

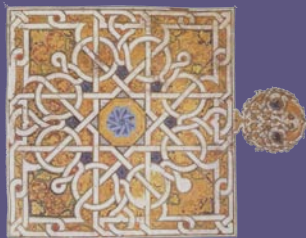


25–26 July 2025, The Warburg Institute, London

MIRRORS *of the*
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in the
COSMOS *of*
IBN 'ARABI

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The Body as Metaphor of Divine Self-Revelation



and **The Warburg Institute**



FARIS ABDEL-HADI is an independent researcher, writer and publisher. With a background in commercial law, Abdel-hadi delivers lectures, seminars and workshops around the world on the subject of Sufism, Islamic philosophy, and intellectual history. His latest book, *Ibn 'Arabi's Religious Pluralism: Degrees of Diversity*, marks a significant contribution to the debate concerning Ibn 'Arabi's views on religion, focusing on his multifaceted approach to non-Abrahamic traditions.

Ijtihad and Nearness in the Kitab Maqam al-Qurba

Ibn ‘Arabi’s notion of struggling and striving on the spiritual path, modelled after the established juristic notion of intellectual independent reasoning, or *ijtihad*, has been given rather short shrift apart from the few scant studies that currently exist. This is all the more surprising when one considers the value the Shaykh al-Akbar attaches to this concept, and the way he uses it to uniquely portray other religions, particularly non-monotheistic ones. It is in light of the existing lacunae that this presentation purports to present Ibn ‘Arabi’s shorter epistle, the *K. Maqam al-Qurba*, in connection with other passages from his writings including the *Futuhāt*, in order to expand our understanding of this quasi-ecumenical framework for reconciling the diversity of views and beliefs that exist.

Friday 25 & Saturday 26 July

The Warburg Institute, Woburn Square, London, WC1H 0AB



MUKHTAR ALI is Assistant Professor of Islamic Studies, specializing in Sufism, Islamic philosophy and ethics. His areas of interest include Arabic and Persian literature, Qur'anic studies, theology, traditional medicine and comparative religion. He is the author of *Philosophical Sufism: An Introduction to the School of Ibn al-'Arabi* (Routledge, 2021) and

The Horizons of Being: The Metaphysics of Ibn al-'Arabi in the Muqaddimat al-Qaysari (Brill, 2020) and his forthcoming work, *Inscriptions of Wisdom: The Sufism of Ibn al-'Arabi in the Mirror of Jami*, is a study on Ibn al-'Arabi's masterpiece, *Fusus al-hikam* through the lens of Jami's *Naqd al-nusus fi sharh Naqsh al-Fusus*.

Divine Necessity of the Comprehensive Being: Unlocking Ibn al-'Arabi's Fusus al-Hikam Through the Adamic Fass

This paper explores the pivotal role of the Adamic *fass* in unlocking the profound metaphysical framework of Ibn al-'Arabi's *Fusus al-Hikam*. Centering on the concept of the comprehensive Being (*al-kawn al-jami'*), a term mentioned in the opening paragraph of the *Fusus*, the Adamic *fass* emerges as the key to understanding the divine necessity of human existence as a mirror of God's names and attributes. By elucidating the unique ontological position of Adam as the *khalifa* (vicegerent) and the synthesis of all divine manifestations, this study demonstrates how the Adamic *fass* provides the interpretive lens through which the overarching unity and wisdom of each *Fass* of the *Fusus al-Hikam* can be accessed. Ultimately, the paper argues that Adam represents not only the archetype of perfected humanity but also the means through which the divine self-disclosure (*tajalli*) achieves its fullest realization, making the Adamic *fass* the cornerstone for comprehending Ibn al-'Arabi's vision of existence.



NUR AHMAD is currently a PhD student of Islam in Java at Leiden University. His PhD research is an intellectually historical study of *Fayd al-Rahman fi Tarjama Tafsir Kalam Malik al-Dayyan (The Grace of the Merciful in the Interpretative Translation of the Words of the King and the Judge)*, a Javanese Sufi tafsir by Muhammad Salih al-Samarani (c.

1820-1903). In this work, he highlights the crucial function of Sufi thought in traditional Java. He is also interested in the broad impact of Qur'anic interpretation to the Javanese intellectual world.

The Muhammadan Circumference – The Reality of Human in the Letters of Muhammad

The Akbarian school of thought was a powerful force in nineteenth-century Java, becoming a central topic in various genres of Javanese traditional literature. The *suluk* and the *primbon*, in particular, were used by Javanese mystics to impart the doctrines of the school to those aspiring to tread the Sufi path. One such doctrine focused on the reality of letters as the building blocks of the material world. The cosmos (i.e. the great human) and the human being (i.e. the small human) were believed to be composed of these letters. In this research, I will delve into the Javanese mystics' interpretation of this Akbarian concept of humans. By interpreting the letters of Muhammad, the Javanese mystics created the Muhammadan Circumference (*al-da'ira al-muhammadiyah*), a visually striking representation of the reality of 'human' that served as a medium to reflect on the source of all things in the Muhammadan Reality (*al-haqiqah al-muhammadiyah*).



GRACIA LÓPEZ ANGUITA is a lecturer in the Department of Arab and Islamic Studies at the University of Seville. She obtained her European PhD with a thesis on Ibn ‘Arabi’s treatise *‘Uqlat al-mustawfiz* awarded with the Doctorate Prize. She focuses her research on the thought of this Master and his school. She has been a visiting researcher at Allameh Tabatabai University (Tehran) and at the École Pratique des Hautes Études (Paris) and is currently part of the team of the research project funded by the Spanish Government and European funds: *Cultural and Religious Identity in Sufism in Morocco and Senegal: Hagiographies, Gender and Symbolology*.

Human and Divine Breaths: Mirrors of Creation, Language and Love

Ibn ‘Arabi states in *Futuhat* that ‘the breath of the creatures comes from the divine breath’ or that ‘the human breath has the same form as that of the Merciful’. Parting from this idea, a whole set of implications related with the articulation of language, the act of praising, the continuous creation, the esoteric-exoteric dialectic or even with love, unfolds itself. From the reading of some of Ibn ‘Arabi’s cosmological texts, it can be deduced that there is a correlation between the cycle of breath – exhalation/inhalation – and the rhythm of creation/annihilation in the Universe.



RIM FERIANI is a passionate education leader. She is currently working as Professional Learning Lead at HIF Swiss International Boarding School. Originally from Tunisia, Rim is fluent in both French and Arabic. In addition to her role at HIF, she serves as Education Director at MIAS Society, overseeing the development and delivery of online courses.

With a strong academic background, Rim has taught at King’s College and the University of Westminster, and has published numerous papers on Sufi philosophy, Postcolonial Francophone and Maghrebian literatures. Her publications include: *Sufi Symbols of the Sacred in L’Enfant de sable* and *Abdelkhébir Khatibi: From the Body to the Text* (co-authored with Professor Debra Kelly).

Reading Ibn Arabi: From the Body of the Text to the Heart of the Words

In this talk Feriani will propose an interpretation of Akbarian texts as embodied spaces that open doors to those wishing to trace hidden meanings. Considering Ibn ‘Arabi’s texts as open spaces where letters, words, and sentences form a harmonious architectural appearance. Like the imaginal figure of the Youth who speaks only through symbols, Ibn ‘Arabi’s texts invite readers to observe closely this richly presented architectural body while tasting the symbolic meanings lurking behind each gateway. Drawing on a selection of passages, Feriani will delve into the enriching interaction between bodily meanings and spiritual bodies. Entering the Akbarian imaginal realm signifies the idea that words are limitless in their capacity of revealing what is hidden. Feriani will explore the uplifting experience of textual interpretation that allows the reader to enter through the threshold of the text and reach towards the spirit of the words.



DUNJA RAŠIĆ (PhD Freie Universität Berlin) is a Sufi scholar and the author of *The Written World of God* (Anqa Publishing, 2021), *Bedeviled* (State University of New York Press, 2024) and *The Nightfolk* (University of California Press, 2025). Her research interests revolve around philosophical Sufism, philosophy of language, Sufi cosmology and the school of Ibn ‘Arabi.

Conquest of the Great City

The closing folios of the holograph of Ibn ‘Arabi’s *K. ‘Anqa’ mughrīb* (MS Berlin 3266) contain a small talisman. This is the oldest of the thirty surviving images in Ibn ‘Arabi’s hand. Ibn ‘Arabi thought talismans more potent than an average drawing of a Sufi shaykh, as they could capture and transfer spiritual powers and abilities from one living being to another. My presentation will examine the intended purpose of the City talisman Ibn ‘Arabi drew in the holograph of *‘Anqa’*, as well as the meanings attributed to it in the subsequent copies of the manuscript; with the later-date scribes changing the shape and purpose of the talisman to suit their needs and concepts of the human body, heart and soul.



MAKOTO SAWAI is an Associate Professor of Tenri University, Japan. After receiving an M.A. from American University in Cairo, he was granted a PhD from Tohoku University in 2015. His major is Religious studies and Islamic studies. He is interested in symbolism in Islamic mystical thought like the divine names, Adam, and life and death. His first book, *Adam in Islam: An Anthropological Approach to Sufi Thought* (2019) written in Japanese, was awarded an annual award of the Japanese Association of Religious Studies as well as the Japanese Association of Indology and Religious Studies.

The Divine Names and Human Names in the Self-Revelation of the Existence

According to Ibn ‘Arabi’s idea of the self-revelation of the Existence, whole existents emerge through the existentialization. Whether it is divine or human, a name of existents is a ‘thing’ (*shay*) as a result of the existentialization of the self-revelation of the Existence. The name itself is a kind of visible thing that we can recognize and a mirror of the Existence. He considers the divine names as well as the hidden meanings of human names like the prophets Muhammad and Adam, and emphasizes the divine mercy demonstrated in names. I would like to talk about how names are narrated as the divine mercy.



GREGORY VANDAMME is a scholar specialising in classical Sufi thought, particularly the works of Ibn ‘Arabi and his commentators. He holds a PhD in Religious Studies from UCLouvain, where his dissertation focused on the concept of *hayra* (perplexity) in Ibn ‘Arabi’s thought, exploring its implications in epistemology, metaphysics, and Qur’anic hermeneutics.

Currently, Gregory is a post doctoral research associate at the University of Chester, following his roles as a research fellow at F.R.S.–FNRS and UCLouvain in Belgium, and as guest lecturer at SciencesPo Paris. His research primarily delves into the doctrines of speculative mysticism, Qur’anic hermeneutics, and spiritual education in Sufism.

The Body of the Caliph: Corporeal Governance of the Human Kingdom in Ibn ‘Arabi’s al-Tadbirat al-ilahiyya and its Commentaries

In his *Book of the Divine Governances for the Restoration of the Human Kingdom* (K. *al-Tadbirat al-ilahiyya fi islah al-mamlaka al-insaniyya*), Ibn ‘Arabi describes how the flourishing of the individual depends on a spiritual policy ensuring harmony in the human microcosm. This governance of the individual is centred on the caliphal authority of the spirit and its vizier, the intellect. But where does that leave the body? Is it merely reduced to passive obedience to this authority, or does it too play an active role in this internal politics? In this presentation, we shall revisit the *Tadbirat* from the vantage point of the body, while also examining two later commentaries by Husayn b. Ṭu‘ma al-Baytimani (d. 1175/1761) and Muhammad al-Damuni (d. ca. 1208/1794).



