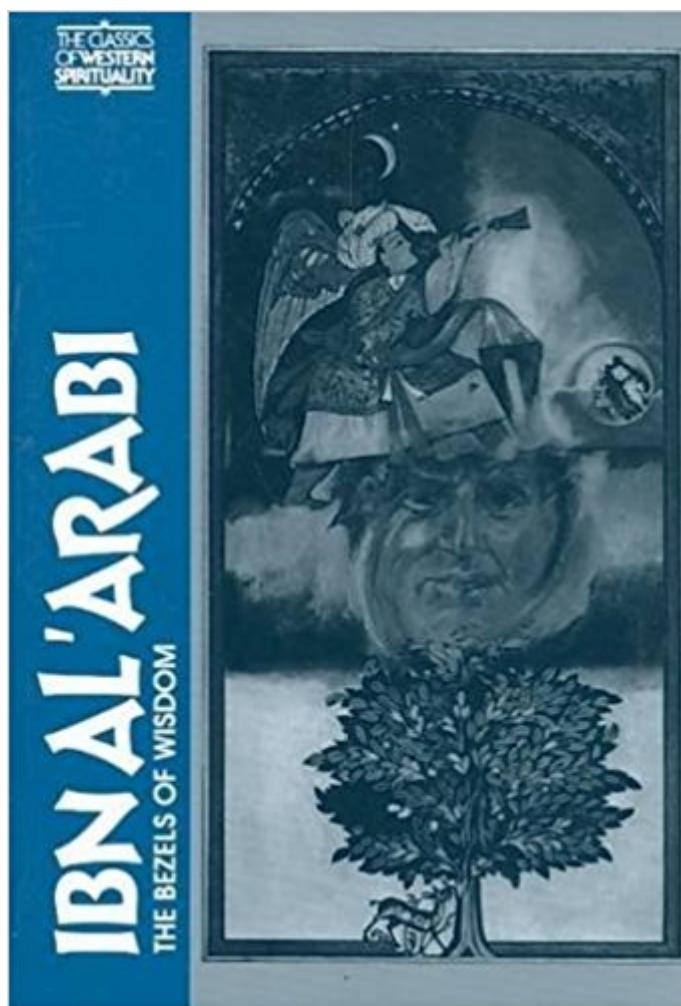


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Ibn-Al-Arabi: The Bezels Of Wisdom (Classics Of Western Spirituality)



Synopsis

The most in-depth and scholarly panorama of Western spirituality ever attempted! In one series, the original writings of the universally acknowledged teachers of the Catholic, Protestant, Eastern Orthodox, Jewish, Islamic and Native American traditions have been critically selected, translated and introduced by internationally recognized scholars and spiritual leaders. The texts are first-rate, and the introductions are informative and reliable. The books will be a welcome addition to the bookshelf of every literate religious persons". -- The Christian Century

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Text: English, Arabic (translation)

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.'

Muhyiddin (reviver of the Faith) Ibn 'Arabi, known as "The Greatest Sheikh" in the Islamic world and called "Doctor Maximus" in the West, was a brilliant mystic, a great theologian, and a prolific author. This is the shorter and more accessible of his two greatest works. It was revealed to him, he says, in a single vision. It describes many of the prophets in the Qur'an, such as Adam, Seth, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, as settings for various aspects of the divine wisdom. There have been a few

translations of this book into English, but at this time, this seems to be the only reasonably-priced version that is available. It is more complete and more direct than Bulent Rauf's partial translation of Burkhart's French translation, which was my favorite for many years (and which is now out of print). Reading this book is a challenge in spots, especially at the very beginning, because the thoughts are very dense, and because a lot of knowledge is taken for granted that non-Muslims might not know, and because Arabic writing tends to be elliptical. But the patient reader will find many gems of insight that will enrich their understanding, whether they are Jewish, Christian, or Muslim. I strongly recommend this book.

its a great book very hard read at least i think but it teaches a lot its worth it.

I needed this text for the same Princeton seminar class, and again got it very quickly and fairly reasonably, and just as described.

Purchased this to add to my Classics of Western Spirituality collection. When I get around to reading it, probably years from now, I'll probably review it then.

First of all, what's a "bezel"? A bezel is the grooved interior of the setting on a ring which holds the precious stone in place: a feat of craftsmanship in the days of irregular jewels. Here it's a metaphor for the Prophets, each a unique receptacle for a unique precious stone: an aspect of Divine Wisdom revealed to one person, at one place and time. The Qur'an has its own perspective on Prophets, different from Judaism or Christianity. Mankind perpetually strays from Divine Wisdom and God sends messengers to call us back. Thus a variety of Biblical figures are considered as Prophets: Adam, Enoch, Noah, Aaron, Jacob, Joseph, Job, John the Baptist and Jesus. There are also Arab Prophets not in the Bible: Sāfā'lih, Hāfi'ad, Shu'aib. Formless Divine Wisdom is Infinite, so this list of Qur'anic Prophets can only be a sample of its limitless manifestations. But it's hard for us to realise how deeply traditional Muslims were imbued with the Qur'an: those who could read learnt to read from it; it was recited constantly; it was not uncommon to know the whole text by heart. For Ibn 'Arabī, the succession of Prophets was a symbolic history of the world, and so although only a sample of God's Self-Revelations, they form a symbolically complete picture, a mandala. From the beginning this text was singled out from Ibn 'Arabī's enormous output: it was more widely studied, the subject of more commentaries, than any of his other works. It is one of his most difficult, yet accessible works. Difficult because... well, read a bit and see. Accessible because it comes

closest to summing up his ideas. Westerners are often baffled when they first encounter a work like this. What exactly is it? Philosophy, poetry, theology, mysticism? Complex philosophical arguments in the Neo-Platonic tradition mingle harmoniously with Scriptural commentary, poetic and metaphorical language, and mystical paradoxes. We are told at the start of the first chapter (about Adam) that God Knows Himself directly, but it is different to know oneself through Another, so God created the Universe to be His mirror. At first it was amorphous and rough [mirrors were made of metal in those days] but gradually it was polished until it could reflect Him. With the creation of human beings, self-conscious like God Himself, the Universe reached completion. Adam was the first Prophet, the first to receive Formless Wisdom in a unique form. The task of every human being is to know God, so that He may know Himself in us. I have written at such length to try to give some idea of what this unique and wonderful book is, what you can expect to find in it. This is the most readable translation yet of a work that has for centuries been considered a marvel.

The Fusus al-Hikaaam or more accurately the Wisdom of the Prophets, here as the Bezels of Wisdom is truly a very difficult text. Firstly this is like reading Hegel, often you do not understand what a passage means because Ibn 'l Arabi writes in esoteric terms. He himself admitted to having to be slightly difficult because of the concepts of which he was writing. Even if you distance this from Islam (although you need some basic knowledge on Islamic Philosophy to begin this book) you will realize it talks in depth about the spirit, mortality, purpose of Being, and of God. Do not however buy this translation, as a Pakistani I have visited many institutions devoted to Ibn 'l Arabi. Many believe it is impossible to translate him, but when you do there are better English translations. There is one called the Wisdom of the Prophets by Taj Publishers/Suhail Academy. Then I believe that even this is

better: http://www..com/Ringstones-Wisdom-Fusus-al-hikam-Islamic/dp/1567447244/ref=pd_sim_sbs_b_2?ie=UTF8&refRID=05K9HGT60GNXNEMK6FGE Also for those seeking to understand Ibn Arabi, while he is not the best, in English I would stick to Chittick's commentaries. Ofcourse for those who understand Arabic there are much better commentaries available.

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