



Messianic Hopes and Mystical Visions: The Nurbakhshiya Between Medieval and Modern Islam (Studies in Comparative Religion (Hardcover))

By Shahzad Bashir

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Messianic Hopes and Mystical Visions tells the story of the Nurbakhshiya, an Islamic messianic movement that originated in fifteenth-century central Asia and Iran and survives to the present in Pakistan and India. In the first full-length study of the sect, Shahzad Bashir illuminates the significance of messianism as an Islamic religious paradigm and illustrates its centrality to any discussion of Islamic sectarianism. By tracing Nurbakhshi activity in the Middle East and central and southern Asia through more than five centuries, Bashir brings to view the continuities and disruptions within Islamic civilization across regions and over time. Bashir effectively captures the way Nurbakhshis have understood and debated the meaning of their tradition in various geographical and temporal contexts. Bashir provides a detailed biography of the movement's founder, Muhammad Nurbakhsh (d. 1464). Born to a Twelver Shi'i family, Nurbakhsh declared himself the mahdi, or the Muslim messiah, as an adept of the Kubravi Sufi order under the influence of the teachings of the great Sufi master Ibn al-'Arabi (d. 1240). Nurbakhsh's religious worldview, which Bashir treats in depth in this volume, offers a

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Editorial Review

From the Inside Flap

From the Preface:

"As with the history of other messianic movements, that of the Nurbakhshya encapsulates the generation, unfolding, and preservation of hope in a resplendent future stemming from faith in a person seen as the bearer of an extraordinary universal mission. In the Islamic context, the eventual root of such a faith is the idea that the divine being designates living persons to call humanity to his true will. The Muslim messiah demands to be accepted as the spokesman of God's wishes in the manner of earlier divinely appointed prophets. Nu-rbakhsh clearly saw himself as a part of the elect group of humanity chosen by God to represent him, and his followers have continued to believe in this idea in more or less attenuated forms to the present day."

About the Author

SHAHZAD BASHIR is an assistant professor of religion at Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota. Born in Pakistan and educated at Amherst College and Yale University, Bashir now lives in Northfield.

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