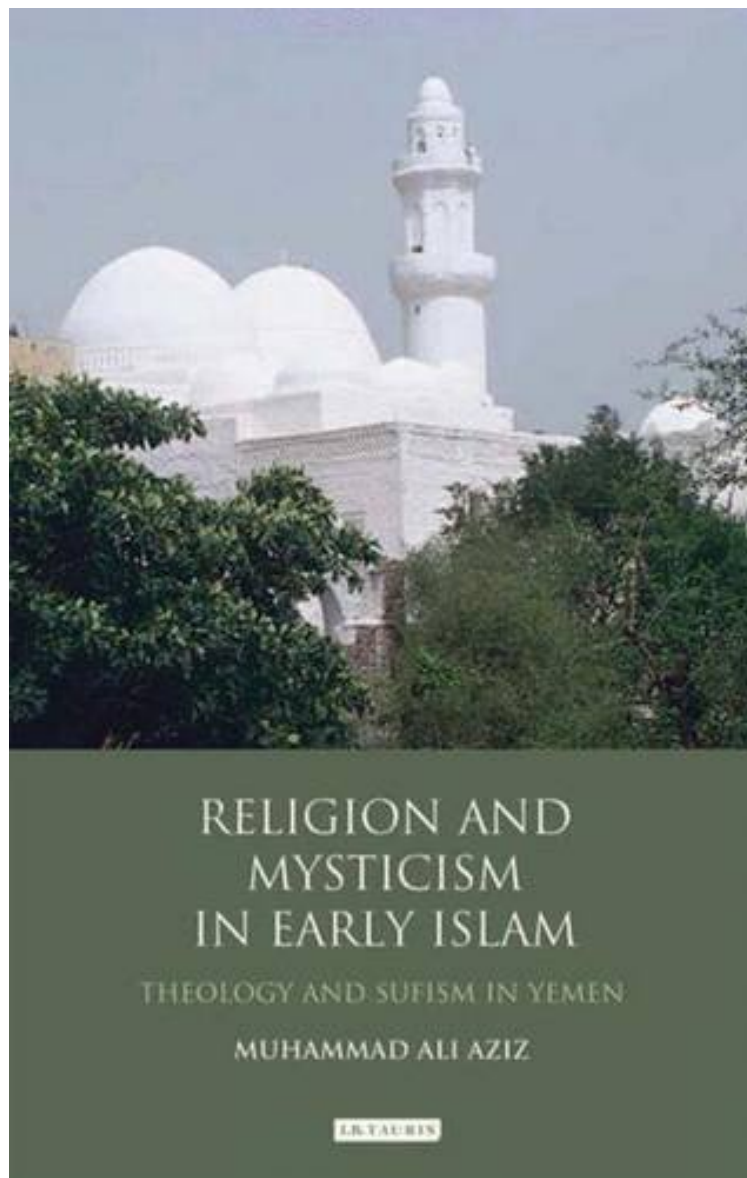


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Religion and Mysticism in Early Islam: Theology and Sufism in Yemen (Library of Middle East History)

Muhammad Ali Aziz

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Religion and Mysticism in Early Islam: Theology and Sufism in Yemen (Library of Middle East History):

Scholar, mystic and visionary, Ibn 'Alwn lived through the transition from Ayyubid to Rasulid rule in thirteenth-century Yemen. He was well known in his time for his critique of the ruling elites and their governance, and left behind a substantial body of writings on Islamic mysticism, theology, law and exegesis of the Quran. Here Muhammad Aziz presents a comprehensive portrait of Ibn 'Alwn, delineating the religious and political background in Yemen, the development of Sufi orders, the interplay between Sufi, Shi'i and Sunni traditions, and the impact of Ibn 'Alwn on the history of Sufism and Islam. The first study of Ibn Alwn in English, *Religion and Mysticism in Early Islam* is essential reading for all those interested in mysticism, early Islam, Sufism, and religion and history more generally.

""Religion and Mysticism in Early Islam is unprecedented and novel and offers a great deal of original factual material about Yemeni Sufism that is not available in any Western language. The books broad chronological and thematic scope renders it an essential introduction to the vicissitudes of Sufism in Yemen from its inception up to the present day. In furnishing such a broad and detailed panorama of intellectual, political and religious life of his native country, Dr Aziz has laid a solid factual and textual ground for the future study of Islam and Sufism in that part of Arabia."" -- Alexander Knysh, Professor of Islamic Studies, University of Michigan""Muhammad Aziz's new book will be a significant contribution to the library on Sufism in Yemen. His central achievement in 'Religion and Mysticism in Early Islam' is to closely examine a prominent thirteenth century Yemeni Sufi named Ibn Alwn, whose legacy remains vibrant in Yemen down to the present day. The core of Aziz's study is his careful presentation of the major texts and themes in Ibn Alwn's theological thought and his mystical poetry, elements of which he also translates. Equally significant is Aziz's depiction of Ibn Alwn's life and his role as a Muslim 'saint' Around this core Aziz has built a rich contextual discussion that locates Ibn Alwn with respect both to the emergence and later development of Sufism in Yemen and to his personal and intellectual relations with other Sufis in Yemen and elsewhere in the Muslim world. The wider context that Aziz provides also addresses the complicated historical contours of other Islamic phenomena in Yemen, situating Ibn Alwn and other Sufis in their detailed dialogues with a series of other Muslim religious trends, notably the indigenous school of Sunnis and two locally active strands of Shiis, the Ismailis and the Zaydis."" -- Brinkley Messick, Professor and Chair, Department of Anthropology, Columbia University and author of *The Calligraphic State: Textual Domination and History in a Muslim Society* (1993)About the AuthorMuhammad Ali Aziz received his PhD from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. He has taught at Princeton University and the University of Michigan. He currently teaches at Yale University and is translating three medieval treatises by Ibn 'Alwn.