

***Light Upon Light: 5 Master Paths to Awakening the Mindful Self***

Andrew Vidich, PhD

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Reviewed by Tyler R. Tichelaar for Reader Views (9/08)

Andrew Vidich's "Light Upon Light" provides a wide array of spiritual examples and stories from Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and other religions to demonstrate how a person can gain a deeper personal relationship with God and live a more fulfilling spiritual life. Vidich divides the book into sections largely focused upon Spiritual Masters, most of whom are not familiar to the Western World. Beyond just biography, Vidich discusses the stories and inner quests of these Spiritual Masters as guidelines for our own spiritual searches today.

American culture, as Vidich notes, is flooded with self-help books that promise to teach you how to achieve your goals, but most people fail to succeed after reading these books because they do not carry through beyond setting goals to taking regular action to complete them. Vidich focuses on meditation and the importance of meditating daily with common sense advice on how to concentrate and gradually increase from meditating for just a few minutes a day to several hours at a time. He emphasizes that our spiritual well-being is the most integral part of our lives and something we must focus on daily to make progress.

I found "Light Upon Light" to be deeply thoughtful and far advanced beyond most of the self-help books I have read. It is also more informative and intellectual than books like the narrow-minded, demeaning and unfortunately popular "The Purpose-Driven Life." While Vidich talks a lot about overcoming the ego, he does not focus so much on the depravity of man as many other religious books, although that sense still was in the book to some degree—especially in the story of the saint who had excrement dumped upon him, only to declare he deserved far worse. I don't understand why self-esteem fails to be part of religion and wish Vidich had removed these kinds of examples. In all other ways, I appreciated the author's sincerity throughout to help people achieve greater spiritual happiness. I especially found it interesting how Vidich advocates that each person find a spiritual master to help him or her stay the course, something that our "self-help" American culture and "do it yourself" attitude may be resistant to, but which would be a great benefit for follow-through.

Readers not familiar with Eastern religions may find "Light Upon Light" a bit of a stumbling block at times. Vidich uses many terms not familiar to Western readers. Despite a glossary at the end of the book, he never did define what "Sant Mat" means—he assumes readers have some knowledge of Eastern religion and mysticism. I also found it a bit difficult at times to follow him because English is obviously not his first language and there were numerous typos throughout the book. I found the

glossary frustrating as well because it was only loosely alphabetical—all the A's were together, but not in Ab, Ac, Ad etc. order. Most readers, however, will find these flaws only minor inconveniences and be inspired to learn more about the spiritual practices and masters discussed in the book.

I recommend “Light Upon Light” by Andrew Vidich to people who want to read examples of how holy men from the past have reached stages of enlightenment. I will not say this book changed my life, but it did remind me of the importance of finding time to meditate each day—something I hope to get into the practice of doing regularly—Vidich’s advice may well start me on my way.