

The Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society

It is He who is revealed in every face, sought in every sign, gazed upon by every eye, worshipped in every object of worship, and pursued in the unseen and the visible. Not a single one of His creatures can fail to find Him in its primordial and original nature.

Ibn 'Arabi, Futûhât al-Makkiyya

Mystic, philosopher, poet, sage, [Muhammad Ibn 'Arabi](#) is one of the world's great spiritual teachers. Ibn 'Arabi was born in Murcia, Al-Andalus, in 1165 and his writings had an immense impact throughout the Islamic world and beyond. The universal ideas underlying his thought are of immediate relevance today.

[The Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society](#) was founded in 1977 to promote a greater understanding of the work of Ibn 'Arabi and his followers. It is an international association with its headquarters in Oxford England and a branch in Berkeley California.

This web site passes on news and announcements of events, and provides information about publications in this field. It has over 150 translations and articles republished from the Society's Journal and other sources.

The movement which is the existence of the universe is the movement of love.

The Writings of Ibn 'Arabi

Written by The Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society

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Ibn 'Arabi, Fusûs al-Hikam

The Writings of Ibn 'Arabi

Ibn 'Arabi began to write books at about the age of 27, and continued to do this for the rest of his life. Based on the titles in two lists that he left, it can be said that Ibn 'Arabi wrote about 300 works. However, the works by Ibn 'Arabi which are extant today number between 75 and 100. Some of these are very long, and some are short.

His best known works are:

***Fusûs al-hikam* ("The Ringstones of Wisdom")**

Considered to be the quintessence of Ibn 'Arabi's spiritual teaching, it comprises twenty-seven chapters, each dedicated to the spiritual meaning and wisdom of a particular prophet. Over the centuries Ibn 'Arabi's students held this book in the highest esteem and wrote over one hundred commentaries on it.

***Al-Futûhât al-makkiyya* ("The Meccan Openings")**

"This is a vast compendium of metaphysics, cosmology, spiritual anthropology, psychology, and jurisprudence. Topics include the inner meanings of the Islamic rituals, the stations of travellers on the journey to God and in God, the nature of cosmic hierarchy, the spiritual and ontological meaning of the letters of the Arabic alphabet, the sciences embraced by each of the ninety-nine names of God, and the significance of the differing messages of various prophets." This work was written over a twenty-year period as Ibn 'Arabi travelled in the Near East, and revised in a second recension during the time he lived in Damascus.

***Tarjuman al-ashwaq* ("The Interpreter of Yearnings")**

This short collection of love poetry was inspired by his meeting during his first pilgrimage to Mecca with Nizam, the beautiful and gifted daughter of a great scholar from Isfahan. He later wrote a long commentary on the poems to prove to one of his critics that they deal with spiritual truths and not profane love. It was the first of Ibn 'Arabi's works to be translated into English.

Translations and articles in this section

[Selected major works of Ibn 'Arabi](#) . Ibn 'Arabi's output was prodigious, ranging from the enormous *Futihat al-Makkiyya*, which fills thousands of pages of Arabic, to treatises no more than a few pages long. The selection provides a brief overview of the best-known titles. This article is reproduced from *The Unlimited Mercifier - The spiritual life and thought of Ibn 'Arabi*, by Stephen Hirtenstein.

[Seleção das maiores obras de Ibn 'Arabi](#) , (the same article, translated into Portuguese)

Fusûs al-Hikam

[Ibn 'Arabi's own Summary of the Fusûs](#) , introduced and translated by William Chittick. The importance of Ibn 'Arabi's *Fusûs al-hikam* as the quintessence of his writings and thought and a major source of his influence is well-known, and is attested to by the more than one hundred commentaries written upon it. Ibn 'Arabi also wrote a work called

Naqsh al-fusûs

(the "Imprint" or "Pattern of the Fusûs"), in which he summarized briefly the main discussions of the

Fusûs

itself. Abd al-Rahman Jamî's work,

Naqd al-nusûs fi sharh naqsh al-fusûs

, written in the year 863/1459 incorporated the text of Ibn 'Arabi's summary, and had his own commentary in a mix of Arabic and Persian. William Chittick's translation of about one-sixth of Jamî's work was first published in Sophia Perennis (1975), then in the Journal of the Ibn 'Arabi Society (1982). (

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156KB)

[The Chapter Headings of The Fusûs](#) by William Chittick. This is a study of the significance of the chapter headings of the *Fusûs* as understood by

four major commentators on the work. The first was Sadr al-Dîn al-Qûnawî (d. 673/1274), Ibn al-'Arabi's son-in-law, chief disciple, foremost interpreter, and the author of

al-Fukûk

, a commentary on the central themes of each chapter of the

Fusûs

. At his behest his disciple Mu'ayyid al-Din al-Jandi composed one of the earliest and most extensive commentaries on the

Fusûs

itself. Two other commentaries were written by 'Abd al-Razzâq al-Kâshânî (d. 730/1329 or

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736/1335-6), who studied the

Fusûs

with al-Jandi, and Dâwûd al-Qaysari (d. 751/1350), who studied it with al-Kâshâni. From the Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society, Vol. II, 1984. (

pdf

188KB)

[Extract from the Fusûs al-Hikam](#) "The calling by revelation of the Brides of Absoluteness in the places of absoluteness of the Wisdoms of the bezels" and "O f the Divine Wisdom (al hikmat al ilâhiyyah) in the Word of Adam".

Extract from Fusûs al-Hikam, Volume 1, translation from the Arabic into Ottoman Turkish with commentary, rendered into English by Bulent Rauf with the help of Rosemary Brass and Hugh Tollemache. Published by the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society.

Futûhât al-Makkiyya

[Introduction to The Meccan Revelations](#), written by James Morris. This is the Introduction to *The Meccan Revelations*, by Michel Chodkiewicz, William Chittick and James Morris (Pir Publications Inc, 2002). This volume consists of the English portions of a bi-lingual book originally published in Paris, 1988. Although this is the introduction to a specific work, it gives a valuable overview of the *Futuhât al-Makkiyya* and to publications about it in French and English.

[How to Study the Futûhât: Ibn 'Arabi's Own Advice](#) by James Morris. This includes a translation of key sections of the complex Introduction (*muqaddima*)

to the

Futûhât al-Makkiyya

. This article is also available in Swedish (

[Hur Man Studerar](#)

[Futûhât :](#)

[Ibn 'Arabis Egna Råd](#)

).

[Two Chapters from the Futuhât](#), introduced and translated by William Chittick. This is the full text of Chapter 317 (Concerning The True Knowledge of the Waystation of Trial and its Blessings) and Chapter 339 (Concerning the True Knowledge of a Waystation in which the Shari'a kneels before the Reality, seeking Replenishment). The chapters deal with several

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themes. Among these, two of the central ideas of Ibn al-'Arabi's spiritual universe stand out: the 'Oneness of Being' (*wahdat al-wujud*) and 'Perfect Man' (*al-insan al-kamil*)

). These translations first appeared in

Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi - A Commemorative Volume

, ed. S. Hirtenstein and M. Tiernan, Element Books, Shaftesbury, 1993. (

pdf

108KB)

[On the Inner Knowledge of Spirits Made of an Igneous Mixture: Chapter 9 of the *Futūhāt al-Makkiyya*](#)

Gracia López Anguita. It is perhaps stating the obvious to say that, from an Akbarian perspective, all the elements of creation constitute a theophany. However, it is worth recalling in the case of the genies, given the misgivings which this element of Islamic cosmology can give rise to and the negative connotations which accompany it. The study of the figure of the genie or

jinn

in Ibn 'Arabī's

Futūhāt

reveals both the network of connections between the genie and other elements of his cosmological system and the different levels of interpretation of this concept.

[Ibn 'Arabi on the Barzakh - Chapter 63 of the *Futūhāt*](#) (pdf 160KB), James Morris. One of Ibn 'Arabi's most extensive and widely influential discussions of the Imagination/Barzakh, in all its humanly relevant dimensions, was in the set of five eschatological chapters (61-65) within the long opening section of the *Futūhāt*. Those chapters, whose arrangement follows the traditional ordering of the symbolic "events" and "places" of the Resurrection mentioned in Islamic scriptures, begin with descriptions of Gehenna and the "Fires" and other torments of its residents (chapters 61-62) and conclude with the stages of redemption and eventual bliss of souls who have reached the Gardens of paradise (chapters 64-65).

[The Mahdi and His Helpers - Chapter 366 of the *Futūhāt*](#) (pdf 296KB), James Morris. The primary focus of Chapter 366 of the *Futūhāt* is the distinctive set of spiritual qualities and capacities marking this particular spiritual stage (*manzil*)--characteristics which Ibn 'Arabi finds symbolized in the various hadith concerning the eschatological role of the Mahdi and his "Helpers" or "Ministers," but which he insists are already realized by those saints (*awliya'*)

) who have attained this degree of spiritual realization, who have already reached the "end of time."

[The Spiritual Ascension: Ibn 'Arabî and the Mi'râj - Chapter 367 of the Futûhât](#) (pdf 368KB), James Morris. The initial indications in the Koran and hadith concerning the Prophet's Ascension (*mi'raj*) or nocturnal voyage (*isra'*, at Kor. 17:1) and the revelatory vision in which it culminated (Kor. 53:1-18) subsequently gave rise to a vast body of interpretations among the many later traditions of Islamic thought and spirituality. Ibn 'Arabi's personal adaptation of that material, in at least four separate longer narratives, reflects both the typical features of his distinctive approach to the Koran and hadith and the full range of his metaphysical-theological teachings and practical spiritual concerns.

[The Futuhat Makkiyya: Some Unresolved Enigmas](#), Michel Chodkiewicz. This seminal paper demonstrated in a new way the intimate connection between the Qur'an and the writings of Ibn 'Arabi, by showing how the 114 chapters of the section of the *Futûhât* (called the *fasl al-manâzil*) correspond to Surahs of the Qur'an in sequence on a one-to-one basis. It exposes an underlying structure to the *Futûhât* never previously described in public commentaries, which makes untenable common scholarly characterisations of it as a disorderly encyclopedia of bookish knowledge or a heterogeneous collection of passages juxtaposed simply as a result of the caprices of inspiration. Themes in this paper were later developed by Michel Chodkiewicz in *An Ocean Without Shore – Ibn Arabi, The Book, and the Law*, New York, 1993.

[On Knowing the Station of Love: Poems from the 78th Chapter of the Futûhât Al-Makkiyyah](#), by Ralph Austin. Translations of five poems.

Diwān and Tarjumān al-ashwāq

[The Ship of Stone](#) by Claude Addas. A seminal essay on the place of poetry in the work of Ibn 'Arabi. The same paper is available in French, [Le Vaisseau de pierre](#).

[The *Dīwān* of Ibn 'Arabi](#) by Roger Deladrière. The 475 large format pages of the Boulaq edition correspond to a selection of more than 800 pieces of verse. A *dīwān* being by definition a collection of poems which have been sanctioned by the writer, one would

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expect to find in the Shaykh al-Akbar's the pieces of verse that can be read in his major works, such as the

Futūhāt.

Yet when a detailed inventory is made, it turns out that less than a tenth of his known output is to be found in the

Dīwān.

This is an important survey of this very important book.

[Selections from Ibn 'Arabi's *Tarjumān al-ashwāq* \(Translation of Desires\)](#) , four poems translated by Michael Sells.

[Ibn 'Arabi's "Gentle Now, Doves of the Thornberry and Moringa Thicket"](#) , by Michaels Sells.

An introduction to and translation of Poem 11 from the

Translation of Desires

, which contains what is surely the most-quoted passage in Ibn 'Arabi's works, "O marvell! a garden amidst fires! My heart has become capable of every form..."

[Ibn 'Arabi's Poem 18 \(*Qif bi l-Manâzil*\) From the *Translation of Desires*](#) , Michael Sells.

"...the journey is the constant movement and transformation

(*taqallub*)

of the heart, which in each moment must give up a manifestation of ultimate reality (a manifestation symbolized by the beloved) in order to receive a new manifestation."

[The Ransom and the Ruin](#) , Aaron Cass

For Ibn 'Arabi poetry is the expression of an intensive and prolonged contemplation of God and nothing else. Ibn 'Arabi is describing in the *Tarjuman al-Ashwaq* the manner proper to contemplation of Reality. The images are the images of primordial forms (not archetypes, which are the synthetic product of a collusion between a speculation that the world is real and the conjecture of a higher reality) the modes in which the divine wisdom clothes itself before its descent into the realm of thought.

Other books

[The Journey through the Circles of Inner Being according to Ibn 'Arabi's *Mawâqî' al-nujûm*](#) , by Denis Gril. Every spiritual path, starting from the corporeal and ordinary being and extending to the spiritual and sanctified being is, in fact, a whole life's journey. In *Mawâqî' al-nujûm*

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'The twilight of the stars", Ibn 'Arabî tells us about this progressive journey, through lights and shadows, happiness and sadness, success and danger.

[Ibn al-'Arabî's *Book of the Fabulous Gryphon \('Anqā' Mughrib\)*](#) , by Gerald Elmore. Of the principal extant works of Ibn al-'Arabî, the

'Anqā' mughrib

is one of the half-dozen or so earliest, and its manuscript appears to be the oldest surviving text of any book by the Shaykh. Apart from the the

Fusūs al-hikam

and

Al-Futūhāt al-makkīyah,

the

'Anqā'

seems to have been commented upon by Arab writers more times than almost any of Ibn al-'Arabî's other books, perhaps because of its subject matter, the meaning of the Seal of the Saints, and because of the complexity of its language.

[On Majesty and Beauty - *The Kitâb Al-Jalâl Wa-l Jamâl* of Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi](#) , translated by Rabia Terri Harris. "Written in the space of one day in April/May 1205 (601) in Mosul, it discusses various Quranic verses in terms of two apparently opposing aspects, Majesty and Beauty, alluding to the third aspect which integrates them, the balance of Perfection." This translation first appeared in Volume VIII of the Journal. (

pdf

68KB)

[Ibn al-'Arabi's Testament on the Mantle of Initiation \(*al-Khirqah*\)](#) translated by Gerald Elmore.

Written towards the end of Ibn 'Arabi's life, this short work expands from the Quranic verse: "O Children of Adam, We have sent down upon you a Vestment

(libâs)

to cover your shameful parts, and beautiful Raiment

(rîsh)

; and the Robe of God-fearing

(libâs al-taqwâ)

- that is best." (

pdf

300KB)

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[Introducing Ibn 'Arabi's "Book of Spiritual Advice"](#) , James Morris. (pdf 156KB) Among the shorter treasures his more famous works have sometimes overshadowed is Ibn 'Arabi's remarkable book of spiritual aphorisms, the "Book of Spiritual Advice" (

Kitâb al-Nasâ'ih

). These short sayings are meant to function as a probing mirror of one's spiritual conscience, examining the authenticity and proper integration of each reader's states and stations.

[Book of the Quintessence of What is Indispensable for the Spiritual Seeker](#) , James Morris. (pd

f

192KB). A partial translation of

Adab al-Murîd

[Kitâb al-fâna' fi-l mushâhadah](#) , translated by Stephen Hirtenstein and Layla Shamash. Its central topic is the path of mystical unveiling which leads to the contemplation of God. Although at first sight it may seem like a defense of the spiritual way against the attacks of rationalists and dogmatic theologians, it turns out to be a set of indications and exhortations for those on the path to undergo the spiritual death (*fanâ'*) and be realised in contemplation.

[The *Kitab al-inbah* of 'Abdallah Badr al-Habashi](#) , translated by Denis Gril. In one sense the *Kitâb al-inbâh*

is not by Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi, for it was written by his companion of twenty-three years, beloved friend and student, 'Abdallah Badr al-Habashi. However it records what al-Habashi says he heard Ibn 'Arabi say, and may be trusted as a faithful account.

[I entrust to you a bequest](#) Three passages from the *Kitab al-Was'il* by Isma'il Ibn Sawdakîn, in which he recorded things he asked Ibn 'Arabi about, and answers he received. These concern servanthood, retreat, and what was said to Bayazid al-Bastami - "Leave yourself and come!". Translated by Stephen Hirtenstein.

[Some Dreams of Ibn 'Arabi](#) pdf , translated by James Morris. These are four of the eighteen dreams recorded in the Shaykh's short "Epistle of Good Tidings" (

Risâlat al-Mubashshirât

), whose title alludes to a famous hadith where the Prophet explains that these "good tidings...are the dream of the muslim, either what that person sees or what is shown to them,

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which is one of the parts of prophecy.' ...So I decided to mention in this section some of what I have seen in dreams that involves a benefit for others and points out for them the means for reaching the Good, since there is no need to mention what only concerns myself."

[Love Letters to the Ka'ba. A presentation of Ibn 'Arabi's *Tâj al-Rasâ'il*](#), Denis Gril. In this book, *The Crown of Epistles and the Path to Intercessions*

, Ibn 'Arabi addresses eight love letters to the Ka'ba. This contains all the variations that Arabic literature has to offer on the theme of love. This is an unusual love, for a being made of stone, though oh so sacred, situated in an intermediate world between the human and the divine. Denis Gril introduces a treatise, as rich as it is difficult, which must take its place beside the *Tarjumân al-Ashwâq* and the chapter on Love in the *Futûhât*.

[Three Dimensions of the *Rûh*](#) by Huzayfa Mangera. Ibn 'Arabi's *Rûh al-Quds* is well-known through the *Sufi s of Andalusia*

, which includes the extraordinary pen-pictures which make up the middle part of the book, combined with similar descriptions from another work. This article is the first study of the *Rûh al-Quds* as a whole, and brings out the context in which those memorable biographies were set. It is an excellent introduction to the book.

["Unveiling from the Effects of the Voyages"](#) . Angela Jaffray. An Introduction to the *Kitâb al-isfâr 'an natâ'ij al-asfâr*

. The theme of movement and transformation runs through all of Ibn 'Arabi's works. Part cosmology, part Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsîr*) and stories of the prophets (*qisas al-anbiyâ'*), part spiritual vademecum, its seventeen chapters deny categorization. After an initial chapter discussing "the three voyages" – to God, from God, and with God – subsequent chapters are given titles characterizing the specific voyage dealt with, such as The lordly voyage of the All-Merciful from the Cloud to the Throne; the voyage of creation and command, or the voyage of origination; the voyage of the Qur'an; and the voyage of the vision in the signs and the esoteric significations (Muhammad's *mir'âj*).

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[An Introduction to Ibn 'Arabi's *Mishkat al-Anwar*](#) . The *Mishkat al-Anwar* consists of 101 *hadîth h qudsi* collected by Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi. It has few of Ibn 'Arabi's own words in it. This collection is a selection and an arrangement. In some cases only part of a long *hadîth* is given, and a long *hadîth* may be broken up into short sections. There is a broad progression from the first *hadîth*, which expresses God's complete independence of us, and our complete dependence on Him, to the last *hadîth*, which reports His welcome to the people of Paradise. These sayings are full of mercy and generosity.