

Interpreting Ibn ‘Arabī

Interpreting Ibn ‘Arabī: Philosophy, Theology, and Exegesis in Later Islam offers a comprehensive and critical examination of one of Islam’s most enigmatic and influential thinkers. Through close engagement with major controversies surrounding Ibn ‘Arabī’s ideas—from the doctrine of the Oneness of Being to his vision of sainthood and Qur’ānic interpretation—this volume traces the rich and contested legacy of his thought across the Islamic intellectual tradition.

Addressing the most debated aspects of Ibn ‘Arabī’s teachings, this book surveys the major contests around the fixed entities, Divine Power, human freedom, and the nature of the Perfect Man. It delves into accusations of pantheism and theological transgression, and explores the strategies employed by the Shaykh al-Akbar’s followers to clarify, defend, or reinterpret his views. It also explores Ibn ‘Arabī’s provocative Qur’ānic hermeneutics, which includes perspectives on mercy, the problem of idolatry, and the fate of unbelievers, situating the Shaykh’s teachings within broader Sufi, philosophical, and theological currents. Finally, it reveals how Ibn ‘Arabī challenged dominant rationalist frameworks and expanded the boundaries of Islamic knowledge by restoring to imagination a central epistemological role.

This book is an essential resource for scholars of Islamic philosophy, theology, Sufism, Qur’ānic studies, and the intellectual history of the Muslim world, shedding new light on the interpretive debates that have shaped Ibn ‘Arabī’s enduring legacy.

Arjun Nair is an Assistant Professor of Religion at the University of Southern California. He holds a PhD in the History and Cultures of the Muslim World from the Department of Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations at Harvard University. He specializes in the study of religion, Islamic philosophy, and Sufi literature. He has also published in numerous peer-reviewed venues, including the *Journal of Islamic Studies*, the *Journal of Qur’anic Studies*, the *Journal of Sufi Studies*, *Religions*, and the *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn ‘Arabi Society*.

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Contents

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	vii
<i>Note on Transliteration and Translation</i>	viii
Introduction	1
<i>The Problems (mushkilāt) of the Fuṣūṣ: Interpretive Divergences</i>	2
<i>From the Lack of Understanding ('adam al-fahm): Solving the Problems of the Fuṣūṣ</i>	3
<i>The Present Study: Interpreting Ibn 'Arabī</i>	5
1 "All is He, All is Not He": The Vision of <i>Huwa-lā Huwa</i>	15
<i>The Entities (a'yān) are Not Made (ghayr maj'ūl) and Non-Existent (ma'dūm)</i>	22
<i>The Mirror-Entities and the Color-Entities</i>	25
<i>The Pre-Existent Forms (ṣuwar) of the Entities: The Cloud, the Barzakh, the Creator-Real</i>	32
2 Divine Power and Human Freedom	49
<i>The Essence (Dhāt) and the Divinity (Ilāh), Determination (taqdīr) and Creation (khalq)</i>	50
<i>Freedom and Compulsion, Responsibility (taklīf) and Predestination (qadar)</i>	56
3 Incomparability and Similarity	67
<i>To Affirm Incomparability is to Affirm Limitation (taḥdīd) and Restriction (taqyīd)</i>	73
<i>Transcending the God of Beliefs (al-ilāh al-mu'taqadāt)</i>	77
<i>The Divinity Clothed in Forms of Belief: Worshipping the Idols of Belief</i>	85

4 “Created in his/His Form”: The All-Comprehensive Form of Man	103
<i>Originated and Beginningless (ḥādīth azalī), Perpetual and Endless (dā’im abadī)</i> 110	
<i>The Problem of Man’s Firstness (awwaliyya)</i> 114	
<i>Creation (khalq) in Two Senses: Determination (taqdīr) and Existentialiation (ijād)</i> 115	
5 Becoming a Form of God (ṣūrat al-Haqq)	127
<i>The False Form (ṣūra bāṭila) of the Pharaoh of Moses (Fir’awn Mūsā)</i> 131	
<i>The Form of al-Kharrāz, One of the Tongues of God (lisān min alsinat al-Haqq)</i> 135	
6 The Messenger Takes His Knowledge from the Seal of the Saints	145
<i>The Prophets (anbiyā’)</i> in the <i>Fuṣūṣ al-hikam</i> 146	
<i>The Seal of the Saints: “The Space for Two Bricks” (mawdī’ labinatayn)</i> 150	
7 Interpreting the Qur’ān	162
<i>Between ta’wīl, ishāra, and ‘ubūr: Ibn ‘Arabi’s Qur’ānic Hermeneutics</i> 163	
<i>Abraham’s Sacrifice (dhabh), God’s Deception (makr), Drowning in Knowledge</i> 169	
8 The Hermeneutics of Mercy	181
<i>The Faith of Pharaoh (īmān Fir’awn) in Q. 10:90-92</i> 183	
<i>From Torments (‘adhāb) to the Sweetness of Torments (‘udhūba)</i> 191	
Conclusion: Interpreting the Shaykh al-Akbar	207
<i>“He/not He” Revisited: Ambiguity and Knowledge as Perplexity (hayra)</i> 210	
<i>“He Who Does Not Know the Status of Imagination Has No Knowledge”</i> 211	
<i>Bibliography</i>	214
<i>Index</i>	222