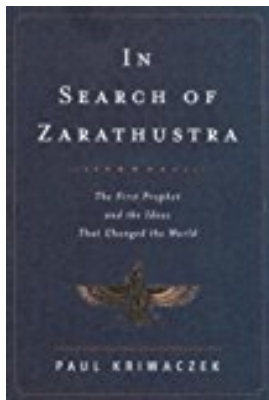


[PDF] In Search Of Zarathustra: The First Prophet And The Ideas That Changed The World

Paul Kriwaczek - pdf download free book



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Description:

From Publishers Weekly Hidden by the looming shadows of Christianity, Judaism and Islam, Zoroastrianism seems a largely forgotten religion today. Yet this ancient tradition so powerfully influenced these other three faith groups that they would not exist in their present state if not for

the teachings of Zarathustra, the prophet of Zoroastrianism. Kriwaczek's lively and fast-paced study offers a unique view of Zarathustra's impact on Western religious history. Beginning in present-day Iran (the Persia where Zarathustra first began his teaching around 1200 B.C.), he participates in New Year festivities that demonstrate that pre-Islamic Iranian mythology and religious customs exist in uneasy alliance with contemporary Islamic practices. Kriwaczek then sets off on a backward travelogue, examining the significance of Zarathustra for Nietzsche in the 19th century, the Cathars of the Middle Ages and Hellenistic and Jewish thought from the third through the first centuries B.C. The prophet's teachings, recorded in the Avesta, offer a dualistic view of the world, a dualism that can be seen in the apocalyptic visions of the Book of Daniel and in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Zoroastrianism also featured divisions of heavenly beings, each lined up on one side or the other, supporting either darkness or light. In both Christianity and Islam, the influence of Zoroastrianism can be clearly seen in the pantheon of heavenly beings arranged in hierarchical fashion according to degrees of goodness or evil. This is the best and most thorough survey of Zoroastrianism, and its prophet Zarathustra, to date.

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From The ancient prophet Zarathustra, founder of Zoroastrianism, was a "deeply radical figure" who believed in "one true God," saw the world as a "battlefield between good and evil," and predicted the coming of a messiah and the end of time, convictions that became the foundation for Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. So intrigued did Kriwaczek, formerly a Central and South Asia expert for the BBC, become with Zarathustra's largely overlooked legacy, he launched an original, exacting, and many-faceted inquiry into the Iranian visionary's deep, abiding, and remarkably universal influence. Working backward in time and blending vivid accounts of visits to historic Zoroastrian sites with a fresh and consistently perceptive and surprising analysis of religious history, Kriwaczek weaves an enticingly complex tapestry. He seeks and finds evidence of Zoroastrianism in twentieth-century Iran and Afghanistan, parses Nietzsche's adoption of the prophet as muse and conduit, tracks the puzzling history of the Cathars, discerns Iranian elements in Gothic art and feudalism, and discusses how the prophet Mani nearly turned Zoroastrianism into a "world faith."

Donna Seaman

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