



**Mullah Nasruddin in Marrakech – by Mansoor Shah**  
**Reviewed by [Dave Porter](#) December 2010**

Despite only being published last month, this slim volume is already garnering attention from some highly-placed quarters. It has been picked up by the likes of the Lonely Planet and our own Asian News based here in Manchester.

Manchester author Mansoor Shah has had the clever idea of taking a popular historical figure from the Middle Ages and dropping him into the modern world to see how the two take to each other.

Like Don Quixote, Mullah Nasruddin is a comic mix of the absurd and the worldly-wise, his encounters with the people he meets on the streets of Marrakech providing fertile material for semi-philosophical musings.

The book is interspersed with striking images of Marrakech and its people, and takes the form of the witty and often sarcastic encounters of the Mullah with residents. The chapters are allusive, epigrammatic and topics range from the mundane – buying a new car – to the trials and tribulations of married life.

A typical encounter, entitled Shifty Purse, reads as follows:

A stall keeper observed that Mullah Nasruddin was very slow taking out his purse but was extremely quick putting it back.

He asked the Mullah the reason for this.

Although it is none of your business I will explain, replied Mullah Nasruddin.

When I am asked to pay I need extra thinking and reckoning time; once the transaction is completed, it should be quickly hidden.

Are you afraid that you may be robbed? Asked the stall keeper

Only from you replied, Mullah Nasruddin.

Manshoor Shah is a follower of Sufism and this collection is infused with the gentle reflections it yields to its followers. A HUMOROUS folklore character teleported from the Middle Ages into the hustle and bustle of modern-day Marrakech is fast becoming a literary star.

Mullah Nasruddin has been brought to comic life by author and poet Mansoor Shah, who has created a spirited and at times sarcastic religious character who delivers his own very unique and funny pronouncements on everyday life.

People tell his stories and antics with great affection and endearment across Asia including Arabs, Persians, Uzbeks, and the Turkic Xinjiang in China. Some of his stories are linked with Sufi traditions and philosophical approaches – and they almost always come with a sting in the tail.

Mullah Nasruddin in Marrakech is available at [www.lulu.com/spotlight/Manzain](http://www.lulu.com/spotlight/Manzain)

**Notes to editors:**

Please ring [David Porter](#) on 0782 4351450 to arrange an interview with Mansoor.