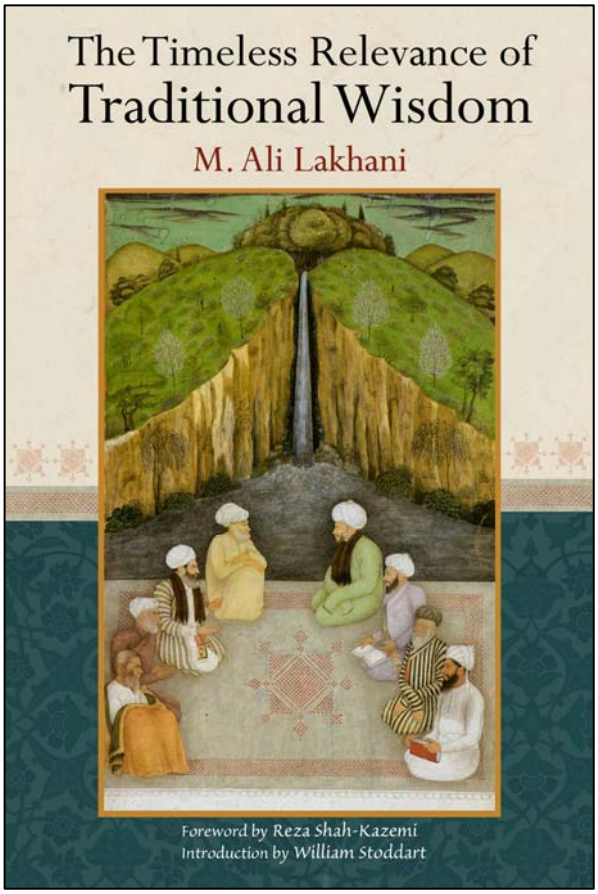
The Timeless Relevance of Traditional Wisdom

By M. Ali Lakhani



More than ever, there is an urgent need to rediscover timeless and objective principles in order to confront the issues of our times. In this collection of thirty remarkable essays, Lakhani summons us to rediscover the sacred worldview of Tradition, governed by truth, virtue, and beauty, as he addresses some of the most pressing issues today, including fundamentalism, gender and sexuality, religious diversity and pluralism, faith and science, and the problem of evil.

This Book Features:

- Thirty essays previously published in *Sacred Web*, the journal of Traditional Studies
- A foreword by Reza-Shah Kazemi
- An introduction by William Stoddart
- Biographical notes
- An index of notable people and themes

Publication Details

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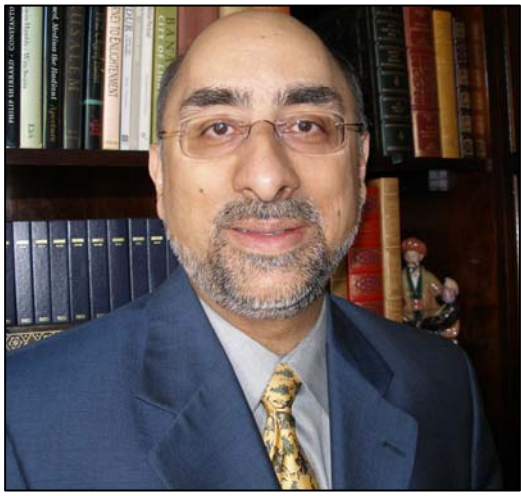


M. Ali Lakhani, founding editor of *Sacred Web*

Praise for *The Timeless Relevance of Traditional Wisdom*

"Lakhani approaches the chaotic world with both compassion and sensitivity, but what makes his writings so worthwhile is the fineness of his analyses… When appropriate, it is his custom to offer an opinion as to what the

'cure' for some problem or other might be. His opinions are a combination of principles and common sense, and always repay much pondering… Following in the footsteps of the great, Mr. Lakhani takes no prisoners!"
—**William Stoddart**, author of *Remembering in a World of Forgetting*

"The essays gathered here come from the pen of someone… who is well aware of both the difficulties of living in the modern world, and of the mercies and graces which are present in every world and in every age. Rather than allowing himself to be dispirited by the difficulties, Lakhani chooses instead to be uplifted by the mercies and to respond to the challenge of living in the modern world by imaginatively and intelligently applying traditional principles to contemporary problems."
—**Reza Shah-Kazemi**, author of *Paths to Transcendence*

"For well over a decade now *Sacred Web: A Journal of Tradition and Modernity* has stood as the pre-eminent forum for the exploration of contemporary issues in the light of Tradition. Like many other readers I always turn firstly, with pleasurable anticipation, to Lakhani's percipient editorials, which combine forensic rigor with stylistic elegance… Now these small but glittering gems are gathered together, along with several more extended essays and they remind us that the messages of Tradition are ever new, immediately pertinent to both our current circumstances and our ultimate destiny."
—**Harry Oldmeadow**, La Trobe University Bendigo, and author of *Frithjof Schuon and the Perennial Philosophy*

Praise for Sacred Web

"I am always delighted to receive the latest issue of *Sacred Web* because, so often, I come across such deeply revealing and enlightening articles, rich in content and diverse in subject matter."
His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales

"Sacred Web provides scholarly and inspiring access to a form of spiritual understanding that is very little understood in our modern society but which is of the greatest importance for our time. Its varied and excellent articles give the reader an insight into the deeper dimensions of our contemporary problems, bringing to life and giving contemporary relevance to the issues of our day."
Karen Armstrong, Professor at Leo Baeck College, and acclaimed author of *A History of God*

"However deluged I am with incoming, time-consuming mail, I always find myself smiling and turning mental cartwheels when I find an issue of Sacred Web arriving. Its modest circulation belies the quality of every issue's content."
Huston Smith, Pre-eminent religious scholar and author of *The World's Religions*

"Along with Sophia**,** Sacred Web is the most important journal in the English language devoted to the study of tradition. Furthermore, it is unique in its interest in the consequences of confrontation between tradition and modernity, an issue which lies at the heart of so many aspects of the life of humanity today."
Seyyed Hossein Nasr, University Professor of Islamic Studies, George Washington University

About the Author

M. Ali Lakhani was born in England in 1955. He was educated at the King's School, Canterbury, before reading law at Cambridge, and being called to the Bar in British Columbia, where he has practiced primarily as a barrister since 1979.

In 1998, Ali founded the traditionalist journal, *Sacred Web*, with the focus of identifying the "first principles" of tradition and exploring their relevance to the

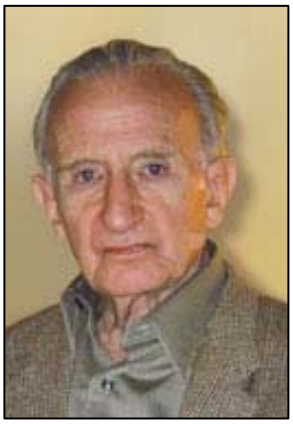
issues of modernity. *Sacred Web* (appearing in print bi-annually, and with a web site at www.sacredweb.com) is now regarded as one of the pre-eminent traditionalist journals in the English language, and has included essays by the foremost contemporary traditionalist writers, as well as by several prominent religious scholars and writers sympathetic to tradition.

In 2001, Ali was invited to address the International Congress on Imam 'Ali in Iran, where he presented his essay on the "Metaphysics of Human Governance". That essay, which dealt with the teachings of 'Ali ibn Abi Talib on Truth and Justice, garnered the First Prize in English at the conference, and was awarded at a special ceremony held in Tehran in March 2002. A revised version of the essay was included in the anthology, *The Sacred Foundations of Justice in Islam: The Teachings of 'Ali ibn Abi Talib*, co-published by World Wisdom Books and Sacred Web Publishing, 2006.

About the Author of the Foreword

Reza Shah-Kazemi is a Research Associate at the Institute of Ismaili Studies in London and the founding editor of the *Islamic World Report*. He has authored several books, including: *Paths to Transcendence: According to Shankara, Ibn Arabi, and Meister Eckhart*, *The Other in the Light of the One: The Universality of the Qur'an and Interfaith Dialogue*, and *Justice and Remembrance: Introducing the Spirituality of Imam 'Ali*. His newest book, *Common Ground Between Islam and Buddhism* features introductions by H.H. the Fourteenth Dalai Lama and H.R.H. Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad. His contributions to the traditionalist journals *Sophia* and *Sacred Web* deal with themes relating to the perennial philosophy, tradition, beauty, and prayer.

About the Author of the Introduction



WILLIAM STODDART was born at Carstairs in Scotland in 1925. He studied modern languages, and later medicine, at the universities of Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Dublin. He has made a life-long study of the great religious traditions of the world, and in this connection traveled widely in Europe, North Africa, Turkey, India, Ceylon, and Japan. His books include: *Sufism: The Mystical Doctrines and Methods of Islam* (1976; editions in seven languages), *Outline of Hinduism* (1993), and *Outline of Buddhism* (1998). His essential writings were recently published by World Wisdom as *Remembering in a World of Forgetting: Thoughts on Tradition and Postmodernism* (2008).