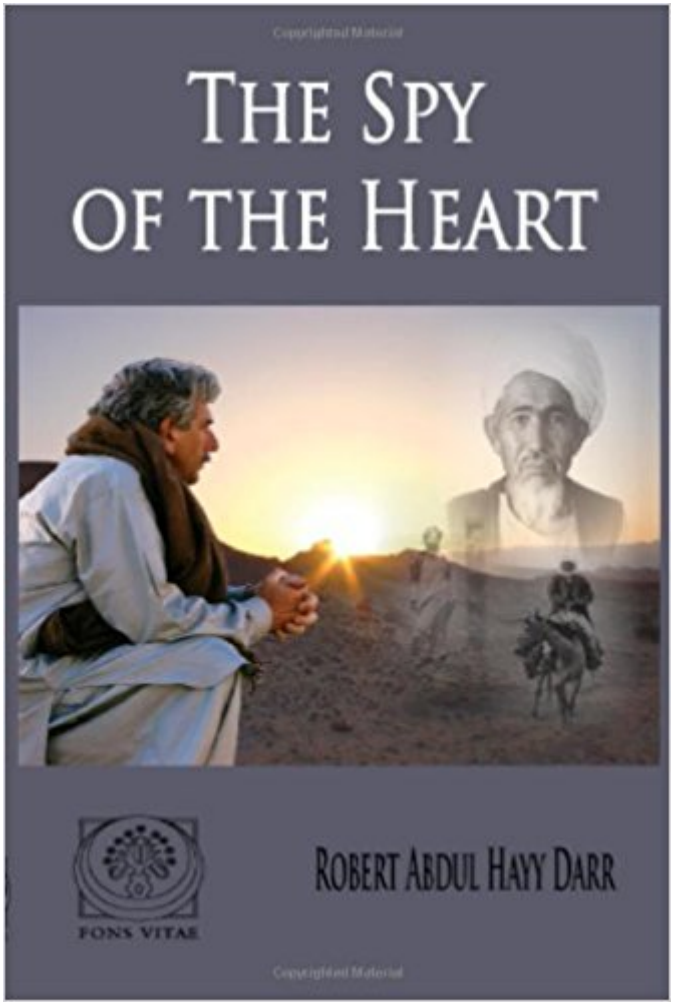
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The Spy Of The Heart



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Synopsis

Exploring the doctrines and practices of contemporary Islamic spirituality in Afghanistan, this book draws the reader into the complex world of Sufism, the mystical dimension of Islam. Because of its long history of metaphysical and theological inquiry, Sufism has over the centuries developed a religious sophistication that offers an alternative to militant and literalist Islam. The narrative and personal descriptions of the people and cultures of rural Afghanistan allow readers toÃ Â better understandÃ Â the positive aspects of Islam andÃ Â to feel the depths of Afghan yearning and sorrow after decades of war.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"This fascinating autobiographical travelogue . . . presents a more positive view of Islam than currently represented in the Western press. . . . The Spy of the Heart is a simply told, but an intensely gripping story of study and later initiation into Sufism."Ã Â Ã Â —Professor Leonard Lewisohn, PhD,Ã Â Islamic Studies Department, University of Exeter"The Spy of the Heart isÃ Â better than most bestsellers about Afghanistan. It is not only a must-read for researchers and journalists . . . and the students of modern Afghan history and politics, but also the Afghans themselves." —Daily Outlook Afghanistan (March 27, 2011)

Robert Abdul Hayy Darr is an American Muslim who hasÃ Â translated and published works of Afghan and Persian literature into English, such as the poetry of Raz Mohammed Zaray and Ustad Khalilullah Khalili, and the book The Garden of Mystery.

The Spy of the HeartÃ Â Robert Darr's book is an essential (and very interesting) read for anyone who wants to understand the background of one of the major conflicts of the 21st Century: The threats posed by radical Islamist movements like al Qaeda and the Taliban not only to the West, but to the existing structure of the Muslim world as well. Darr's experiences in the field in Afghanistan during the late 1980s into the very early 1990s offer a rare insight into the conditions that created the environment that fostered the radical, literalist 'religion' of Osama bin Laden and his associates. This is an excellent book. Buy it and read it!

An honest, first hand account of a unique time and place. Reads like the raw, unedited journal from which it is based. Most other travel writing is too polished to be this real, too "balanced" to be this honest, too compromising to power to be this accurate.

WonderFull on many levels ÃƒÂ¢Ã Â•Ã Â¤

Fascinating book - reads like a novel, but it is a true story.The author provides a rare view of Afghanistan just after the Russians left the country.

Nice book, but the publisher put it together cheaply and pages were falling out

The book is a very engaging narrative of Mr. Darr's physical and spiritual journey into the world of Islam and Sufism. I am impressed with the depth of his understanding of Afghan culture as well as his grasp of the essence of Sufism. Being an old student of Sufism and having read a lot of books on the subject, I can safely vouch that rarely have I come across such a clear and concise contemporary interpretation of Sufism without disconnecting it from its historical and traditional context.For me, the crux of the book was the following sentence:'I had come to believe--after observing myself and others--that the cultivation of a religious persona can lead one to disown other aspects of personal experience, and make one false and neurotic in the process of this denial.'This is such a liberating concept that people of all religious and ideological persuasions should pay serious attentions to it if they aspire to discover the core of their own being and hence the Spirit of everything.The book also contains some excellent photographs of, beside other things, the characters whose description in the book really brings them to life for the reader.Highly recommended for all and especially for the Muslims who are trying to come to terms with a modern

pluralistic world.

I came across this book as recommendation by the Curator of Turkish and Persian Manuscripts in the British Library and told me something about the authors background, at the time I was only able to find a copy online and unable to read it therefore was ecstatics to have found a hardback copy.I am not good for words but it comes highly recommended by myself who is an afghan and found it hard to find reliable information about the country and its people which is mostly drawn on through ideological lines. This is a story of one person who goes literally at times endangering his own life, with a open heart and the process witness the dawn of the militant Islam in Afghanistan and the marginalization of spirituality and the high open-minded Muslim culture which once dominated the region and why. Valor, courage, integrity, honesty, hardworking, keeping once word, run deep through out the story. Robert so shows its importance in age self interested. the it is serious and funny at times which makes a good travelogue to keep the reader glued on to the book.What I come to realize and I hope everyone that does read it will to, is Robert seized on to life, those opportunities that presented him no matter how much risky or impossible they looked and so he won at the end. At one point it reminded me of Davidson, in 'Only Fools and Horses' a British comedy in which his favorite catchphrase is 'he who dares wins' but in different light. I have not done much a service to his book by writing this for 'his a remarkable man' as the curator told me.

Disclaimer. I know author. I'm giving this book a good rating, not because he is a friend, but because it is actually a fascinating story. It is an adventure, a spiritual journey, and astute political observation rolled into one easy to read travelogue.Robert helped distribute supplies for the UN in Afghanistan during the soviet war in the late 80's. I knew him for many years without knowing this side to him. His book chronicles his time there and shows how the seeds of militant Islam were sown during this time. This isn't a guy who drove around in a white land-rover with a blue helmet. He spoke the language, blended with the locals, and herded bags of money across mountains on donkeys avoiding mujahadeen and feuding warlords.I most enjoyed the adventure, but Robert also tells of his spiritual journey, and how he came to understand Islam and ultimately convert. He is a poet and connects with the graceful face of Islam. He makes no apologies for the corruption being done in it's name.I'm not religious, but this book opened my eyes on Afghanistan, Islam, and a fascinating character who has taught me a lot.

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