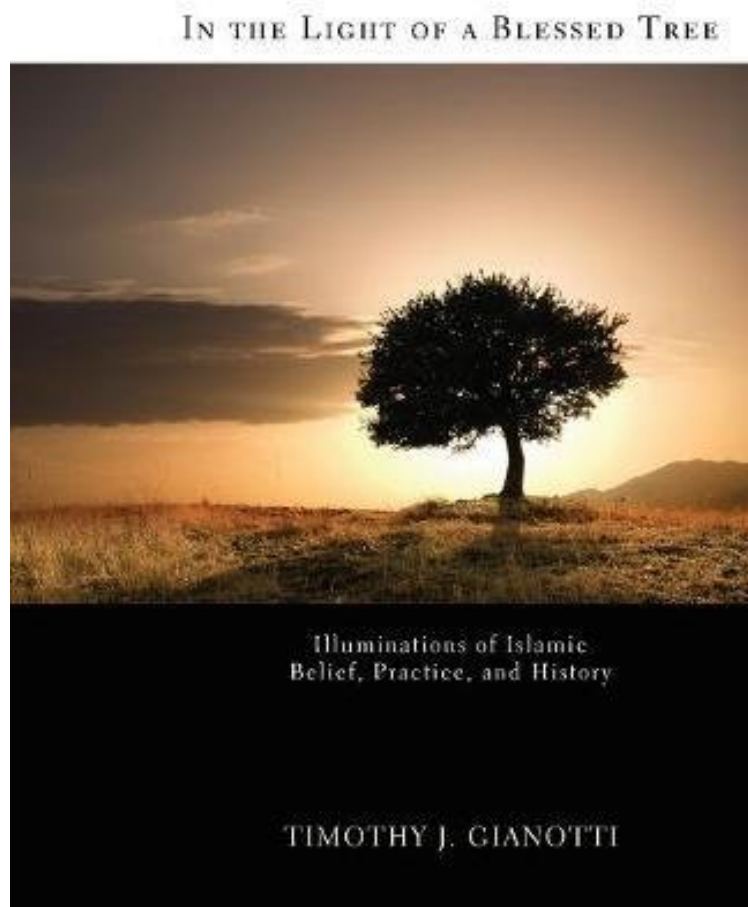


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In the Light of a Blessed Tree: Illuminations of Islamic Belief, Practice, and History

Timothy J. Gianotti

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In the light of A Blessed Tree presents an absolutely original, experientially textured introduction to Islamic belief, practice, and history for both the intrigued newcomer as well as for those who already possess some basic literacy in Islam. Slowly crafted over the years following the terror attacks of September 11, 2001, this modest book speaks with scholarly integrity but in an everyday voice, full of real-life narratives that ""illuminate"" the beliefs, practices, and histories described. More, it brings the reader in touch with the psychological, social, and cultural forces that shape the way we come to the question of Islam in a wounded world, still grappling with the trauma of 9/11 and very much still in a state of war. For these and other reasons, In the Light of a Blessed Tree speaks to contemporary images and realities, even as it walks through the ancient origins of Islam. ""In the best sense of the word, this is a deceptive book. Although written in such approachable terms, that simplicity conceals the author's deep scholarship and his extensive exploration of the faith of Islam, especially in a Western context. In the Light of a Blessed Tree is an inspiring work, and I hope this thoughtful book finds the wide audience it deserves."" -Philip Jenkins Edwin Erle Sparks Professor of Humanities Pennsylvania State University ""In our times, it has come to take considerable effort to dispose western readers to grasp something of the mystery and beauty of Islam. Yet Timothy Gianotti does so with an apparently effortless prose approaching the poetic, melding experience with history, practitioner with scholar, to bring this rich and multi-faceted tradition alive in our minds and hearts. It is hard to imagine a better way of helping students and seekers to appreciate the wonders of Islam."" -David Burrell, CSC Professor of Ethics and Development_ Uganda Martyrs University ""In the Light of a Blessed Tree is a multi-faceted work. It is a reliable and informative textbook. It is an academically sound and spiritually illuminating introduction to Islam. And it is a moving and personal faith statement. Above all, it is a spiritual meditation, well-worth reading."" -Mahmoud Ayoub Professor of Islamic Studies and Christian-Muslim Relations Hartford Seminary ""It is unusual for an author on religion to capture both the 'body' and the 'spirit' of a faith tradition, to provide a rational, critical articulation of a religion's ideas and practices along with an accessible entry into the deep and complex corridor of a religion's inner spaces. Professor Gianotti has managed to accomplish exactly this in his very special book on Islam. This is both a personal meditation based upon his own profound experience as a Muslim, and an analytical and unapologetic articulation of Islam as subject of critical analysis. Through personal anecdotes as practitioner and professor, Gianotti reveals a special sensitivity to the difficulty of understanding Islam in this time of uncertainty. I will use this book in my own teaching."" -Reuven Firestone Professor of Medieval Jewish Studies Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion Timothy J. Gianotti is a scholar and interfaith advocate who has served on the faculties of the University of Virginia, the University of Oregon, and Penn State University. Most recently he has served both York University and the Noor Cultural Centre (Toronto) as the Noor Chair of Islamic Studies and the Noor Fellow in Arabic Islamic Studies. He is the author of Al-Ghazali's Unspeakable Doctrine of the Soul (2001).