and comprise an insightful overview of a system of Islamic moral psychology. He examines in great depth and penetrating insight the psychological motivations and justifications for moral thought and action and correspondingly the associated bases of immorality. In so doing, he has provided a road map that any person can follow to overcome the guiles of his fundamental enemies: the world, the ego, the whims of the soul, and Satan.

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Customer Reviews

This book review was originally published in Islamic Ink, February 2009 issue. [...] "What are the signs of this in a truthful servant? When he studies he contemplates; when he falls silent he reflects; when he speaks he mentions [God]; when something is denied him he is patient; when he is given something he is thankful; when he is tested [with a death] he says, We belong to God and unto Him we are all returning (2:156); if someone behaves ignorantly with him he bears their abuse; when he learns something he humbles himself; when he teaches something he does so with gentleness; and when questioned he responds to the full extent of his knowledge." (pp. 117-18) Imam Zaid Shakir's translation, commentary and notes on Imam al-Harith al-Muhasibi's Risala al-Mustarshidin (Treatise

for The Seekers of Guidance) is a page-turner, offering great wisdom, practical advice, and much-needed encouragement. So much wisdom, in fact, that I've made checkmarks - sometimes multiple checkmarks - on most pages, indicating passages that I want to revisit. The blank page and inside back cover are likewise full of page numbers I've noted to indicate pages which contain especially poignant passages. I literally had to slow myself down when reading. Treatise for the Guidance of the Seekers is one of those books that when I finished, I was sad it was over. Imam Abu `Abdullah al-Harith bin Asad al-Muhasibi was born in Basra between 165/781 and 170/786 and died in Baghdad in 243/857. He was a scholar and narrator of hadith and considered by many to be among the great intellectuals in Islamic history. According to Imam Zaid Shakir, "Imam al-Muhasibi's major intellectual contribution was in the development of what was to become the science of Sufism, or Islamic spirituality and moral psychology." (p. viii) In Risala, Imam al-Muhasibi bases his arguments on the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet, may Allaah bless him and grant him abundant peace, which, according to Imam Zaid, gives the book "a wide reception among common Muslims, even those who do not readily identify with Sufism." (p.x) Imam Zaid Shakir is a respected and influential Islamic scholar in his own right. He spent many years studying Arabic, Islamic law, Qur'anic studies, and spirituality in Cairo, Syria, and Morocco and graduated from Syria's prestigious Abu Noor University. He currently is a scholar-in-residence at Zaytuna Institute and founder of the website New Islamic Directions. Treatise for The Seekers of Guidance is an easy visual read. The translated text of Imam al-Muhasibi is in black boldface, followed by Imam Zaid's commentary in normal type. Translated Qur'anic verses are italicized and ahadith are identified as such with sources cited in endnotes. The book is a surprisingly easy intellectual read as well, considering the potential complexities of the content. Imam Zaid also tries to root his commentary in the Qur'an and Hadith, and he expounds upon Imam al-Muhasibi's text in an eloquent, insightful, and clear fashion. A good example of the format is as follows: Never consider any sin to be insignificant, never divulge a secret, never reveal what God has concealed, never contemplate committing a sin, and never persistently commit a minor transgression. (p. 163) Imam Zaid begins his commentary on this text as follows: This advice is extremely relevant as many times we place ourselves in spiritual danger by having our hearts stained by numerous sins that we never bother to repent from because we deemed them insignificant. Another dangerous habit that afflicts many people is making it easy for themselves to fall into minor sins. One of the sages mentioned, "There are no minor sins if they are persistently engaged in and there are no major sins if they are eradicated by repentance." (p. 163) Imam Zaid then continues to explain the two ways in which minor sins become major sins. Treatise for The Seekers of Guidance helped me to understand verses of

the Qur'an in new ways, clarified for me some important aspects of the deen, and provided the sources of statements that I had read before but were never properly cited. Overall, I finished the book feeling intellectually satisfied and spiritually nurtured. I end with a bit of practical advice from the commentary: "It is said whenever you feel arrogant, go and stand next to a mountain."

This english presentation of Imam Muhasabi's work is very clear and penetrates the heart and mind. If you are looking for methods to internally cleanse yourself, build your character and improve your relationships with GOD, yourself and your fellow man then this book is for you. If one earnestly follows the methods and techniques in this book, GOD willing, you will reach the goal.

All the book is incredible, but I would especially take careful consideration of Imam al-Muhasibi's conclusion: best part of the book. It's also amazing how Imam Zaid is able to retain your attention throughout the entirety of the book (I say that because much of Imam Muhasibi's original text is somewhat redundant--not in a bad way though).

Very deep, contemplative book. Can't read more than a few pages at a time because it causes you to deeply reflect on your own life and the way in which you've been conducting it. It makes you search your heart and gives you straight advice as to how to rectify your life to live it pleasing to God.

I am thoroughly enjoying this book. Zaid Shakir constantly references other traditional scholars, real life situations, and has very easy to understand elaboration. It's definitely a purchase I'm glad I made and, insha Allah, I will be reading it more than once.

This is an absolutely amazing book that has much wisdom and guidance. What I liked most is that Imam Shakir always bases his arguments on the Qur'an and the Hadith; which is important I think to have credibility. This book honestly, shows the very spirit of Islamic character and how all Muslims should be in the daily lives whether in private or public. This shows how the heart is a very important spiritual organ that should be purified and protected from sin that could come from all the other organs (i.e. eyes, ears, tongue...etc). That is the only way to spiritual maturity and ihsan (worshiping GOD as if we see him, and we don't then know that he sees us all the time). Without a sound heart all we do to attain spiritual elevation is a waste of time. May Allah reward Imam al-Muhasibi and Imam Zaid Shakir for these words of wisdom that are based on the Qur'an and the Prophetic

tradition of our beloved Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him. Peace.

You don't have to be a Muslim to glean a great deal of guidance from this book. But if you want to understand the core morality of Islam, this is a highly helpful book. It serves as a great spiritual aid also...

Very beneficial to those looking to find balance and a spiritual anchor to their lives. Really appreciate Zaid Shakir's commentary as it translates the lessons for the Muslim American experience. May God reward these scholars/writers.

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