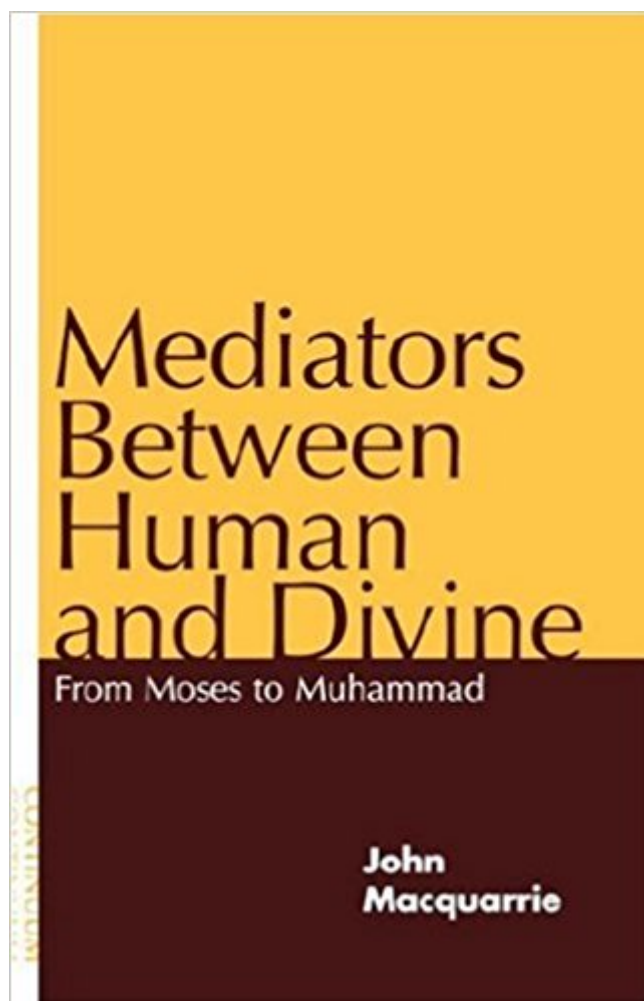


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Mediators Between Human And Divine: From Moses To Muhammad



Synopsis

A profile of nine religious geniuses--Zoroaster, Lao-Tzu, Buddha, Confucius, Socrates, Krishna, Jesus, and Muhammad--whose visions of God have been and continue to be a crucial factor in human history.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

John Macquarrie, formerly of Union Theological Seminary, New York, is Emeritus Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity in the University of Oxford.

I had the great privilege of studying with the author at the time it was published. John MacQuarrie was one of the great theologians of the 20th century. This small volume is a gift to anyone who seeks to understand world religions.

The book being reviewed here was of great interest to me, given that I'm serious about spirituality and finding a path toward perfect harmony with Ultimate Reality (the Divine -- or God). Although many great spiritual leaders are totally convinced that their particular religion (maybe even their own denomination) is the ONE TRUE religion, this sort of thinking can be gravely divisive in a world that is perennially beset with tendencies toward conflict, prejudice, violence, and warfare. John Macquarrie does a fine job of showing how it is highly reasonable to regard the spiritual leaders of ALL great world religions as having had inspiration and guidance from God. To many

fundamentalists of any number of religions, this can seem dangerously liberal and open to inclusion of paganism and all sorts of evils into religion. It needs to be understood that humanity is highly inclined toward self-promotion, prejudice toward those who have different practices or beliefs, and intolerance of diversity. Nevertheless, it is entirely fair to point out that many thinkers who deem themselves inclusive in their thinking are also inclined toward a liberal, anything goes, relativism of right and wrong. This is gravely dangerous, because it waters down religion in such ways as to include just about anything that anyone might wish to practice. I believe that the author of the book being reviewed here did a pretty respectable job of showing that there were some basic commonalities among the great spiritual innovators -- "mediators between human and Divine" -- such that we can detect a common source for the inspirations these spiritual thinkers got. God does not have to restrict his inspiration to one ethnicity, one political system, or one religion. God is capable of revealing His glorious presence in all sorts of various ways that encourage people to worship Him, serve their fellow humans, live peacefully among each other, and grow toward that harmony with the Divine that can engender a life of peaceful and near-blissful living. This book can be an encouragement to inspire people to love and respect their fellow humans, regardless of the great diversities of different religious practices and beliefs. I will, in conclusion, point out that I'm not all so confident that thinkers like Confucius or Socrates should be included among great spiritual mediators. After all, it seems that their lives very largely revolved not around how to find the path toward spiritual perfection, but rather how to get along politically and have philosophically sound thinking. The latter are, of course, praiseworthy endeavors, but mediators between puny humans and the glorious Divine would seem to be people who reveal much about the nature of the Divine and the Divine Will for how best to live the human life. To my thinking, Confucius and Socrates were more expert at political and philosophical thinking than expert in how to arrive at harmony with God. Nevertheless, it is my conviction that the latter thinkers did receive a great deal of inspiration from the Divine, and that they might reasonably be included among spiritual innovators and mediators. All in all, the book was worth purchasing and reading for me -- quite informative, and well presented.

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