

Muhammad Osama Imran attended the course 'In each thing he has a sign' in Fall 2020. His enthusiasm for Ibn Arabi and his contributions to the course have been exemplary. He is an anthropology PhD student at the University of Minnesota and the following is an extract he shares from his reflections on Ibn Arabi's concept of Oneness of Being.

In Osama's words, "My project intersects the fields of anthropology, philosophy, and religious studies. Through my ethnography, I will attempt to read Western scientific and Sufi mystic philosophy together, neither as a meeting of distinct epistemological systems nor as a mere mapping of Western Enlightenment concepts of time, subjectivity, or matter onto the understandings of performers of *zikr*, but rather, as a creative encounter that provincializes universalist categories and allows for an opening of an aperture through which we can ground the vernacular theorizations of Sufi practitioners as philosophical interventions in the academic discussions on agency, temporality, and materiality, and imagine a different future for scholarship on Islamic societies and practices".

Breaths of Intimacy: Entangled Temporalities and Haunted Selves of Sufi practitioners of *zikr*

In order to elusively comprehend the immeasurable complexity of the One and the many, it is useful to understand the Cosmos as the Reality's shadow (Ibn Arabi, *Bezels of Wisdom*). The Light, understood as the agency of creation, casts a shadow that appears in the latent essences of all contingent beings. On a macrocosmic scale, this Cosmos entails the relationship between Spirit and Nature, the former being active, luminous, and commanding, while the latter passive, dark, and receptive. The human as a microcosmic image or 'shadow of the Reality' also entails a spirit enshrined within nature (the body) and mirrors the binary of the manifest and unmanifest, the apparent and the hidden. The former is given to representation and can be accessed through language and senses, but the knowledge of the latter requires His remembrance, or *zikr*. Practiced in several ways, this ritual of contemplative devotion illuminates the spirit and reveals the concealed essence of the human self to its own other. Ibn Arabi writes that the binary of God and Cosmos, Creator and Creation, or Self and Other emerge from the Sole Reality which encapsulates all oppositions (*Bezels of Wisdom*). This means that there is Absolute Oneness, yet crucially, the shadow and the light casting it are not the same. How must we then understand subjectivity in a context when a multiplicity of spirits and the Uniqueness of the latent essence is posited simultaneously? And how is the manifestation of the concealed registered by the bodies of *zikr* practitioners?