



Women Called to the Path of Rumi: The Way of the Whirling Dervish

Shakina Reinhertz

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The beauty and mystery of the Whirling Dervishes have captured the mythic imagination of the Western world for centuries. Rumi, the great Sufi saint of 13th-century Turkey, taught both male and female students this whirling dance, but in the centuries after his death, women were excluded from participation. Not until the late 1970s, when Shaikh Suleyman Dede brought the turn ritual to America, was this practice again opened to women. *Women Called to the Path of Rumi* is the first English-language book of its kind. It:

- * outlines the history of the women who have followed this way since Rumi's time.

- * illuminates the transmission of this work from Turkey to America

- * highlights the first 20 years of the order's life in a new country and culture

- * describes the viewpoint of the participant rather than the observer

At the heart of the book are personal interviews with more than two dozen American initiates-- from adolescents to wise elders--many of whom have practiced on this path for over 15 years. The brilliant illustrations and photographs present dynamic images of women turning in Sema (the formal Mevlevi ritual) and whirling spontaneously in Zikr, the Sufi gathering of prayer and music. Quatrains of Rumi from many modern translators are interspersed throughout the text.

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