

***A Mystical Encounter of a Dominican Friar, Serge de Beaurecueil
(d. 2005), and a Ḥanbalī Ṣūfī, ‘Abdullāh Anṣārī of Herāt (d. 1089)***

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Abstract

This study examines the life and scholarship of a French Dominican friar, Serge de Beaurecueil (1917 - 2005). His life time investigation of the mystical dimensions of Islam centered around the life and corpus attributed to the 11th century Ḥanbalī Ṣūfī shaykh ‘Abdullāh Anṣārī of Herāt (1006 - 1089). The thrust of our argument is that this erudite and mystical conversation with the work of the Pīr of Herāt is a methodology and a theology of dialogue with the religious other. This mystical and prophetic journey combines the Ashramic spirituality of Jules Monchanin and Henry Le Saux in India, a master-disciple relations, the ethical demands of interfaith dialogue, and finally testifies to the hidden and abiding presence of God among the downtrodden of Kabul. Also, de Beaurecueil’s life ascertains the rich and varied heritage of Dominican spirituality and lays bare the conundrums of interfaith encounter.

The introduction sets the stage for the friar’s mystical and prophetic life among Muslims. The first two chapters are biographical. They scrutinize the formation period and professional life of both de Beaurecueil and Anṣārī. The following two chapters describe de Beaurecueil intellectual and spiritual growth. His erudition on the corpus of Anṣārī and his *praxis mystica* fit perfectly the Dominican tradition of search for Truth (*Veritas*) and *contemplata aliis tradere*. The last chapter attempts to couch in a philosophical language a mystical encounter. Even though de Beaurecueil’s *praxis mystica* is both attractive and intimidating, his life is a bold testimony to the demanding complexities and rich opportunities of Christian-Muslim mystical encounter.

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