

# Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society

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## Key libraries digitised

Stephen Hirtenstein in Turkey

Now that the Suleymaniye Library in Istanbul has fully embraced the digital age, all the manuscripts are catalogued and viewable on their computers. There is an internal on-line site, where each catalogue entry and manuscript image is stored and can be accessed from their terminals. The reading room now has eight screens, which attract the younger generation like flies to the honey-pot. It is still possible of course to look at the books in "the flesh" as it were.

As for the archiving work itself, this new system has changed some of our ways of working: one can now see at a glance what is held in different collections by using their search engine, which I have tried to master despite the fact it is all in Turkish. This shows quite quickly what manuscripts of Ibn 'Arabi are held in all the collections – I should mention that this system will cover not only what is physically held in the Suleymaniye but also in other main libraries (e.g. Beyazit) and a myriad number of smaller libraries. According to Nevsat Kaya, the outgoing director of the library, the digitising of other major libraries will be completed over the next three months, including the Beyazit, Nurosmeniye and Koprulu collections (all in Istanbul) as well as those in Amasya and Manisa. So in future one will only need to come to the Suleymaniye to view a huge collection drawn from many of the most important manuscript libraries in Turkey.

This period has been mostly spent cross-checking information from before and exploring some of the new vistas opened up by this system (for example, all the Ibn 'Arabi texts held in the Ayasofya collection). One very important manuscript has been digitized: the earliest known copy of Ibn 'Arabi's *Book of the Night Journey* (*K. al-Isra*), dated 633H and read in front of the author with 14 witnesses, including the author's son, Sa'duddin. This manuscript, which formed the basis of Souad al-Hakim's critical edition, is written in an elegant hand with vowelling, and a later hand has added in extracts from Ibn Sawdakin's commentary on the work, containing oral explanations by the author.

## Now in iTunes!

Publishing in the 21st century

The US branch of the Ibn Arabi Society has accumulated dozens of audio recordings of presentations given at US Symposia over many years. The delivery of audio files has been transformed by the internet in recent years, and in keeping with the times the Society has begun posting these talks to the internet as MP3 files. In addition to offering the talks as downloadable files from the Society's website, the talks are also available on Apple's popular iTunes store in the form of a free Podcast.

A show of hands at the Society's Annual General Meeting in November showed that only about a quarter of the people present knew what a Podcast was. The "Pod" comes from "iPod" - an MP3 player made by the Apple computer company - something about the size of a mobile phone that can play music and other things stored as digital files. The "cast" bit of the word is borrowed from "broadcast". So a Podcast is like a broadcast over the internet. A file is sent to your computer and can be passed on to your MP3 player automatically. However, it is not necessary to have an iPod to subscribe to or to play the Podcasts. The material can be downloaded into the free iTunes software, or just copied from the Society web site, and played back through the computer speakers.

Subscribing to a Podcast can be done by anyone with a Mac or Windows PC, and the free iTunes software. Subscribing makes it easy to stay up-to-date as new talks are posted every month. The first talk put on-line in this way was by Michael Sells, followed by Caner Dagli, and Cecilia Twinch. At the time of writing, each talk had been downloaded about 130 times. For more information, visit the website at [www.ibnarabisociety.org/podcasts/](http://www.ibnarabisociety.org/podcasts/)

Articles from the Journal already have a second life on the Society web site. In October 2006 the most popular article was downloaded more than 300 times.

"Technology" can still help those who prefer to have a printed book in the hand - the Society is exploring the use of "print on demand" methods to reprint some journals, which would otherwise be unavailable.

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## Ibn 'Arabi as a citizen of Spain

An action begun in Murcia in 1990 continues today

Arabic was a native language in parts of the Iberian peninsular between 711 and about 1570 - for more than 800 years. Miguel Asín Palacios, through his studies of Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi and other writers in Arabic, was one of the early scholars to reassert the relationship of the culture of al-Andalus to present-day Spain. From the 1980s, there was an expansive move to reclaim aspects of Spain's past which had long been covered over, and to re-assess the expulsions of Jews and Muslims that followed the Reconquista in 1492.

Murcia first established its claim to Ibn 'Arabi as one of its citizens in 1990. With active encouragement and support from the heart of the regional government, a conference of unprecedented breadth was organized in Murcia in that year. Speakers included Osman Yahya, Ralph Austin, William Chittick, Michel Chodkiewicz, Claude Addas, Dom Sylvester Houédard, other speakers from the Ibn 'Arabi Society, and people well-known in Spain. It was a public event. There were huge posters up round the town, and long articles in the press. The conference was sponsored by local businesses, and the whole thing was carried out with great generosity

At the closing ceremony, under the glare of television cameras, the President of the regional government recounted that when the city had first discovered that it was the birthplace of a renowned person, they named a street after Ibn 'Arabi. It was only a small street, some 150 metres in length. But due to the exigencies of town planning, things had changed, and the small street had become a major route of 1.5 kilometres. He presented the speakers with the first fruits of the Region's publishing programme. These were translations into Spanish of *Journey to the Lord of Power* and the *Hizb al-wiqaya*. The Region has now been involved in the production of twelve titles in its Colección Ibn 'Arabi. The most recent of these was *El lenguaje de las alusiones* by Pablo Beneito, published in 2005. These books sell well, and some have been reprinted twice.

This interest in Ibn 'Arabi, and support for Ibn 'Arabi studies, has continued in Murcia, despite changes of the governing party. Altogether Murcia has been responsible for organizing more than six international conferences on the matter, including a big event in Damascus. Official acceptance has gone beyond naming streets. The secondary school

Instituto Benarabi was established in Cartagena in 2003, and the Archaeological Institute supported by the Region is named after Ibn 'Arabi.

Following the initiative taken in Murcia, Ibn 'Arabi has also been held up as a symbol of humane insight and mutual tolerance by various national bodies in Spain.

In January 2006 the ambassador of Spain in Tehran announced the establishment of the Ibn 'Arabi Prize for Translation, in collaboration with the Allameh Tabatabai University, Tehran. This is to be awarded each year for translation of a literary or educational work from Spanish into Persian.

In December 2006 there will be a meeting in Toledo dedicated to dialogue between Spain and the Maghreb under the title Foro Ibn 'Arabi. This is the ninth in a series of forums which have been organized since 1994 by the Instituto Internacional del Teatro del Mediterráneo. Other meetings of the Foro have been held in Morocco. These engage in religious dialogue, and seek a greater mutual understanding of cultures and civilizations.

## UK symposium 2007

"Unified Vision – Unified World?"

The Society in the UK will hold its 24th Annual Symposium at Worcester College, Oxford, on 28th-29th April, 2007. The symposium is entitled "Unified Vision - Unified World?". The following have so far accepted the invitation to speak.

- *Angela Jaffray*, whose translation of *al-Ittihâd al-kawnî* was published by Anqa in September. She lives in Chicago.

- *Salman Bashier*, Visiting Lecturer at Haifa University and author of *Ibn 'Arabi's Barzakh: The Concept of Limit and the Relationship between God and the World*.

- *Niels Detert*, who works in Oxford as a Clinical Psychologist.

- *Jane Clark*, the Society's Librarian, who is active in the Society's Archive project to copy and document historic manuscripts.

- *Pablo Beneito*, from Seville University, who has published several editions and translations of works by Ibn 'Arabi.

- *Pilar Garrido*, from Seville, a researcher who who is currently writing on Tustari, Ibn Masarra and Ibn 'Arabi.

- *Kautsar Azhari Noer*, Professor at the Department of Comparative Religion, Syarif Hidayatullah Islamic State University in Jakarta.

- *Elias Amidon*, spiritual director of the Sufi Way International, and a director of the Abraham Path Initiative. He is based in Boulder, Colorado.

More details will be posted on the Society's web site as they become available.



The poster which appeared on walls all round Murcia in 1990

## Bill Viola and Ibn 'Arabi

### Alison Yiangou on "LOVE/DEATH : The Tristan Project"

Bill Viola is internationally recognised as one of today's leading video artists, and has been hugely influential in establishing video as a vital form of contemporary art. His installations – total environments that envelop the viewer in image and sound – are shown in museums and galleries worldwide and are found in many distinguished collections. Viola uses video to explore the phenomena of sense-perception as an avenue to self-knowledge. His works focus on universal human experiences – birth, death and the unfolding of consciousness – and have roots in both eastern and western art, as well as some of humanity's most profound spiritual traditions, including Zen Buddhism, Sufism and Christian mysticism.

In 2004 he was invited by the Paris Opera to create a video work for their new production of Wagner's opera "Tristan and Isolde"; work that forms the basis of an exhibition held in London from 21st June – 2nd September 2006. Installations were displayed in two locations, at the Haunch of Venison Gallery and St Olave's College.

Viola was interviewed on BBC Radio 4's 'PM' programme – arguably one of the major news commentaries in Britain – on the day the exhibition opened, June 21st. In the course of this interview, Viola explained that in his view, the ecological crisis facing the world today results from the fact that mankind has greatly increased his knowledge of his outer world and his ability to manipulate it technologically, but has lost the knowledge of his inner world. He proceeded to talk about Ibn 'Arabi and how profound is his knowledge of this inner world, quoting in this context "an ocean without a shore". We need to rediscover this knowledge of our inner world, Viola said, and combine between that and our knowledge of our outer world. A statement with which Ibn 'Arabi – who emphasises that the fully realised human stands at the place of the "joining of the two arcs" and has the responsibility of both uniting and separating the inner and the outer worlds – would no doubt agree. Ibn 'Arabi has clearly been a very strong influence in Viola's work. Indeed his biographical work "Reasons for Knocking at an Empty House – Writings 1973 –1994" begins and ends with quotes from him ("If you engage in travel, you will arrive" and "the Universe continues to be in the present time").

In the London exhibition, the theme of transformation is inescapable. Tristan and Isolde represent lovers brought to the realisation that the magnitude of Love can only be fully realised by loss of selfhood – a transformation which occurs in the 'myth' through the self-sacrifice of physical death. However in Viola's works the viewer is made fully aware that this transformation is also one of knowledge: sacrificing the illusion of selfhood, or "die before you die". To cite a few examples of the works exhibited: in "Purification", a man and a

woman undertake the ritual preparations for a symbolic sacrifice required for their transformation and rebirth; "Bodies of Light" images the understanding that at the core of the physicality of the human is an essential luminosity which is untouched by birth or death. "Fire Woman" represents an image seen in the mind's eye of a dying man. The fire, a roaring, raging inferno, represents the flames of passion and desire which blind the inner eye. The female figure falls into her own reflection and, to quote Viola in the catalogue, "the reflecting surface is shattered and collapses into its essential form: undulating wave patterns of pure light". The "Ascension" scenes of both Tristan and Isolde describe the process of letting go of the body in the last moments before death, and the ascent of the soul, by means of overwhelmingly powerful images of light and water.

Sadly it is not possible here to describe each of the installations in more detail, and even if space were unlimited, a verbal description could never convey the supra-cognitive impact on the seer/hearer of standing before these huge, powerfully beautiful moving images which convey profound meaning. It was said above that Viola uses video to explore the phenomena of sense-perception as an avenue to self-knowledge. According to Ibn 'Arabi, the senses convey necessary knowledge: error is due to the faculty of understanding, which interprets the senses.

It is almost as though, through the scale of their impact, Viola's installations bypass the understanding and speak directly to that core (*coeur*) in the seer/hearer in which true self-knowledge resides.

## Granada Conference

The New York Open Center have announced a conference to be held in Granada, Spain, September 15-20 2007: "An Esoteric Quest for The Golden Age of Andalusia - Sufis, Kabbalists and Christian Philosophers in Medieval Spain." More details will be available soon from [www.opencenter.org](http://www.opencenter.org).

## Fellows' representative

John Boyd-Brent, Fellows' Representative for the year 2005-06, has been working on a new design for the Society's web site, which has developed in ways which could not be foreseen ten years ago, and can be difficult for visitors to find their way around. The new version will be made live soon.

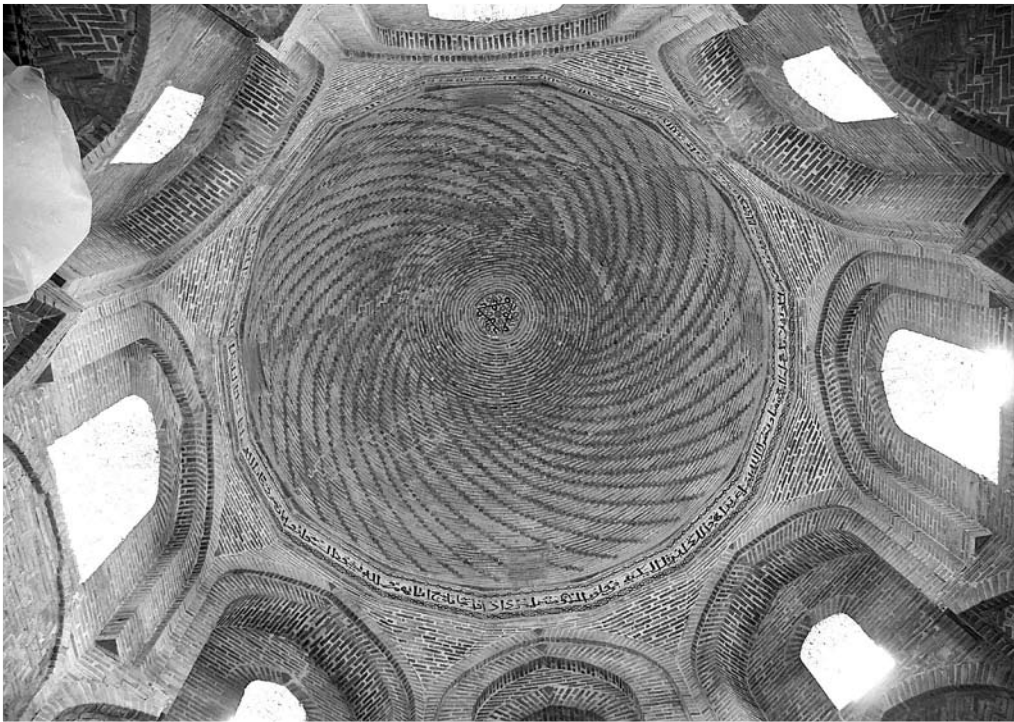
The election of Azize Stirling from Oxford as Fellows' Representative for 2006-07 was announced at the Society's AGM in November. She would like to serve the Society by acting as a point of reference for people wishing to study Ibn 'Arabi. She can be contacted by e-mail at [azize@onetel.com](mailto:azize@onetel.com).



## Malatya and Ibn 'Arabi

Stephen Hirtenstein on the history of this ancient city

Of all the cities in which Ibn 'Arabi lived during his time in the Levant (Mashriq), there is only one that might surprise the modern observer, as it has sunk into mild oblivion. Where Konya, Aleppo and Damascus still stand as proud bearers of an ancient tradition, as well as being busy modern cities with populations in excess of half a million, Malatya in south-eastern Turkey is a forgotten destination: an old town of eastern Anatolia near the upper Euphrates, whose claim to fame today is as the centre of the export of apricots.



Dome of the  
Ulu Cami,  
Malatya

Malatya's chequered history owes much to its situation on a great crossroads in a hugely fertile plain at the foot of the Taurus mountains. Here the Persian royal road crossed the Euphrates trade routes. Known to Assyrians as Melidda, to Romans as Melita and to Greeks as Melitene, it once served as the base camp for the Roman 12th legion, and in the time of Justinian became the capital of the province of Armenia. Following the Arab conquest, Malatya became prey to its geography: a frontier city between Byzantines and Arabs, changing hands many times and suffering the inevitable consequences. Having been an important Emirate under Arab rule, the town fell to a resurgent Byzantium in 934AD. When Nicephorus Phocas, the Byzantine commander of Anatolia who later became Emperor, seized Aleppo in 962AD, he tried to repopulate Malatya with Greek settlers, but they refused out of fear of Arab raids. So Syrian Jacobites were brought in, and this policy was so successful that by 1100AD there were 53 churches and 60,000 Christians capable of bearing arms. Yet within one year, in September 1101AD, the town had fallen to the Turkmen emir of Sivas, and became a pawn

in renewed struggles between rival kingdoms, Danishmends, Edessa Franks, Comnenoi emperors and Rum Seljuks. By the end of the 12th century AD (6th Hijra) it was firmly in the control of the Seljuks, who ruled it from Konya for some 130 years, from 1077-1307.

It is at this relatively stable period in Malatya's history that Ibn 'Arabi appears on the scene. The Anatolian Seljuk kingdom was in the hands of the very capable Seljuk ruler, Kaykhusraw I, who after a brief period of exile established himself on the throne in Konya in February/March 1205AD (Rajab 601H). He had invited his erstwhile vizier and teacher, Majduddin Ishaq b. Muhammad, to rejoin him from Mecca and bring with him scholars to reinvigorate the country. The most prominent of these was Ibn 'Arabi.

This initial visit to Anatolia was part of a longer journey as he made his way north from Mecca, in the company of Majduddin, his companion Badr al-Habashi and others. Setting out in September 1204 (Muharram 601) Ibn 'Arabi spent up to a month in Baghdad and at least four months in Mosul, where three works are known to have been composed<sup>1</sup>. He then arrived in Malatya in time for Ramadan

(April/May 1205)<sup>2</sup>, and stayed for at least 3 months before travelling on to Konya around August 1205 (early 602H). Here he met the Iranian master, Awhaduddin Kirmani, who would become one of his close friends, and probably wrote his *Risalat al-Anwar*. Contrary to most accounts, Ibn 'Arabi may have spent no longer than a month or two in the Seljuk capital before returning to Malatya by October, no doubt time enough to cement a relationship with Kaykhusraw and others. The whole Anatolian visit had lasted up to eight months, and by mid-December he was already in Damascus and on his way south to Hebron and Cairo.

It is difficult to estimate when Ibn 'Arabi returned to Anatolia and the city of Malatya, although he is known to have kept in contact with

1. K. al-Qasam al-ilahi (RG 565), al-Maw'iza al-hasana (RG 448) and al-Tanazzulat al-Mawsiliyya (RG 762).

2. These dates all come from the writing or reading of his works which are known to have taken place in Malatya or elsewhere. The sama' certificates, recording who was present at the readings and where and when, provide us with invaluable detail, otherwise unavailable. The mentions of Malatya in the actual texts are few and far between, and not very illuminating (eg F.IV.298).

Kaykhusraw's son and successor, Kayka'us<sup>3</sup>. The latter had been sent by his father to be brought up and educated in Malatya under Majduddin's watchful eye. Majduddin Ishaq probably lived in Malatya from c. 1207 (604) until the end of his life, with occasional tours as emissary on behalf of the sultan. On 1st January 1209 (22 Jumada II 605) his more famous son, Sadruddin Muhammad, better known as Sadruddin al-Qunawi, was born in Malatya. Whether Ibn 'Arabi was also living there by then remains unknown. However, he must have needed some kind of stability for an emerging family: his first son 'Imaduddin Muhammad had already been born; his second wife, known as Maryam bint 'Abd Allah, seems to have been of an aristocratic family, as she is called Khatun, a Seljuk title for a lady of high birth; he had a daughter called Zaynab, who was probably born in 1210 (607). There is also no doubting his close connection with Majduddin, who almost certainly acted as his patron as much as his friend. All of this points to Ibn 'Arabi having had a home in Malatya from at least 1209 (605) onwards and probably earlier. Whatever the case may be, by July 1215 (Rabi' I 612H) he certainly had his own house there, as it is mentioned as the place for a reading of his commentary on the *Tarjuman al-ashwaq (Dhakha'ir al-a'laq)*. Until at least 1221 when his second son, Sa'duddin Muhammad, was born, Malatya is known to have provided a fairly continuous base for him, his family and his disciples. When his long-time companion Badr al-Habashi died in the same year (Kayka'us having died in the previous year), it seems that the ties with Malatya and Anatolia were broken, prompting his final move to Damascus. Coinciding with the flowering of the Seljuk kingdom, Ibn 'Arabi had in that time left an indelible mark on the course of Anatolian spirituality.

And what of Malatya's later history? Despite the predations of the Mongols in the 13th century, Malatya managed to survive intact as a Seljuk principality with Mongol overlords: it was renowned at this time for being a place of tolerance, where Christians and Muslims lived side by side in harmony. As Seljuk rule collapsed at the end of the century, the town became a target for Arab attacks, and the Mamluks ravaged it in 1315. Under the Ottomans, the town functioned primarily as an agricultural centre, although it retained a very strong spiritual affiliation. From 1516 onwards it regained some prosperity: a census in 1522 records approximately 7,000 inhabitants, which rose by 25% in the next 50 years. In summer most people used to move out of the town and lived among their gardens and vineyards, a practice which became permanent in the 19th century after an Ottoman pasha used their town houses as an army barracks over winter, causing havoc and destruction. These summer-houses with their garden plots grew into

the modern town of Malatya, while the old settlement, now known as Eski Malatya ("Old Malatya") or Battalgazi, was abandoned and left to crumble away. The ancient city walls are today overgrown and slowly disappearing, as new housing is built and farming land reclaimed for the ever-important apricot trade.

In the last few years a programme of renovation has begun in south-eastern Turkey, and Malatya's Great Mosque or Ulu Cami, one of the finest in the region, is currently being restored to its former glory. Built during the reign of Kayka'us (r. 1211–1220) and therefore while Ibn 'Arabi was living there, it is a typically robust Seljuk design with elegant tilework, and used to lead directly to a series of medreses (teaching buildings). Over the entrance doorway to the mosque there is a stone inscription dated 672H (1273AD), containing the following Quranic verse (72.18): "The places of worship belong to God, so do not call upon any other along with Him".

## In the footsteps of Ibn 'Arabi

Anqa Anatolia tour, May 2006

Further to tours of Andalusia in 2004 and 2005 to explore the traces of Ibn 'Arabi's world and follow in his footsteps, Anqa Publishing arranged a visit to Anatolia in April-May of 2006 for the same purpose.

A party of 22 people began their visit with two days in Konya, the capital of the Seljuks of Rum and home of Sadruddin Qunawi, Shamsi Tabrizi, and Jelaluddin Rumi. It also houses a major collection of Ibn 'Arabi manuscripts, part of Sadruddin's private library, at the Yusuf Aga library, a visit to which was hosted by the director, Bekir Shahin. They travelled eastwards by bus, stopping in such places as Kayseri, Malatya, Urfa, and Mardin. In addition to sites directly associated with Ibn 'Arabi or the Seljuks, visits were made to their Christian antecedents: sites in Cappadocia (Gümüsleri, Göreme), with connections to the Greek Orthodox tradition of St Basil and St Gregory, and churches in Mardin, the seat of the patriarchate of the Syriac church, which still uses the language of Jesus, Aramaic, in its liturgy.

There were visits to places associated with the later Sufi tradition of Anatolia, such as the tomb of Hajji Bektash. Echoing the living quality of the journey were the verses of Somuncu Baba (a saint famous in Bursa as a transmitter of Ibn 'Arabi's teachings) at his tomb in Aksaray: "We are living, never dead; we are never left in darkness. We can never be rotted in the ground; for us there is neither night nor day."



Seljuk tile

3. For example, Ibn 'Arabi wrote him a letter in 609H (1212AD), by which time he had succeeded to the throne.

As the party arrived in Urfa, a city associated strongly with the story of Abraham and Nimrod, a freak hailstorm appeared to confirm the Quranic verse "O fire, be cool and peace for Abraham" (Q.21.69), which is commemorated there.

The old city of Malatya, where Ibn 'Arabi lived for many years, is now a ruin in an agricultural setting. So there is tranquillity, and a sense that it retains its quality. It is here that Badr al-Habashi was buried, for 20 years the friend and companion of Ibn 'Arabi. In the *Rûh al-Quds* Ibn 'Arabi records: "I myself went to his grave and complained to him of something that had befallen me after his death. He answered me from the grave and gave praise to God. I heard his voice clearly... The preacher Badr al-Din told me that some of his household had looked down by night from the rooftop onto the grave and had seen a great light reaching from it to the sky. The light had persisted till dawn."

The party returned to Istanbul by air, and spent three days there, including visits to the Suleymaniye mosque and its library, where the director, Nevsat Kaya, showed them the manuscript conservation and digitising work being done there, and finally to the Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum, where they were privileged to see the original manuscripts of the *Fusûs al-Hikam* and the *Futûhât al-Makkiyya* in the care of one of the Society's honorary fellows and President of the Museum, Prof. Mahmud Kilic.

Professor Kilic shows visitors manuscripts of the *Fusûs* and the *Futûhât*



## Aleppo

### Lectures on Ibn 'Arabi

Aleppo in Syria is one of the oldest inhabited cities in the world, with traces of habitation going back 11,000 years B.C. It was chosen as the capital of Islamic Culture for the year 1427 H. / 2006 AD by the Islamic Conference Organization. The Conference stressed the fact that Aleppo represented a model of Islamic cities in relation to religious tolerance, and people of different religions living together. As part of a programme of 150 lectures during the year, two were devoted to Ibn 'Arabi. Aboud Al Askary spoke on "Ibn 'Arabi and the dialogue of civilization between the shores of the Mediterranean" and Su'ad Hakim on "Between Al-Suhrawardy and Ibn 'Arabi - mysticism in Aleppo".

## Conferences in 2006

### Oxford and Berkely

The Ibn 'Arabi Society in the UK held its 23rd annual symposium at Worcester College, Oxford, in May 2006 under the title "Know Yourself". This symposium attracted an unprecedented number of participants – between 70 and 120 people at all sessions. It featured speakers from an unusually wide range of disciplines, including a psychotherapist, and a leading expert in the work of Ibn al-Farid, whose poetry was so highly valued by many great students of Ibn 'Arabi, such as Sadr al-Din Qunawi. Richard Twinch, Events Co-ordinator in the UK, has written a review of the symposium which can be found on the Society web site.

The Society in the USA held its 2006 symposium in October with the same title as that in the UK. On this occasion the symposium was back in Berkeley after two years away from its home base. In 2004 it was held in Seattle, and the following year went all the way to New York. For the third year running the costs of the symposium were met by donation rather than by fixed registration fees.

For the past two years afternoon seminars have been a part of the symposium both in the UK and the USA. Jane Carroll writes of the event in Berkeley: "These smaller groupings worked very well in opening up the conversation and giving the very attentive audience an opportunity to participate..." She went on to say, "When the full body of the symposium, speakers and attendees, work so well together, when the intent is shared to delve deeper into the wisdom of Ibn 'Arabi and when such nourishing 'fresh meat' is brought to the table by the speakers everything comes alive and seems easy to arrange."

You can find more details of these conferences and other events, and links to some full reports, on the Events page of the Society web site.

## And in 2005

Apart from events organized by the Society, there was a major meeting of Ibn 'Arabi scholars in Damascus in June 2005. Organised by the Damascus-based Institut Français du Proche-Orient, it was held under the title "Symbolism and Hermeneutics in the Thought of Ibn 'Arabi".

In December 2005 a conference was held in Istanbul and Konya called "Women and Tasawwuf". This was organised by the Turkish Women's Cultural Association in honour of the centenary of the birth of Samiha Ayverdi, and included a ground-breaking paper by Su'ad Al-Hakim on "Ibn 'Arabi's two-fold perception of Woman – as Human Being and Cosmic Principle". This appeared in Vol. 39 of the Society Journal in 2006.

If you would like to be included on an e-mail mailing list for events, contact [mias.uk@ibnarabisociety.org](mailto:mias.uk@ibnarabisociety.org)



## News from Indonesia

Sent by Kautsar Noer

### Tadarus Ramadan 1427

Jaringan Islam Liberal, an Islamic organization which promotes liberal Islamic thought, organised Tadarus Ramadan 1427 ("Study Together in Ramadan") at the Utan Kayu Theatre in Jakarta. The Tadarus presented a theme entitled "Being Liberal through Sufism: Learning from Ibn 'Arabi." It took place in three meetings, held on successive Tuesdays.

The first meeting took place on Tuesday, Ramadan 3, 1427 (August 26, 2006) under the title "Introduction to the Study of *Fusûs al-Hikam*". The speakers were KH Abdurrahman Wahid, Kautsar Azhari Noer, and Mohamad Guntur Ramli. The Chairman was Anick HT.

The second meeting was an "Introduction to the Study of *al-Futûhât al-Makkiyyah*". The speakers were KH Sa'id Aqiel Siradj, Syaifiq Hasyim, and Zainul Ma'arif. It was chaired by Noviantoni Kahar.

The third meeting was called "Introduction to the Study of *Tarjumân al-Ashwâq*". The speakers were KH Husein Muhammad, Umdah El-Baroroh, and Abd Moqsih Ghazal. Luthfi Assyaukanie was in the chair.

### Course in the Sufism of Ibn 'Arabi

Paramadina, a prominent Islamic foundation in Jakarta, has organised a course entitled "Introductory Study of Ibn 'Arabi's *Fusûs al-Hikam*". The course is a package of seven meetings, one meeting a week on Wednesdays, which began on September 13, 2006. The teacher is Dr. Muhammad Baqir, a graduate of Madrasah Hujjatiyyeh, Islamic Seminary in Qom, Iran.

### Study of Fusûs al-Hikam

A group of people in Jakarta who are interested in the Sufism of Ibn 'Arabi hold meetings about six times a year to study *Fusûs al-Hikam* under the leadership of KH Sa'id Aqiel Siradj, a prominent Indonesian ulama (Muslim scholar).

The meetings are held in the office of Basuki S. Hardjosoekatmo. Many meetings for the study of *Fusûs al-Hikam* have been held at his office in recent years. In the meeting on October 28, 2006, the study reached the middle of the last chapter, which is entitled "The Bezel of the Wisdom of Singularity in the Muhammadan Word."

## Livre des illuminations

In October 2005 the Prix Laure Bataillon for the best work of fiction translated into French was awarded to *Le Livre des illuminations* by Gamal al-Ghitany. The Arabic original, *Kitâb al-tajalliyât*, was published in 1990. Part biography and part autobiography, it also has a deep relationship to the book of the same title by Ibn 'Arabi.

## Recent Publications

Continued from back page

### Arabic

*Na'am wa lâ - Ibn 'Arabi wa l-fikr al-munfatih (Between Yes and No - The open thought of Ibn 'Arabi)*, Mohamed Mesbahi, Fez, 2006. 272 pp, paperback. ISBN: 9954-410-21-X

### English and Arabic

*The Universal Tree and the Four Birds - Ibn 'Arabi's Treatise on Unification (al-Ittihâd al-kawnî)*, Translation and commentary by Angela Jaffray, with a critical edition of the Arabic text. Anqa Publishing, 2006. 140 pp, paperback.

*A Prayer for Spiritual Elevation and Protection - Ibn 'Arabi's al-Dawr al-a'lâ (Hizb al-wiqâya)*, Study, translation, transliteration and Arabic text by Suha Taji-Farouki, Anqa Publishing, 2006. 140 pp, paperback.

### English

*The Other in the Light of the One - The Universality of the Qur'ân and Interfaith Dialogue*, by Reza Shah-Kazemi, Islamic Texts Society, Cambridge, 2006. Paperback.

### French

*Science Sacrée*, Revue d'Études Traditionnelles, No. 7. 96 pp, Paperback. [www.sciencesacreee.com](http://www.sciencesacreee.com)

### German

*Die Weisheit der Propheten*, Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi, Chalice Verlag, Zurich, 2005. From Titus Burckhardt's translation into French of 12 chapters of the *Fusûs al-Hikam*. Paperback.

*Der Verborgene Schatz*, Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi, Chalice Verlag, Zurich 2006. This includes *The Kernel of the Kernel*, *The Twenty-nine Pages*, and *Whoso Knoweth Himself*. Paperback.

### Spanish

*El lenguaje de las alusiones: amor, compasión y belleza en el sufismo de Ibn 'Arabi*, Pablo Beneito, Comunidad Autónoma de la Region de Murcia, Murcia, 2005. 202 pp, Paperback.

*La taberna de las luces - Poesía sufí de al-Andalus y el Magreb (del siglo XII al siglo XX)*, Selected, introduced and translated by Pablo Beneito, Murcia, 2004. 124 pp, Paperback.

### Turkish

*Fususul Hikem*, Ibn Arabi, Translated by Ekrem Demirli, Kabaici Yayinevi, 2006.

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## Recent Publications

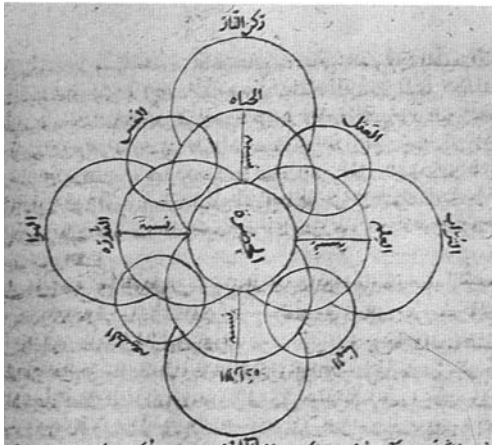
Books in Arabic, English, French, German, Indonesian, Spanish and Urdu

### English

***Cosmology and Architecture in Pre-Modern Islam. An Architectural Reading of Mystical Ideas***, by Samer Akkach. Both paperback and hardback.

Referencing a wide range of mystical texts, and with special focus on Ibn 'Arabi, Samer Akkach introduces a notion of geocentric spatial sensibility that is shaped by concepts of time and space. Akkach describes how this underpins religious beliefs about the cosmos, geography, the human body, and constructed forms. Within this geometrically defined and ordered universe, nothing stands in isolation or ambiguity; everything is interrelated and carefully positioned in an intricate hierarchy. Through detailed mapping of this intricate order, the book shows the significance of seeing the world for those who lived in the pre-modern Islamic era, and how cosmological ideas became manifest in the buildings and spaces of their everyday lives. There is an excellent summary of Ibn 'Arabi's ideas complete with significant diagrams from the *Futûhât*. Samer Akkach is Senior Lecturer in History and Theory of Architecture at the University of Adelaide, and was a speaker at the most recent Society symposium in Berkeley.

Richard Twinch



One of the diagrams from the *Futuhat* translated and expanded by Samer Akkach. These diagrams are also used by Mohamed Haj Yousef in his doctoral thesis, "The concept of Time in Ibn 'Arabi's Cosmology and Its Implications for Modern Physics."

### Urdu

***Shaikh e Akbar Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi***, by Muhammed Shafi' Baloach. (Lahore: Maktabah Jamal, 2006). (pages 350; price PKR. 200/--)

This is perhaps the first comprehensive book in Urdu on the Life and thought of al-Shaikh al-Akbar. The book has five chapters. The first chapter is about his life, education, travels, religious affiliations, and gives a short introduction to his Muslim and non-Muslim Contemporaries. The second chapter presents a summary of the Shaikh's teachings on various subjects and ends with the list from the *Futûhât* of his beliefs. The third chapter

deals with some critics of Ibn 'Arabi and focuses in detail on Shaikh Ahmed Sirhindi and Muhammed Iqbal. In the fourth chapter we are introduced to the supporters, admirers and expositors of the Shaikh. In this chapter, the author also traces Ibn 'Arabi's influence on Western thinkers. The last chapter surveys the influence of *Wahdat al-Wujud* on the poetry of Arabic, Persian, Urdu and the local languages of Pakistan.

Kaiser Shahzad

### Indonesian

***Meraih Hakikat Melalui Syariat: Telaah Pemikiran Syekh al-Akbar Ibn 'Arabi (Achieving the Haqiqah through the Shari'ah: A Study of the Shaykh al-Akbar Ibn 'Arabi)***, by Nurashiah Faqih Sultan Harahap, with an introduction by Eric Winkel (Bandung: Mizan, October 2005).

This work originates from her doctoral dissertation "Muhyi al-Din Ibn 'Arabi and Shari'ah" at the Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, Montreal, Canada. It encloses two appendixes of Bahasa Indonesia (Indonesian) edition of Winkel's "Shari'ah, Fiqh, and Spirituality," *Islamic Quarterly* 38 (1994) and his "Ibn 'Arabi's Fiqh: Three Cases from the *Futûhât*," *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society*, 11 (1993).

***Tiga Madzhab Utama Filsafat Islam (Three Schools of Islamic Philosophy)***, by Seyyed Hossein Nasr, translated by Ach. Maimun Syamsuddin (Yogyakarta: IRCiSoD, March, 2006).

***Insan Kamil: Ikhtiar Memahami Kesejatian Manusia dengan Sang Khaliq Hingga Akhir Zaman (The Perfect Man: An Attempt to Understand the Reality of Man with the Creator until the Latter-Day)***, by Syeikh Abdul Karim Ibnu Ibrahim al-Jili, translated by Misbah El Majid (Surabaya: Pustaka Hikmah Perdana, 2006).

Kautsar Noer

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