



The Bezels of Wisdom

Ibn Arabi , R.W. Austin (Editor)

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Called by Moslems "the greatest master," Ibn Al-'Arabi was a Sufi born in twelfth-century Spain. The Bezels of Wisdom was written during the author's later years and was intended to be a synthesis of his spiritual doctrine. Bezel means a setting in which a gem, engraved with one's name, is set to make a seal ring. The setting in which Ibn Al-'Arabi has placed his spiritual wisdom are the lives of the prophets. It was in Damascus that he had the vision that prompted him to write this book. He describes it in his preface: "I saw the Apostle of God in a visitation...He had in his hand a book and he said to me, 'This is the book of the bezels of Wisdom; take it and bring it to men that they might benefit from it.'"

The book portrays the wisdom of love through Abraham, of the unseen through Job, of light through Joseph, of intimacy through Elias and so on. Ibn Al-'Arabi invites us in these pages to explore the inner spiritual meanings of the Quran, its heartful meanings. In one of his poems he stated, "Love is the creed I hold: wherever turns His camels, Love is still my creed and faith."

The Bezels of Wisdom Details

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Download and Read Free Online The Bezels of Wisdom Ibn Arabi , R.W. Austin (Editor)

From Reader Review The Bezels of Wisdom for online ebook

Raqib says

one of the heaviest book I have ever picked up. Insight could only be attained by experience not by reading.

Gwen says

Being a Sufi and all, I pretty much have to give Ibn Arabi a five. He pretty much defined what it is to be a Sufi. Even with that aside though this book is amazing. It is hard to find books that really truly make a person drunk with words, but this one manages it. The introduction and translation are both done very well. The only caution I have for the book is that it isn't the kind of book to pick up as an introduction to Sufism. The material really needs a solid grounding in the Abrahamic faiths and Sufi thought. It isn't the kind of book to read in one weekend either. It is best to read it a little bit at a time. I would easily recommend this to anyone looking to delve into the deeper concepts of Sufism.

Firdous says

Tip for reading - Before starting the book one can listen (youtube) or read lectures by Professor William Chittick on Arabi's philosophy.

Here's the link which has helped me a lot

[https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ib...](https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ibn-arabi/)

Kat says

This is what you might call very heavy reading. Fascinating, but deeply philosophical. I've decided to return it to the library before finishing it. I think it would be a better book to discuss in a class with a Sufi Master. One bezel that I did garner was: "The Reality wanted to see the essences of His Most Beautiful Names or, to put it another way, to see His own Essence, in an all-inclusive object encompassing the whole [divine:] Command, which, qualified by existence, would reveal to Him his own mystery. For the seeing of a thing, itself by itself, is not the same as its seeing itself in another, as it were in a mirror; for it appears to itself in a form that is invested by the location of the vision by that which would only appear to it given the existence of the location and its [the location's:] self-disclosure to it."

Ali Reda says

Yousef Nabil says

Ahmedasal says

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Jimmy Ele says

Illuminating text on Ibn Arabi's understanding of the essence of the different seals of wisdom represented by some of the major prophets. The seals of the divine wisdoms of Ibrahim (Abraham), Yusuf (Joseph), Da'ud (David), Sulayman (Solomon), Isa (Jesus), Musa (Moses), and Muhammad (peace be upon them all) were my favorites this first time reading this text through. I have quoted this text significantly in Good Reads in order to capture some of the gems that struck me as important. Ibn Arabi is known as a highly elevated teacher (in rank and position) and was a proponent of the idea of active imagination and a believer in the spiritual reality and symbols behind manifest creation. Some of the things he believed in would probably be scoffed at nowadays but find their place applauded in the science fiction universe of Star Wars. He spoke of the apparition of mystical teachers ala Obi Wan Kenobi, except in this case it would be Islamic teachers and Prophets. It is said that when he had an important question dealing with life, reality, and the spiritual reality behind existence he would ask for the answer and a teacher or prophet would appear to him, either in actuality or in his dreams or in the presence between this world and the world of imagination. I will not go any further on the subject but have only touched lightly on the subject so that the idea of this book could be somewhat understood. His depth of understanding in certain matters and unique takes on our beliefs leaves me with a sense of admiration and deep respect even if others would not entirely agree with him. There were instances in the lives of the prophets which I was able to look at through a deeper lens than the one I had been looking through. I believe that this was the culmination of his life's work and it certainly shows. Not everything I read, I could entirely understand at this moment in time, but what I could understand struck me as inspired, original and having as its focal point, the Quran and the Sunnah. There were only very rare

instances that I did not understand what was being said, and this could just have been a fault of the translation or in the transmission of deep spiritual realities that could not be accessed at this point in my life. I highly recommend this book to anyone searching for deeper meaning within their own lives or in the lives of the Prophets, the Quran, Existence, God, the Universe, Different (Hadarat) presences, Dimensions, etc.

Joseph says

Some seriously crazy shit.

Abrar Shahi says

Needs more than one reading. I will soon make a critical edition and translate it into Urdu by the will of Allah.

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Robert Sheppard says

CLASSICAL ARABIC AND ISLAMIC MASTERPIECES OF WORLD LITERATURE FROM THE ISLAMIC GOLDEN AGE----"THE KORAN," AL-KHANSA, HAFIZ, ABU-NAWAS, RUMI, AL-JAHIZ, "ONE THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS," IBN SINA (AVICENNA), IBN RUSHD (AVEROES),IBN ARABI, IBN-TUFAIL (ABUBACER) & AL-HALLAJ---FROM THE WORLD LITERATURE FORUM RECOMMENDED CLASSICS AND MASTERPIECES SERIES VIA GOODREADS—ROBERT SHEPPARD, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

"THE INK OF THE SCHOLAR"---THE ISLAMIC GOLDEN AGE

The "Islamic Golden Age" was an historical period beginning in the mid-8th century lasting until the Mongol conquest of Baghdad in 1258, generally associated with the rise of the Abbasid Caliphate around 750 AD, and the moving of the capital from Damascus to Baghdad, but also including contributions from remnant Umayyad kingdoms in Iberia (modern Spain and Portugal) and North-West Africa. The Abbasids were influenced by the Qur'anic injunctions and Hadith such as "the ink of a scholar is more holy than the blood of a martyr" that stressed the value of knowledge and reason, and were also more cosmopolitan than the Umayyads, being allied with the Persian Barmacids and less ethnocentrically focused on the narrower tribal

culture of the Kureysh, the original tribe of Muhammad.

The rise of Islam was instrumental in uniting the warring Arab tribes into a powerful empire. The Abbasids claimed authority as belonging to the same family and tribe to which the Prophet Muhammad belonged, and were for that reason considered holy. During this period the Arab world became an intellectual center for science, philosophy, medicine and education; the Abbasids championed the cause of knowledge and established the House of Wisdom (Bait-ul-Hikmat) at Baghdad, where both Muslim and non-Muslim scholars sought to translate and gather all the world's knowledge into Arabic, and also the second court language Persian.

The Arabs displayed a remarkable capacity of assimilating the scientific knowledge of the civilizations they had overrun. Many classic works of antiquity that might otherwise have been lost were translated into Arabic and Persian and later in turn re-translated into Turkish, Hebrew and Latin. St. Thomas Aquinas, for example, gained crucial familiarity with the works of Aristotle through translations into Arabic and then into Latin accompanied by the commentary of the great Muslim Aristotelian scholar Ibn Sina (Avicenna).

During this period the Arab world was a collection of cultures which put together, synthesized and significantly advanced the knowledge gained from the ancient Roman, Chinese, Indian, Persian, Egyptian, Greek, Byzantine and Phoenician civilizations. The decimal system and "zero" travelled from India into Arabic culture during this time and in 9th century it was popularized in the Islamic regions by the Persian mathematician al-Khwarizmi. Later in 12th century the renown Western monk Abelard introduced what Westerners call "Arabic Numerals" to Europe, but which the Arabs themselves termed "Hindsi" or "Indian Numerals," indicating their true origin. They also began the use of Algebra and advanced logarithms in order to solve complex mathematical problems.

There is little agreement on the precise causes of the decline in Arabic creativity and intellectual leadership ending the Islamic Golden Age, but in addition to the devastating invasion by the Mongols and crusaders with the destruction of libraries and madrasahs, it has also been suggested that political mismanagement and the stifling of "Ijtihad" (independent reasoning) in the 12th century in favor of institutionalised "Taqleed" (imitation and uncritical following of precedent) played a part.

THE KORAN (QURAN) IN WORLD LITERATURE

Any understanding of the literatures of Islamic nations must begin with a familiarity with the Koran, just as any understanding of Western Literature must include a basic familiarity with the Bible. Muslims believe the Quran to be verbally revealed through Angel Gabriel (Jibril) from God to Muhammad gradually over a period of approximately 23 years beginning from 609 AD, when Muhammad was 40, to 632 AD, the year of his death.

Muslims regard the Quran as the main miracle of Muhammad, the proof of his prophethood and the culmination of a series of divine messages to humanity that started with the messages revealed to Adam, regarded in Islam as the first prophet, and continued with the Scrolls of Abraham (Suhuf Ibrahim), the Tawrat (Torah) of Moses, the Zabur (Tehillim or Psalms) of David, and the Injil (Gospels) of Jesus. The Quran assumes familiarity with major narratives recounted in Jewish and Christian scriptures, summarizing some, dwelling at length on others and in some cases presenting alternative accounts and interpretations of

events. The Quran describes itself as a book of guidance, sometimes offering detailed accounts of specific historical events, and often emphasizing the moral significance of an event.

Regardless of whether one believes or disbelieves in the Koran, equally as in the case of whether one believes or disbelieves in the Christian or Jewish Bible, it is an inescapable necessity for every educated person to read and be familiar with these works as literature if one has any hope of understanding World Literature, Western Literature, Islamic and Arabic Literature, English, French, German, Russian or any national literature of any culture affected by their influence. No one can understand English or American Literature without familiarity with the King James and other versions of the Bible, the words, phrases, style and stories and themes of which permeate and recur in Shakespeare, Donne, Milton, and a thousand believing and unbelieving authors and works. Similarly, any understanding of German Literature is impossible without knowledge of the Bible of Luther. The Koran thus takes its place in World Literature by virtue of its shaping influence on the mindset and consciousness of over one billion Muslims across dozens of nations, cultures and literatures as well as the cultural foundation of dozens of Muslim authors and works of worldwide importance such as Rumi, Attar, Hafiz, the Thousand and One Nights, Mafouz Naguib, Ghalib and others. Thus it is required reading, at least in part, for any Citizen of the Republic of Letters or of the modern world, alongside the Bible, the Buddhist Sutras such as the Fire Sermon, the Bhagavad Gita and the Dao De Ching, as part of the common heritage of mankind.

Compared to the Bible, the Koran is a much shorter work, lacking the extended historical accounts and chronicles of the Old Testament and the multiple repetitive Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John of the New Testament, and can be read in a relatively short time in translation by most people for basic familiarity.

The basic theme of the Koran is that of monotheism, an invocation to belief and adherence to the single God, Allah, of Muhammad, who is also conceived as the same God of the Christian and Jewish Abrahamic tradition, albeit with differences of understanding with the other religions. A good deal of the Koran is concerned with laying down rules of behaviour in common life, religious practice and society, as the Suras were broadly used for instruction of the Ummah, or new congregation of Islam in Mecca and Medina during Muhammad's life as he recited them. The Koran also contains repetitions of many famous Bible stories such as Adam and Eve, the Flood, Genesis, Exodus and life of Moses, the conception of Jesus by Mary and others. In the Koran Moses and Jesus are considered fellow prophets of Allah, though Jesus is not considered as the son of God as in the Bible. A large part of the Koran contains exhortations to belief in its one God Allah and adherence to its rules of behaviour, with the bliss of paradise as promised reward and certain damnation in Hell as the consequence of failure to do so. Similar to the Bible, a significant part of the Koran focuses on the coming Apocalypse, or end of time and the consequent Last Judgment of all souls.

PRE-ISLAMIC ARABIC POETRY---AL-KHANSA, CELEBRATED WOMAN POET

Even before Muhammad and the rise of Islam Arabic literature had developed a strong poetic tradition. At that time Arabic culture was largely based on oral tradition, with poetry at its center. For a nomadic people such as the Bedouin Arabs, poetry was the main reservoir of the people's knowledge and expression of their very existence. Poets were highly honored, attaining even what today we might term "superstar" status. The poetry was the poetry of the tribe or clan, articulating its legends, heroes, genealogy, iteration of its strong "tribal code" of norms and exploits. Celebrated poets included traditionalists such as Imru 'al-Qays, the

"Brigand Poets" or poets who individualistically broke with the control of their tribes and lived outside the tribal system, and the celebrated Pre-Islamic woman poetess Al-Khansa.

Al-Khansa (575-646) put women in a central place in her poetry. A traditionalist in one sense, she wrote poems of lament for brave fallen heroes of her tribe, such as her fallen brothers, yet celebrated the women who remained alive and powerful in keeping life going and honoring and transmitting the proud warrior values to their children, despite the vicissitudes of battle, defeat and victory. She made women's role in the symbolic order potent and visible, even in a patriarchal tribal society.

HAFIZ---FATHER OF THE GHAZAL GENRE OF LOVE POETRY

Hafiz is the pen name of the Persian poet Shams al-Din Muhammad Shirazi who is celebrated as the originating master of the "ghazal," a form of poetic artistic unity which is neither thematic nor dramatic in the Western sense, but consists in the creation of a poetic unity by weaving imagery and allusions round one or more central concepts, of which both divine and sexual love are the most common. Hafiz was a master of interweaving the erotic and the mystic through superb linguistic craftsmanship and intuitive insight. Some stanzas from his "The House of Hope" give some feel for his themes, often sensual and melancholy:

The house of hope is built on sand,
And life's foundations rest on air;
Then come, give wine into my hand,
That we may make an end of care.

Look not to find fidelity
Within a world so weakly stayed;
This ancient crone, ere flouting thee,
A thousand bridegrooms had betrayed.

Take not for sign of true intent
Nor think the rose's smile sincere;
Sweet, loving nightingale, lament:
There is much cause for weeping here.

What envying of Hafiz's ease,
Poor poetaster, dost thou moan?
To make sweet music, and to please,
That is a gift of God alone.

ABU-NAWAS---EROTIC COURT POET OF THE CALIPH HAROUN AL-RASHID OF THE THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS

Abu-Nawas (755-815) is perhaps the most beloved of Arab poets of any period. He appears repeatedly as a character in the classic "One Thousand and One Nights," or "Arabian Nights" along with the renown Abbasid Caliph Haroun al-Rashid and his Barmacid Vizir Jafar. He is the archetypal sensual, erotic and profligate poet and Baghdad court favorite of the Caliph. He wrote pangyric poetry as well as heterosexual and homosexual ghazals, and handled Bacchic poems of "wine, women and song" with incomparable skill. He wrote with an existential edge to his Epicurean ethos that embraced every kind of pleasure and satisfaction. His death is a subject of legend, some saying he died in prison for writing blasphemous verse, others that he died in a whorehouse, some saying he was murdered in reprisal for lampooning a powerful court personage, and still others that he died peacefully in his sleep in the home of a learned Shi'ite scholar.

RUMI---SUFI MYSTIC POET OF THE ECSTASY OF LOVE

Jalal al-Din Rumi (1207-1273) was renown as both the foremost Sufi mystic poet and the founder of the Mavlevi sect of Sufi dancing dervishes. Originally an academic scholar and professor, he was persuaded by a wandering Sufi mystic, Shams al-Din Tabrizi, to take up the Sufi life and put the love of God at the center of his existence. Striving after divine illumination in diverse ways, from devout meditation to the ecstatic pleasures of wine, sexuality and the Dervish entrancement of dance, he emphasized a devotion to a spiritualized love that disregards rites and convention and concentrates on inner feeling and approach to the ecstatic infinite. His odes have been chanted by Hajj pilgrims on the road to Mecca for centuries and are sung with the greatest reverence even today.

AL-JAHIZ--THE GREATEST PROSE WRITER OF CLASSICAL ARAB CULTURE

Abu Uthman 'Amr ibn Bahr (776-868) of Basra, Iraq was known as "Al-Jahiz" or "the goggle eyed" due to a malformation of his eyes and was one the dynamic personalities in the Mu'tazilite circles, which met regularly in Basra reminiscent of the famous "salons" of Paris. Basra was also the location of the annual Al-Mirbad literary festival of Arab and Islamic culture that took place yearly featuring competitions and debates on philosophical issues, and at which he was renown for his wit, cutting humor, endless anecdotes and depth of knowledge. His book "Spiritual Leadership" was praised at the court in Baghdad by the Caliph al-Mamun, who appointed him as court scribe, personal secretary and speech writer. His monumental work the "Book of Animals" is the first encyclopedia on animals and zoology. His most famous work is the "Book of Misers" which is a unique portrait gallery of human characters rich in their contradictions and ironies. It features an acute analysis of the passion of avarice, satirical and comic narratives, and cutting insight into human psychology. If the Eighteenth Century is sometimes called the Age of Voltaire, the Ninth Century in the Abbasid Caliphate could be called the "Age of Al-Jahiz" through his dominance of prose writing in Arabic.

THE GREAT PHILOSOPHERS OF THE ARAB GOLDEN AGE

If Classical Greece had the great triumvirate of Aristotle, Plato and Socrates in the realm of philosophy, the Islamic Golden Age featured Ibn Sina (Avicenna), Ibn Rushd (Averroes) and Ibn Arabi. Ibn Rushd and Ibn Sina played a major role in saving the works of Aristotle, whose ideas came to dominate the non-religious thought of both the Christian and Muslim worlds. They would also absorb ideas from China and India, adding to them tremendous knowledge from their own studies. Ibn Sina and other speculative thinkers such as al-Kindi and al-Farabi combined Aristotelianism and Neoplatonism with other ideas introduced through Islam. Avicenna argued his famous "Floating Man" thought experiment, concerning self-awareness, where a man prevented of sense experience by being blindfolded and free falling would still be aware of his existence, perhaps a forerunner of Descartes "cogito ergo sum"----"I think therefore I am."

Ibn Arabi was the foremost advocate of metaphysical Sufism, as expressed in his magnum opus "Bezels of Wisdom" which transformed Islam's personal God into a principle of absolute being, where all is God and God is all, in which humanity in his Sufist interpretation, occupies a central role as revealed divine being, perhaps reminiscent of Bishop Berkeley's pan-idealism.

The Arab philosophers of the Islamic Golden Age also stimulated other non-Muslim philosophers such as Jewish philosopher Moses Maimonides.

IBN TUFAIL AND IBN AL-NAFIZ---FATHERS OF THE ARABIC PHILOSOPHIC AND SCIENCE FICTION NOVELS

Ibn Tufail (Abubacer) and Ibn al-Nafis were pioneers of the philosophical novel. Ibn Tufail wrote the first fictional Arabic novel "Hayy ibn Yaqdhan" ("Philosophus Autodidactus") as a response to al-Ghazali's "The Incoherence of the Philosophers," and then Ibn al-Nafis also wrote a fictional novel "Theologus Autodidactus" as a response to Ibn Tufail's "Philosophus Autodidactus." Both of these narratives had protagonists (Hayy in *Philosophus Autodidactus* and Kamil in *Theologus Autodidactus*) who were autodidactic feral children living in seclusion on a desert island, both being the earliest examples of a desert island story, a forerunner of Defoe's "Robinson Crusoe." However, while Hayy lives alone with animals on the desert island for the rest of the story, like Mowgli in Kipling's "Jungle Book" in "Philosophus Autodidactus," the story of Kamil extends beyond the desert island setting in "Theologus Autodidactus," developing into a story of his re-entry into civilization, the earliest known coming of age plot and eventually becoming the first example of a science fiction novel.

AL HALLAJ---SUFI MARTYR

Al-Hallaj (857-922) was a great Sufi mystic, poet and theologian whose life and spiritual mission was reminiscent of the fate of Jesus Christ. A great spiritual searcher, he attended debates and salons in Basra and Baghdad, then embarked on thirty years of wandering, perpetual fasting, meditation, contemplation and silence in search of Sufi enlightenment. His pilgrimage to Mecca led to further enlightenment and he began to attract large numbers of followers, breaking the normal Sufi practice of esoteric secrecy by public preaching, including reform of corrupt clerics. His movement was perceived as a threat by the highly corrupt religious establishment, and he suffered a fate similar to Jesus and the Apostles. Corrupt clerics accused him of blasphemy and he was imprisoned in Baghdad eight years, tortured, half-killed and exhibited on a scaffold. The Caliph, failing to force him to recant his beliefs, finally had him decapitated, burnt and his ashes scattered into the Tigris River.

SPIRITUS MUNDI AND THE ISLAMIC GOLDEN AGE

The Islamic Golden Age is also reflected in my own work, the contemporary and futurist epic *Spiritus Mundi*. One of its characters Mohammad ala Rushdie is a novice Sufi of the Mevlevi Order, writer and also an activist for the creation of a United Nations Parliamentary Assembly. He is taken hostage by terrorists and meets the Supreme Leader of Iran, later reciting to him a short story he has written "The Supreme Leader and the Three Messiahs," reminiscent of Dostoyevski's "The Grand Inquisitor" set in an Islamic setting. Part of the plot of the novel involves a geopolitical conspiracy of an allied China-Russia-Iran to execute a Pearl Harbor-like sneak attack invasion of the Middle-East oil reserves to sever the "oil jugular" of the West, leading to a threatened WWIII. It is foiled by a cosmic quest of the protagonists into a mythic dimension and a change of heart in the Iranian Supreme Leader following a visit of the Angel Jibreel (Gabriel) who commands him to "Open the Gates of Ijtihad" or creative reasoning against the tradition of blind precedent and conformity to the past as a means giving rebirth to the spirit of the lost Islamic Golden Age and preventing Armageddon and World War III.

For a fuller discussion of the concept of World Literature you are invited to look into the extended discussion in the new book *Spiritus Mundi*, by Robert Sheppard, one of the principal themes of which is the emergence and evolution of World Literature:

For Discussions on World Literature and n Literary Criticism in *Spiritus Mundi*:
<http://worldliteratureandliterarycrit...>

Robert Sheppard

Editor-in-Chief
World Literature Forum
Author, *Spiritus Mundi* Novel
Author's Blog:
<http://robertalexandersheppard.wordpress.com>

Spiritus Mundi on Goodreads:

<http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/17...>

Spiritus Mundi on Amazon, Book I: <http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00CIGJFGO>

Spiritus Mundi, Book II: The Romance <http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00CGM8BZG>

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Mohsin AL Hadhrami says

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Elizabeth L'Abate says

best translation. Each prophet as a different Gnosis and practice....
