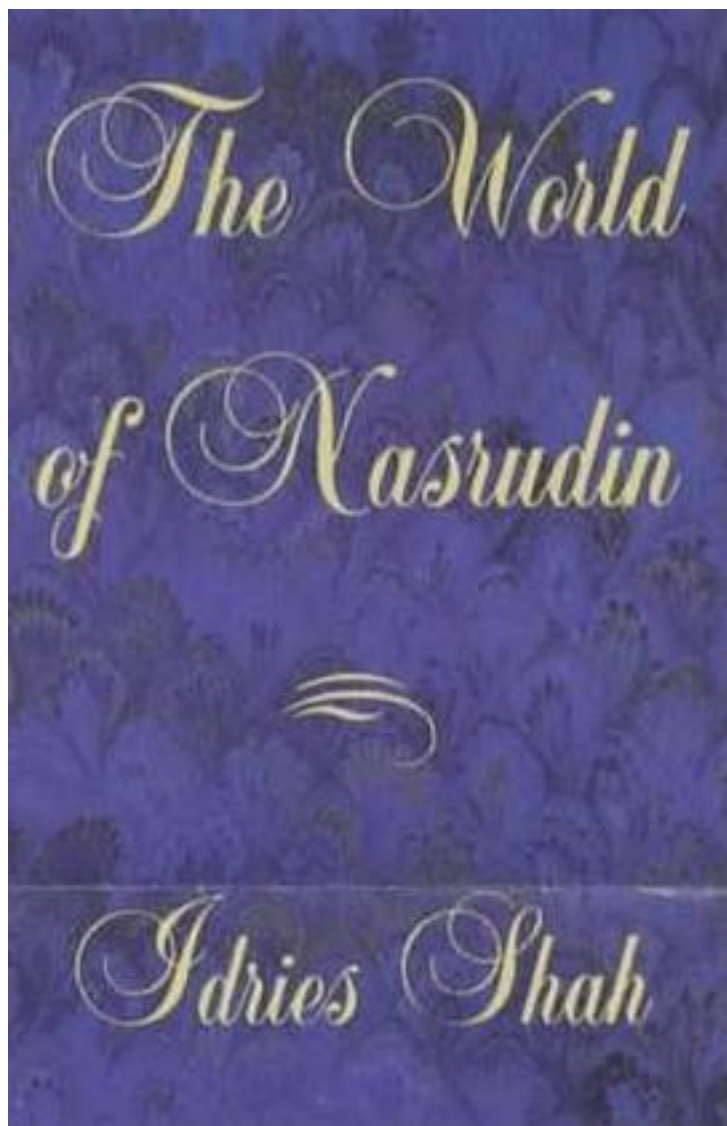


The World of Nasrudin



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著者:Idries Shah

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"The World of Nasrudin," the final volume in a remarkable series, is -- like all of Idries Shah's books -- full of surprises. It was Shah who, almost 40 years ago, began introducing the Western world to the age-old Middle Eastern and Central Asian stories and jokes that showcase Mulla Nasrudin, the irresistible, irrepressible and ever-morphing Sufi teaching figure who happily appears as a sage one moment and as a fool the next. In his three previous books of Nasrudin tales, marvelously adorned by gorgeous Richard Williams drawings of the Mulla and his donkey, Shah showed that Nasrudin jokes have an extra punchline and an unexpected payoff. The Mulla's antics tend to stay with you, because they uncannily mirror human thought and behavior in all its beauty and ridiculousness.

Today Nasrudin stories are used to illustrate all kinds of points: I ran across the Mulla in a book explaining Goethe's approach to science, and on a Web site that uses Nasrudin to present the chemical effects of ultrasound. Is Mulla Nasrudin on his way to becoming a globally recognizable figure? Coming seven years after Shah's death, "The World of Nasrudin" seems to suggest that there's still a lot left to be learned from -- and about -- the redoubtable Nasrudin.

In the first place, consider the new book's unadorned, industrial strength, giant economy size. The first three Nasrudin books put a total of 370 stories about the Mulla into circulation. "The World of Nasrudin," unillustrated and almost encyclopedic in scope, adds another 378 new, previously unpublished stories to the total. Next, there's the world that "The World of Nasrudin" is entering -- a post-September 11th world where, for some people at least, a bearded figure in robe and turban is not associated with tolerance, goodwill, and understanding. Shah's answer to this point is to paint a clearer picture of the world Nasrudin sprang from. The only "enemy" in Sufi books is narrow thinking and the kind of rigid, fearful, emotionally clouded rhetoric that can imprison individual minds and threaten the sanity of whole societies. Many of the Nasrudin stories in "The World of Nasrudin" are centuries old, and it is noticeable that many of the adversaries Nasrudin daringly outwits in these ancient tales are brutal and violent tyrants, stretching back to Tamerlane himself, and a long succession of religious fanatics, blinkered bigots, and self-proclaimed and self-deluding men of God -- as well as the usual run of pompous misers, incompetent judges, and just plain dopes.

Fortunately, "The World of Nasrudin" can, like its predecessors, also be read for many other purposes, such as sheer fun, or the awakening jolt of truth. Students of humor will be pleased to discover what may well be the original version of the venerable "Waiter, there's a fly in my soup" joke.

By Tony Hiss

作者介绍:

Idries Shah (1924 - 1996) - Author

Idries Shah (1924-1996), whose family lived in Afghanistan for a thousand years, is an internationally known authority on the region and his books on Sufism are considered seminal. "The Sufis," first published in 1964, is a first-of-its-kind modern statement on Sufism. Shah is the author of more than twenty books and has a readership spanning East and West.

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