

Booklist

Advanced Review – Uncorrected Proof

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Sacred Voices: Stories from the Caravan of Women.

By Mariam Baker. Illus. by Cynthia Dollard

2018. 218p. Dog Ear, \$49.95 (9781457554834); paper, \$24.95 (9781457565502). 297.4

Baker is a Sufi, practicing a mystical branch of Islam, and both she and illustrator Dollard are also whirling dervishes, who use ecstatic dancing as part of their religion. The focus of this unusual and attractive book is, of course, on Islam, but with a feminine point of view, and it will have appeal for a wide range of women. Oversize and illustrated with watercolors tinged with mysticism, the book is a cornucopia of stories, personal accounts, poetry, Islamic writings, and meditations on the pillars of Islam, which include faith, prayer, and charity. Some of the writings may surprise readers of other faiths; for instance, an examination of the reverence Islam holds for Mary, the mother of Jesus. Also of special interest are the short biographies of women identified as "mystics and scholars." There are also first-person stories that show how different the experiences of Muslim women can be. A fitting end to the book is the chapter "Recipes to Nourish Body and Soul," which includes meditations, prayers, and recipes from around the Islamic world.

— *Ilene Cooper*