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Course Title

“In each thing He has a sign”: An Introduction to Ibn Arabi’s Spiritual Openings.

Course Schedule

From Monday 25 May 2020 to Monday 27 July 2020

Time: 17:30 to 18:30 (BST time)

Course Length

10 weeks

Course Instructor

Dr Rim Feriani

Who is the course for?

This course is suitable for anyone who has an interest in Sufism in general, and in Ibn Arabi in particular. No previous knowledge of Ibn Arabi's writings is needed.

Course Overview

This course is an introduction to the multi-layered meanings of Ibn Arabi's spiritual openings. We will have the opportunity to explore a selection of chapters from Ibn Arabi's *Meccan Openings*. We will also study the relationship between Ibn Arabi's spiritual openings and such key concepts as the *barzakh* (the isthmus of the imaginal world) and the Names of God.

Course Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Identify the multi-layered meanings of spiritual openings in Ibn Arabi's work.
2. Develop a familiarity with Ibn Arabi's key concepts.

3. Discuss the significance of the reader's interpretation in achieving a better understanding of Ibn Arabi's spiritual world.
4. Engage critically with primary and secondary sources.

Methodology and Course Rationale

When we start reading Ibn Arabi's accounts of his spiritual wayfaring, we soon realise that the style of the language he employs is far from being a direct and descriptive one. Thus, understanding Ibn Arabi's inner journeys necessitates that, we as readers, endeavour to explore the multifaceted meanings that the expressions of spiritual openings convey. There are of course several ways of reading and interpreting Ibn Arabi's texts. What we propose in this course is a hermeneutic model of interpretation. Drawing on the theory of Paul Ricoeur, the hermeneutic model adopted in this course is based on two stages. The first stage consists in explaining the textual meanings of Ibn Arabi's spiritual openings. The second stage consists in exploring the "world-propositions" that Ibn Arabi's inner openings project into his readers (Ricoeur 1976: 87). This approach places emphasis on the active and interpretive engagement between the world of the text, the reader's world and Ibn Arabi's spiritual world.

Programme Overview

'An Introduction to Ibn Arabi's Spiritual Openings' is the first in a series of introductory courses.

Instructional Strategies

This course combines lecture instructions with group discussions and individual readings. Instructional strategies include lecture, textual analysis, demonstration, and discussion. Weeks 4, 7 and 10 will be devoted to class discussions and guided individual reflection.

Course Outline

Week 1 Introduction to the course: content and methodology

Week 2 Ibn Arabi's *Meccan Openings*

Week 3 Spiritual Openings in Chapter 317

Week 4 Discussion and self-reflection

Week 5 Spiritual Openings in Chapter 339

Week 6 Spiritual Openings in Chapter 63

Week 7 Discussion and self-reflection

Week 8 The *barzakh* (the isthmus of the imaginal world)

Week 9 The Names of God

Week 10 Discussion and self-reflection