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Shibli: His Life and Thought in the Sufi Tradition

Kenneth Avery

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Shibli: His Life and Thought in the Sufi Tradition Kenneth Avery
Considers what is known of acclaimed early Sufi master Ab? Bakr al-Shibl? and how he was characterized in various times and places.

Early Sufi master Ab? Bakr al-Shibl? (d. 946) is both famous and unknown. One of the pioneers of Islamic mysticism, he left no writings, but his legacy was passed down orally, and he has been acclaimed from his own time to the present. Accounts of Shibl? present a fascinating figure: an eccentric with a showy red beard, a lover of poetry and wit, an ascetic who embraced altered states of consciousness, and, for a time, a disturbed man confined to an insane asylum. Kenneth Avery offers a contemporary interpretation of Shibl?'s thought and his importance in the history of Sufism. This book surveys the major sources for Shibl?'s life and work from both Arabic and Persian traditions, detailing the main facets of his biography and teachings and documenting the evolving figure of a Sufi saint. Shibl?'s relationships with his more famous colleague Junayd and his infamous colleague ?all?j are discussed, along with his Qur'?nic spirituality, his poetry, and the question of his periodic insanity.

"A very fine contribution to the history of Sufism." — John Renard, editor of *Fighting Words: Religion, Violence, and the Interpretation of Sacred Texts*

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