

Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society

Summer 2008 Issue 25

Contents

30 years of the Society

2007 marked the 30th anniversary of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society.

The Society was founded in 1977 to further a common interest in the study, publication and translation of the works of Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi and his students, and to further his ideals. It has become an international body with members in some 40 countries.

The Society's publications include prayers by Ibn 'Arabi, the Commemorative Volume, and Bulent Rauf's translation of the *Fusûs al-Hikam*.

Through its journal (since 1982), symposia (since 1983), and website (1996), the Society has made an ongoing contribution to the publication of translations and studies of Ibn 'Arabi's writings and meanings. Its archive project contributes to the preservation and knowledge of the manuscript base through which we receive those writings.

The Society has been and is a reference point for enquiries from people wishing to know more about Ibn 'Arabi and those wishing to make what he stands for better known. At the time of writing it is in discussion with people in three countries who are planning events.

Much help has been received during this time from the Society's members, honorary fellows, and innumerable others. God willing the work will continue.

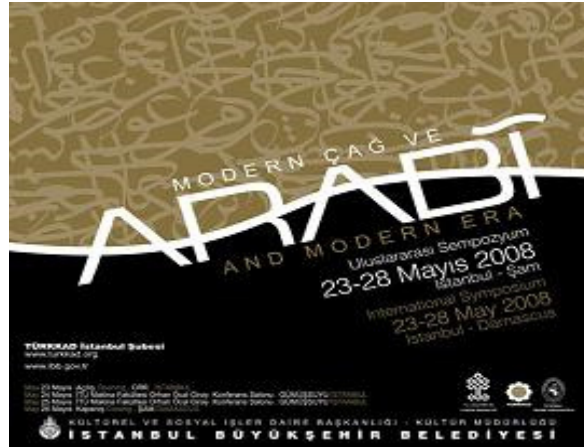
Also in this issue

On pages 2 and 3 we have samples of what two speakers at the recent Symposium in Oxford brought concerning Ibn 'Arabi. Other contributions will be reported on the Society website.

On pages 4 and 5 we have a substantial introduction to *Ibn 'Arabi - Time and Cosmology*, an important new book by Mohamed Haj Yousef on this profound subject.

On pages 6 and 7 there is coverage of some new publications, events going forward into 2009, and current research projects.

On page 8 there is a report on websites to do with Ibn 'Arabi in Arabic, Turkish and Urdu. Each has its own character. These publications are significant by virtue of their ability to reach a large number of people.



Two meetings in Turkey

A symposium entitled *Ibn 'Arabi and the Modern Era* was held in Istanbul and Damascus in May, 2008. It brought together 17 speakers from ten countries, including many of the best-known scholars working in this field. Titles of papers included "The Wisdom of Animals," "From the knowledge of Oneness to Faith" and "The Alchemy of Happiness", illustrating the range of themes covered and the different approaches taken by Ibn 'Arabi.

The symposium was organized by the Istanbul branch of TürkKad, the Turkish Womens' Cultural Association, headed by Cemalnur Sargut.

She was quoted in a Turkish newspaper, saying that understanding Ibn 'Arabi would help shed light on the difficulties facing the 21st century by showing us how to love people without seeing differences, and how all of creation is in unity with the One. After three days in Istanbul, the symposium went to Damascus for the closing speeches and a visit to the tomb of Ibn 'Arabi.

The 800th anniversary of the birth of Sadraddin Qunawi falls in 2008/2009. To celebrate this a symposium was held in Konya on May 20-22 entitled, *From past to present: Sadreddin-i Qunawi*. It was organized under the auspices of the Meram Municipality, whose region includes the tomb of Sadraddin Qunawi.

This was the first international symposium devoted entirely to Sadraddin Qunawi, and it drew speakers and audience from Syria, Iran, Europe and Azerbaijan as well as Turkey. Most papers were in Turkish, Farsi or Arabic.

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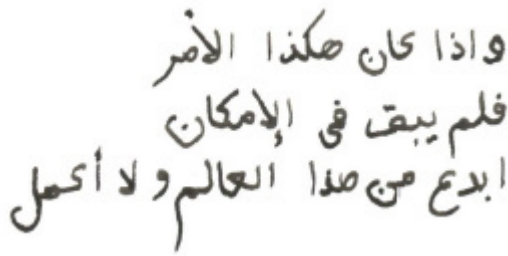
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Unknown perfection

Passages from the *Futûhât*
translated by Eric Winkel

These are passages from those which Eric Winkel translated for his talk at the symposium in Oxford held in April 2008. The symposium was entitled "If not for you... Self and other in Ibn 'Arabi." The translations are fairly literal, and reflect how each word carries weight in Ibn 'Arabi's writings. One of the threads running through these selections is about people recognizing the beauty of the Being that animates themselves and all things.



وإذا كان هكذا الأمر
فلم يبق في الإمكان
إبداع من هذا العالم ولا أحصل

as the matter is like this
there remains not in all possible events
any more wondrous than this world, nor more perfect

He loved to see it

[A person] who articulates the dream
[by putting it into words]
sees a strange affair,
and something is explained for one
that one did not perceive from other
than this perspective.

Because of this,
Rasulallah s.a. (the Messenger of God, Muhammad),
when he rose at dawn with his companions,
used to ask,
"Has any one of you seen a dream?"
because it (the dream) is prophecy,
and he used to love seeing it
amongst his community.

But people today
are in utmost ignorance of
this level (of dream, prophecy)
which *Rasulallah s.a.* was concerned to nurture,
asking every day about it.

Futûhât 4:14

No world more perfect

*He gave each thing its creation
and instructed it [Qur'an 20:50],*
that is,
he explained that *ta'ala* [God, may He be exalted]
gave everything its creation,
so that no one would say,
"such and such is lacking in me,"
because that lack which one presumes
is superficial and transitory,
(presumed) on account of ignorance about oneself
and an absence of trust in Allah's word,

if it came to one, [namely]
He gave everything its creation [20:50].

The creation does not recognize
its perfection or its lack
because it is created for another,
not for itself.

The one who created one rather created one for itself,
not for oneself (ourselves).

(Allah) only gave one what is good for (Allah) *ta'ala*.

The *'abd* [servant/slave] wants it to be for
(him)self,

not for (his) *rabb* [Lord];

because of this one says,

"I want this," and "I lack that."

If one understood that one was created for one's *rabb*
one would know that Allah created the created
in the most perfect form,
suited one's *rabb*

*I take refuge in Allah that I not be among the ignorant
(who don't know this) [2:67].*

This is one of the issues our companions forget,
despite the greatest of them knowing it.

It is one of the issues needed for knowledge,
first, last, and in between,

because it is the basis of divine *adab* [good
relationship]

sought by the *haqq* [the Real] from his creatures.

And only they know that who say,
*Our rabb! you encompass everything with rahmah
and knowledge [40:7].*

As for the ones (the angels) who say,
*Would you put on her (on the earth) one who would
spoil it and shed blood? [2:30],*

They did not stay with the intent of *haqq*
who created creation.

If the matter was not as it happened
(with spoiling earth and shedding blood), then
many names in the divine presence would go idle,
not showing their authority/force.

Rasulallah s.a. said, "If you (all) did not sin,
Allah would go to a people who sinned,
and they would seek forgiveness,
and Allah would forgive them."

So he alerts us that everything that happens
in the universe,
happens for a force of a divine name to come out.

And as it is like this, the matter,
so there does not remain in [the totality of] all possible
events
any [event] more wondrous than this world, nor
more perfect.

There remains not in all possible events
any but its like (in wonder and perfection)
[and then another, its like]
and so on without end,
so understand that!

Futûhât 3:143-144

A pleasure only known by God

When the period lengthens for the wretched
[then the span lengthens for them 57:16]
and they realize that [their dispute with the concept
of *rabb*]
is not beneficial,

they say, "Being in accord is best."

This force effects the change,
and the torment disappears.
The punishment is lifted from their very core,
and they find rest,
in their home.

They find there a pleasure only known by Allah,
because they chose what Allah chose for them,
and they know by that, that their punishment
was only from themselves,
so they say, "hamd to Allah" (Praise be to God)
for every state.
And that has the end-result for them
that they say, "al-hamdulillah, who is
Giving, Kind."

Futûhât 4:144

When the upper wants to meet the lower

When the upper wants to meet the lower,
because the lower has no leg up on the upper,
but the upper has encompassment of the lower,
then inevitably the upper goes to meet the lower,
and this is only possible if the upper descends to
the lower.

[God comes down to our level, asking]
Is there one turning to me?
Is there one entreating me?
Is there one asking forgiveness?

Futûhât 6:168

Futuwwa

by Sara Sviri

Sara Sviri's talk at the Symposium was entitled "From the One to the One another: Mystical ethics in Ibn 'Arabi and in the Sufi tradition." She began by recalling one of the remarkable features of Sufism, sometimes called *futuwwa*. After the Symposium, she gave us this short reflection on the term.

Futuwwa, or chivalry, is an ancient system of values which the Sufi tradition adopted, nurtured and preserved. It revolves around the notion of *îthâr*, altruism, giving precedence to the other. For someone to be nicknamed *fatâ* (pl. *fityân*) – youth, chivalrous youth – they have to live by the following principle: the "other" always precedes oneself; the needs of the other, whatever they may be, take precedence over the needs of the self. Obviously, this goes against the grain of an innate intuition which perceives the self as being closest to the skin.

Is there really a moral and ethical justification in giving precedence to the other in situations where this may mean sacrificing the self, or where this may mean averting from another value system by which the self abides? Apparently, this is precisely what it means. Thus, *îthâr* is a value which sets an almost unattainable ethical standard.

Ch. 42 of *al-Futûhât al-makkiyya* is titled "On the knowledge of *futuwwa* and the *fityan*, their ranks and classes and the secrets of their poles." In this chapter Ibn 'Arabi alludes to a story which

had been current among Sufis. According to this story, a certain *fatâ* neglected setting a table for guests who had arrived at his master's because, as he later explained, there were ants on the table and he chose to wait until the ants crawled away. Ibn 'Arabi's comments on this story are, as always, enlightening and challenging.

Here's what he says:

"A *fatâ* is at all times in the service [of the other], as the Prophet said: 'The servant of a people is its leader.' He whose service is his leadership is a true and faithful servant [of God]... The *fityân* prefer to implement their *futuwwa* towards the weakest ones according to their weakness in relation to God. The most superior *futuwwa* is therefore that which is exercised towards the ones who are the weakest from one aspect or another. This is like the case of the man whose Sheikh ordered him to set a table for his guests, but because of ants that were on the table the man dithered, for he considered that chasing the ants away went against the principles of *futuwwa*, as *futuwwa* should be exercised also towards animals. He therefore waited until the ants crawled away but did nothing by way of chasing them away by force, for the *fityân* never act forcefully except towards their own selves..." However [Ibn 'Arabi adds], by dithering in setting the table for the guests, this man did not exercise *futuwwa* towards the guests.

What does Ibn 'Arabi mean by inserting this addendum? He surely wants us to become aware of the dialectics of *futuwwa*. Being attentive and caring towards the little creatures which were crawling on the table is undoubtedly a praiseworthy chivalrous act. However, by acting in this way, the *fatâ* had chosen to neglect the needs of the guests and the requirements of hospitality. In other words, Ibn 'Arabi alerts us to the fact that ethical choices are never simple solutions to situations in which an "other" should be considered; they always demand a fine evaluation and discrimination (*tadqîq*) between several "others". In the end, regardless of how fine a discrimination one employs, exercising *futuwwa* towards one is always at the expense of another. To consider the "other" demands being aware of different "others" who inhabit the larger picture. Ibn 'Arabi instigates here an interesting debate, relevant, no doubt, to our day-and-age, in which the "other" is part of an ongoing culture of ethical discourse.



Eric Winkel's translations were discussed in small groups at the symposium, after which individuals from each group reported key points of the discussion.

Ibn 'Arabî - Time and cosmology

Mohamed Haj Yousef

Time is a fundamental issue in physics and cosmology, and a perennial problem in philosophy and theology.

Ibn 'Arabî had a unique and comprehensive view of Time, and nothing like it was ever developed by any other philosopher or scientist, before or after Ibn 'Arabî. His writings on time are of great interest today. It can be fairly said that Ibn 'Arabî's view of time and the cosmos is a fruitful concept that potentially bridges the gap between traditional theological and metaphysical views of the world and the contemporary scientific views that are based on experimental procedures and logic.

Even among modern studies of Ibn 'Arabî's works, his unique view of time in its cosmological dimensions has received little attention, although his conception of time is indeed central to understanding, for example, what is called his theory of the oneness of being.

One reason for this relative neglect may be the difficult symbolic language he usually used, and the fact that he didn't discuss this subject at length in any one place in his extant works – not even in the four chapters of his magnum opus, the *Futûhât al-Makkiyya*, whose titles relate directly to time. His overall cosmological understanding of time has to be pieced together from scattered treatments in many works and different contexts within the *Futûhât*.

Known by imagination

To start with, Ibn 'Arabî considers time to be a product of our human imagination, without any real, separately existing entity. Nevertheless, he still considers it to be one of the four main constituents of existence, the four “mothers of existence”.

We need this imagined conception of time to chronologically arrange events, and what for us are the practically defining motions of the celestial orbs and other physical objects. But for Ibn 'Arabî, real existence is attributable only to the actually existing thing that moves, not to motion, nor to time (nor space) in which this motion is observed.

Thus Ibn 'Arabî distinguishes between two kinds of time: natural and para-natural, physical time and spiritual time. He explains that they originate from the two forces of the soul: the active force and the intellectual force, respectively. Then he explains how this imaginary time is cyclical, circular, relative, discrete and inhomogeneous.

Ibn 'Arabî also gives a precise definition of terms such as the “day”, drawing on the specific usage of the Qur'an and earlier Arab conceptions of time. Ibn 'Arabî shows how the definitions of words such as “day” are related to the relative motions of the celestial orbs (including the earth), where every orb has its own “day”, and how those days are normally measured by our normal observable day that we count on the earth.

The Day of Eternity

In fact, rather than the day or any other time unit, Ibn 'Arabî considers the main primitive time cycle to be the cosmic, divine Week. Like our normal week, this is composed of seven Days, but each Day is actually a moment in our time-frame since at every moment in any specific point in space there is a full Day around the globe. Thus he explains how the world is created in seven (cosmic, divine) “Days”, what happens on each Day, and the underlying ontological relation between the Week's Days of creation and the seven fundamental divine Names of Allah. Ibn 'Arabî also shows that all the Days of this cosmic Week, including the last Day (Saturday), all actually occur in Saturday, the “Day of eternity”.

This complex understanding of the ever-renewed divine creation in fact underlies his conception of the genuine unification of space and time, where the world is created “in six Days” (from Sunday to Friday) as space, and then is displayed or manifested on Saturday in the process that we perceive as time.

However, we perceive this process – of creation in six Days and the subsequent appearance of the world on the seventh Day – we perceive all this only as one single moment of our normal time.

In fact, based on Qur'anic indications and the corresponding experiential confirmations of the mystical “knowers” (*'urafâ*), Ibn 'Arabî insists that the entire created world ceases to exist immediately and intrinsically right after its creation, and that then it is re-created again and again. For him, this process of divine re-creation happens gradually (in series), not at once: i.e., it always takes six divine “Days” to be prepared and the last Day to manifest. However, we – the creatures – do not witness this re-creation in six Days, since we only witness the created world in the seventh Day (Saturday, which he calls “the Day of eternity”). So the creation of the world in six Days actually happens every moment, perpetually and recurrently. Therefore, those first six divine Days are actually the creative origin of space and not time. Time is only the seventh Day. This novel conception, the “Week” as the basic unit of space-time, is one which could have a specific and quite essential meaning in physics and cosmology.

The Day of Creation

Even more important in Ibn 'Arabî's conception of time, however, is his understanding of the “Day” of creation as a minimum indivisible Day, a kind of instant of time (*al-zaman al-fard*) that also includes (since it includes all of creation) the instants of that normal day itself which we live in and divide into hours, minutes, seconds and so on. In order to explain this initially paradoxical notion, Ibn 'Arabî introduces – again based

on initially mysterious Qur'anic indications – the different nature and roles of three very different kinds of compounded days (the “circulated” days, the “taken-out” days and the “intertwined” days), which highlight the fact that the actual flow of time is not as uniform and smooth as we feel and imagine.

The key concept underlying these complex developments is that Ibn 'Arabî emphasizes, following the Qur'an, that only one creative “event” should be happening on every Day (of the actual cosmic, divine Days of creation), and not the many different (temporal and spatial) events that we observe. To reconcile this apparent contradiction between the unitary Act (and “instant”) of Creation and the apparent phenomena of spatial and temporal multiplicity, he reconstructs the normal, observable days that we actually perceive in a special manner that is complexly grounded in the different divine “Days” of the actual flow of time.

Link between science and mysticism

Philosophers and scientists in general try to understand the world through observations, experiment and logical deduction. As far as the cosmos is concerned, working “backwards”, they try to find out its initial state by extrapolating in various ways from current observations. Although Ibn 'Arabî considers the intellect unbounded or unlimited as a *receptive* tool, it is quite limited as a ratiocinative think tool because it relies on limited senses. Therefore the intellect alone – as a thinking tool – cannot describe the origin of the world because it is necessarily a part of it. That is why the Sufis rely on the “heart” (the locus of spiritual “tasting” and inspiration, in the language of the Qur'an) rather than the discursive intellect.

The principle of perpetual re-creation is intimately related to what has been called Ibn 'Arabî's theory of the “oneness of being”. Although he never employed the famous term directly, it is quite evident that this characteristic understanding of the oneness of being dominates Ibn 'Arabî's many writings. His focus in applying the oneness of being is on understanding the cosmos and how it works. Or rather, he declared that his aims were not to explain the world, but rather to acquire more knowledge of the world as a structure created according to the Image of Allah, so that he might acquire more knowledge of Allah Himself.

All the same, however, throughout the *Futûhât* and other shorter books Ibn 'Arabî gives a great many cosmological explanations and sometimes logical analyses of his metaphysical visions. This is why it is important to study Ibn 'Arabî's writings, since they may provide a real link between philosophy and science, on the one hand, and mysticism and theology.

This comprehensive cosmological vision, when added to his understanding of the actual flow of time based on the three kinds of days, can be used to build a new, unique, model of the cosmos. In addition to explaining the “oneness of being” and “creation in six Days”, other important results

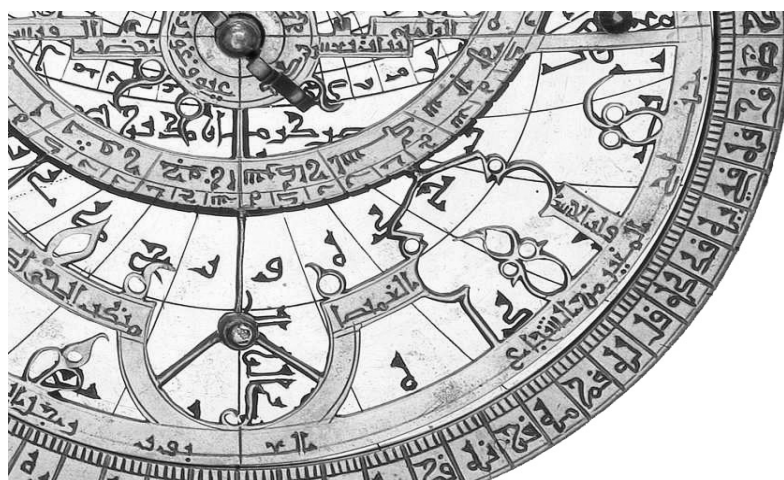
of Ibn 'Arabî's unique concept of time include the ways it helps to resolve the famous EPR (Einstein-Podolsky-Rosen) paradox, thus potentially reconciling the two great theories of Quantum Mechanics and Relativity in modern physics, how it offers a new understanding of the historical Zeno's paradoxes, and how it potentially explains the reason behind quantization, how quantities are either discrete or continuous. But the discussion of issues such as these is too complex to go into here.

Ibn 'Arabî – Time and Cosmology by Mohamed Haj Yousef, Routledge, Abingdon, 2008. ISBN 978-0-415-44499-6 (hardback).

Ibn 'Arabî - Time and Cosmology is the first comprehensive attempt to set forth all the relevant dimensions of time in Ibn 'Arabi's wider cosmology and cosmogony.

James Morris says in his introduction to this work: “this book begins with a helpful survey of the standard theories of cosmology and time found in earlier Hellenistic thinkers, which were largely taken over into the succeeding traditions of Islamic philosophy and science. However, the most creative and unfamiliar aspects of Ibn 'Arabî's cosmological ideas – especially his distinctive conception of the ever-renewed, ongoing and instantaneous nature of the cosmic process of creation (*tajdîd al-khalq*) – are carefully woven together from what have always been profoundly mysterious, problematic, and complexly interwoven symbolic formulations in the Qur'an. Thus the main focus and novel scholarly contribution of the central chapters of this volume lie in the author's careful unfolding and clarification of the intended meanings and references of this dense Qur'anic cosmological symbolism of time and creation, as that multi-dimensional world-view is systematically expounded in elaborate accounts scattered throughout several of Ibn 'Arabî's major works. Every reader who engages with this demanding discussion will come away, at the very least, with a heightened appreciation of the symbolic richness and challenging intellectual dilemmas posed by this unduly neglected – yet arguably quite central and unavoidable – dimension of the Qur'an and its metaphysical teachings.”

Detail of an astrolabe made in al-Andalus during Ibn 'Arabi's lifetime. Astrolabes were used in areas such as astronomy, astrology, navigation, surveying, determining prayer times and the direction of the Qibla.



Recent publications

Fütûhât-i Mekkiyye, by Ibn 'Arabi, translated into Turkish by Ekrem Demirli, published by Litera Yayıncılık, Istanbul, 2006-2008. The translation of the *Fütûhât* into Turkish by Ekrem Demirli has now reached its eighth volume. These are substantial works, more than 400 pages each. With Volume Eight the translation has reached the end of Juz' 119, that is to say, more than half-way through the second of four volumes in the Beirut edition. In 2006 Ekrem Demirli was winner of the Association of Turkish Writers 2006 Best Translation of the Year Award. In a press interview in 2007 he said, "Knowledge must be accessible. The primary aim of my works is to overcome the hurdle of Arabic... The translation of these books will replace the groundless prejudices with sound opinions."

Tasavvuf, No. 21, ed. Halil Ibrahim Simsek, Vahit Göktas, Ankara, 2008. This edition of the journal *Tasavvuf* is devoted to Ibn 'Arabi. It contains about 30 articles in Turkish by Turkish scholars. The articles are also available in pdf format on the journal's website, along with an abstract in English. www.tasavvufdergisi.net/?bolum=dergi

Rasa'il Ibn 'Arabi, Vol. 1, translated into Urdu by Abrar Ahmed, Dar-ut-Tazkeer, 2008. It comprises 12 short works by Ibn 'Arabi, including the *Kitab al-Ahadiyya*, the *Hilyat al-Abdal*, and the *Istilahat al-Sufiyya*.

Symbolisme et Herméneutique dans la Pensée de Ibn 'Arabî, *Actes du Colloque*, ed. Bakri Aladdin, IFPO, Damascus, 2007. Proceedings of the Colloquium held in Damascus, June, 2005.

Beshara and Ibn 'Arabi – A Movement of Sufi Spirituality in the Modern World, by Suha Taji-Farouki, Anqa Publishing, Oxford, 2007. The first detailed analysis of the adoption and adaptation of Ibn 'Arabi's heritage by non-Muslims in the West, *Beshara and Ibn 'Arabi* is a study of Beshara and the Beshara School, which emerged in the Britain of the 1970s. The book depicts an interface between Sufism and the New Age, which it locates in the broader encounter between Islam and the West. Victoria Rowe-Holbrook says, "This important book opens out to provide a much-needed critique of the sociology of Islam in the age of globalization." Michel Chodkiewicz says, "Empathetic in approach and immensely well-documented, this is an exem-

plary work. Its great importance for Akbarian studies is its discussion of the way in which Ibn 'Arabi's teachings have been received and transformed in the modern world."

Love in Sufism – From Rabia to Ibn al-Farid, by Süleyman Derin, İnsan Publications, Istanbul, 2008. "Although the Sufis are well known to refer to love in their writings, there has been little material that Western students and scholars could draw on to get a perspective on this." This book gives an account of five Sufis, all of whom wrote in Arabic, and their conception of divine love. These are Rabia, Hallaj, al-Ghazali, Ibn 'Arabi and Ibn Farid.

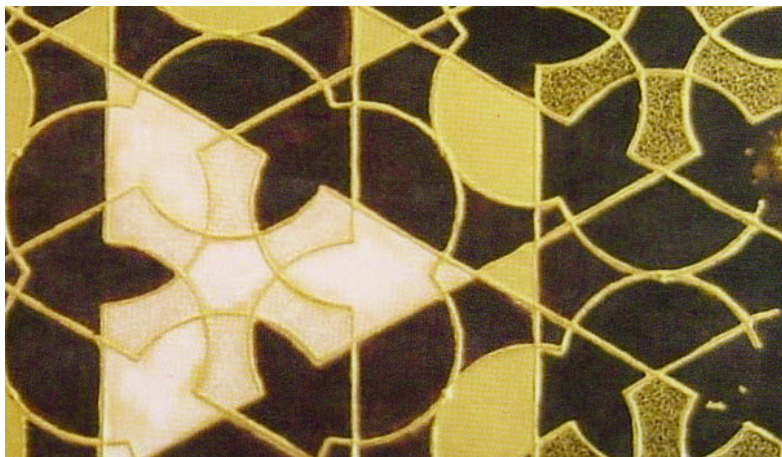
Angels do not dream, by Rachel Gordin. In Hebrew, published 2007. "The challenges of the 21st century require unity. Global warming, pollution of air and water resources, plagues that don't recognize borders, and exterminations of whole species of animals, are not problems of 'us' and 'them' but of humanity as a whole. According to the sheikh, unity is the most profound certainty, to which are directed all the longings of humanity. Going beyond the peel of 'Arab', 'Israeli', 'Moslem', 'Jew', 'Christian', 'rich', 'poor', 'religious' or 'secular', will expose an unknown entity which has no colour, gender or religion. " Rachel Gordin was formerly film-critic of the Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz*. For more information, see www.rachelgordin.com.

Work in progress

USA. Angela Hobright describes her doctoral study at the University of Wisconsin, "The Concept of Veils and Veiling in the Poetry and work of Ibn 'Arabi": As I study Ibn 'Arabi I am drawn to his hunger to push back the veils that surrounded him and the directness of his unveiling. I am, as many are, seeking a connection to the Real and to know that there is no separation from Him but the veil of ourselves draws me to know more and seek He who is not He. While some may find Ibn 'Arabi confusing, I feel it is just the opposite because "He placed no veil over me except myself." And, "If not for this curtain, you would not seek increase in knowledge of Him".* So, I posit that this small work *Kitab al-Hujub* is a key to understanding the concept of the Curtain/Veil in Chapters 254 and 527 of the *Fütûhât al-Makiyyah* as well as "He Who Knows Himself Knows His Lord." (* *The Self-Disclosure of God* by William Chittick pp. 104-112.)

Indonesia. Dr Kautsar Noer writes that Cecep Alba, a post-graduate student at Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University, has completed his doctoral dissertation, entitled *Metode Penafsiran al-Qur'an Ibn 'Arabi (Ibn 'Arabi's Method of Qur'anic Commentary)*. Alba chose this subject as an answer to the accusation that the Sufism of Ibn 'Arabi is not based on the Qur'an. The dissertation shows that Ibn 'Arabi's method cannot be imitated and repeated by anyone because it is given by God. Ibn 'Arabi's commentary unveils both the outer and inner meanings of the Qur'an.

Detail of an image from *Illuminaciones*, an exhibition of works by Rosa Mascarell, inspired by Ibn 'Arabi and dedicated to María Zambrano, Vélez-Málaga, 2008. Egg tempera and gold on a wooden panel.



Turkish drawn from press reports, interviews, blogs and essays from other websites. Other sections deal with books in this field in print in Turkish, and a number of electronic texts of works in Turkish. The site has provision for a discussion forum, but this does not seem to be active yet.

The site is to all intents and purposes anonymous, that is, there is no obvious statement of who is responsible for it, and only in one place is contact information given. It is visited by between 50 and 100 people each day.

Perhaps it should be seen in the context of the strong series of websites in Turkey relating to Sufism (e.g. www.tasavvufdergisi.net) and particular tariqas.



The Ibn 'Arabi Foundation was established in Pakistan in 2007, the work of Abrar Ahmed and Malik Hamesh under the spiritual guidance of Sheikh Rifaqat Hussain Shah. Its website (<http://ibnarabifoundation.co.cc>) was its first significant publishing effort.

The Foundation's first aim is to translate the works of Ibn 'Arabi from Arabic into understandable contemporary Urdu, but it looks beyond that to provide resources for scholars in Urdu, Arabic and English, to promote knowledge of Ibn 'Arabi generally, to create a community aware of his sciences, even to run courses in this area.

The Information and Administration sections of the website are in English, which is the common practice in Pakistan, but it has content in Urdu, Arabic, and English. It includes information about Ibn 'Arabi's life in Urdu, and also has a page on his disciples. It has bibliographies of books in Urdu and Arabic, the texts of a number of works by Ibn 'Arabi, and essays in three languages.

The first printed publication produced by the Foundation is a translation into Urdu of Volume I of the *Rasa'il Ibn 'Arabi*, the collection of short works by Ibn 'Arabi published in Hyderabad Decan in 1948. The Foundation has completed translations of other works which it proposes to publish soon: the *Naqd an Nusus fi sharh al-Fusus*, "Divine Governance of the Human Kingdom", the *Tafsir Sura Fatihah*, and Volume II of *Rasa'il Ibn 'Arabi*.

The Foundation has three Honorary Members, who are Pir Sayed Mohammad Farooq Shah Qadri, who is working on a translation of the *Futuhât*, Qaiser Shahzad, of the Islamic Research Institute of the International Islamic University, Islamabad, and Dr M. Jamil Qalander of the Faculty of Arabic Language, also of the International Islamic University.

Calendar

San Francisco Bay Area – October 2008

October 10: Corey Merriman-Morris and James Morris, *Discovering the Transpersonal: Exploring Ibn Arabi's Method of "Realization" in Practice*. A talk at the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology, Palo Alto. www.itp.edu

October 11: James Morris, "Instruments of Divine Mercy": *Between the Path and the Real in Ibn 'Arabi's Meccan Illuminations*. Ibn 'Arabi Society seminar.

New York – October-November 2008

October 31: Stephen Hirtenstein, "A garden amidst the flames": *a paradigm shift towards spiritual integration and the heart*. A talk at New York Open Center.

November 2: Stephen Hirtenstein, "The mantle of Khidr": *mystery, myth and meaning of the Green Man*. A half-day workshop at the New York Open Center. www.opencenter.org

Oxford – October 2008

October 1: A course of 10 meetings begins at the University of Oxford, Dept. for Continuing Education: *Humanity and the Cosmos in Islamic Mysticism*. Jane Clark and Stephen Hirtenstein.

October 25: The Ibn 'Arabi Society's Annual General Meeting, Friends Meeting House, 2:30 p.m.

Oxford – November 2008

November 29: J. Clark and S. Hirtenstein, *Mary and Jesus: A Sufi Perspective*. A day school at the University of Oxford, Dept. for Continuing Education.

Cairo – December 2008

A conference under the title *Ibn 'Arabi in Egypt - Confluence of East and West*, December 13-16, 2008. Organised by Elisa Toledo, Pablo Beneito, and Ramon Bleuca of the Spanish Embassy.

Oxford – January 2009

January 21: *Gemstones of Wisdom: Readings from Ibn 'Arabi's Fusûs al-Hikam*. The first of 5 meetings. University of Oxford, Department for Continuing Education. Jane Clark and Stephen Hirtenstein.

Fez – April 2009

April 17-24: *Orient and Occident*, the second Fes Festival of Sufi Culture. Provisional programme at www.par-chemins.com.

Oxford – April 2009

April 4: *Moses: a mystical perspective*. Day school at Univ. of Oxford, Dept. for Continuing Education.

Oxford – May 2009

May 2-3: *The Wisdom of the Heart*. The Society's 26th Annual Symposium, Worcester College, Oxford.

New York – October 2009

October 23-24: The Symposium of the Ibn 'Arabi Society in the USA is to be co-sponsored by the Open Center in New York. Details to follow.

Further information on all these events will be posted on the Symposium and Events page of the Society website: ibnarabisociety.org

Websites in Arabic, Turkish and Urdu

There are now substantial websites to do with Ibn 'Arabi in Arabic, Turkish and Urdu. These were established in 2007.

Each has its own character. These publications are significant by virtue of their ability to reach a large number of people.



The Arabic website (www.ibnalarabi.com) introduces itself in these terms:

"This site is dedicated to introducing the Greatest Master Muhyiddin Ibn al-'Arabi and encouraging studies and research related to him. It provides books and literature, including his own and other related books, in addition to discussion forums and articles in Arabic and English. We hope that you will benefit from this site and contribute to the discussion forums and articles knowing that we accept all views, whether supporting

or criticizing, provided that they don't jeopardize general Islamic morals and rules of dialogue."

It is currently composed of four main sections, the first of which is a biography of Ibn al-'Arabi, drawing on a book (*Shams al-Maghrib*) written by Mohamed Haj Yousef. The second is a collection of Arabic texts, mainly of works by Ibn 'Arabi. A third section is a bibliography, a searchable catalogue, of

over 1,500 works on various Islamic subjects. The fourth section is a discussion forum. A fifth section is planned, but not yet in effect, which is entitled "Papers and Studies".

The collection of texts contains more than 20 works of Ibn al-'Arabi including the *Futūhāt* – both as a searchable text and as images of the Cairo edition. The searchable text version conforms to the pagination of the standard Cairo edition, so one can use this search directly to find references without needing to go back to the book. This may be the only online text of the *Futūhāt* that has this feature, so useful for researchers. There are yet more books by Ibn 'Arabi and others, uploaded or linked-to by members in the forums, but these are mostly photocopies of published books.

The most active section of the site is the discussion forum. This has over one thousand registered members, who come to ask questions or contribute to the discussion. The way a *forum* works is that one member asks a question, or puts forward a statement, and other members, any member, answers the question, or responds. These answers can provoke comments themselves, and discussion can get very lively, since participants

are generally anonymous, and feel free to express opinions forcefully. Some more experienced members act as moderators for the forums, which means they can caution people who do not abide by the ground rules of the forum, and can eliminate the kind of abusive messages that this very open approach makes possible.

There are nine forums, or subject areas, which cover matters such as the Qur'an and Hadith, Sufism and tariqas, Sufi masters in history and the present day, Art and poetry, and Inshad. Only one of them is to do with Ibn 'Arabi directly. Not all the forums attract an equal amount of interest, and the one concerning Ibn 'Arabi is one of the three which are visited most.

The site has an English-language section, but this is limited at present to the forums and some biographical information.

The website is the work of Mohamed Haj Yousef, based in the United Arab Emirates. He says, "The idea for the site started when I was in Oxford a few years ago. I suggested translating the MIAS site into Arabic, but I found that translation was difficult and not all that useful while there were better alternatives, since many sources are in Arabic. I have found that there is great interest in and understanding of the subject, even from people in countries usually considered to be anti-Sufi."

"The statistics of the site show that it has been visited over two million times in the past year, though not everybody is coming to read about Ibn 'Arabi. The wide Islamic online library has contributed a lot to listing this site at the top of many major search engines when searching (particularly in Arabic) for any keywords related to Ibn 'Arabi, Sufism, or other Islamic philosophical terms."



Web

مير محيى الدين ابن العربي : الصفحة الأولى
التشجيع على دراسته ونشره، حيث نتمم لكم معلومات
منصلة حول حياته وكتبه بالإضافة إلى ...
www.ibnalarabi.com/ - 44k - [Cached](#) -

The result of a
search in Google
for Ibn 'Arabi



Şeyhü'l Ekber

Muhyiddin İbn Arabi Hz.

The Turkish website (ibnularabi.com) draws together relevant material from a wide range of Turkish sources, from academic papers to newspaper reports.

The Home page carries a lively collection of news items, and reflects just how much is going on in Turkey at this time.

The site has a substantial section on the life of Ibn 'Arabi, and another on his works, a description of 22 titles, treating the *Futūhāt* and the *Fusūs* at length. These are followed by a page devoted to Sadraddin Qunawi (Sadreddin Konevi), something unique to this site.

The Academic section has links to 15 articles and papers by Turkish scholars, and has a list of the theses on Ibn 'Arabi and Sadraddin Qunawi submitted at Turkish universities between 1989 and 2006. Another page makes available 22 articles in

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