

IBN ARABI — RECOGNITION AND REAPPRAISAL

----- A BIBLIOGRAPHIC SURVEY

In his illuminating study of the diffusion of Ibn ‘Arabi’s thought, Prof. Michel Chodkiewicz has made a very interesting remark:

His work, in distinction to all that preceded it-- including in my opinion that of Ghazali -- has a distinguishing feature which the method chosen by Sha’rani in his *Yawagit* has demonstrated well: it has an answer for everything. Ontology, cosmology, prophetology, exegesis, ritual, it encompasses without exception all the domains on which the ahl al-tasawwuf need a trusted guide. In the muqaddima of his famous *Lisan al-‘Arab*, Ibn Manzur (Who was born a few years before Ibn ‘Arabi’s death) explains that he composed this work in order to store all the words of the *lughā nabawiyya* (the prophetic language): “as Noah built the Ark, whilst his people laughed at him”. If the *Lisan* is the “ark of the words (*alfaz*)”, the *Futuhāt* are the “ark of their spiritual significations (*ma’ani*)”.

These ‘spiritual significations’ have been studied and explicated through out the centuries. But recent years have seen an unprecedented activity in this direction. Two significant aspects of this important activity could be identified as the publication of works of highest scholarly standard about various dimensions of Ibn ‘Arabi’s life and doctrines and the establishment of “The Muhyiddin Ibn ‘Arabi Society”. A brief description of the organization and activities of the society is given in the following. The information is drawn from the *Journal of the society*.

“The Society was formed in 1977 to promote the study, translation, and publication of the works of Ibn ‘Arabi and his followers. Its headquarters is

in Oxford, with branches in Turkey and the USA, and membership is drawn from many countries ! Since 1984 the Society has held an annual symposium, each considering a different aspect of Ibn ‘Arabi’s life and work. One of the Society’s most important resources is the library. It houses not only many hard-to-find publications, but also an important and growing collection of manuscript copies, the originals of which are kept in libraries scattered across the world. All material is available for study. The Journal of the Society, devoted to translation, studies, and book reviews, is published twice a year and sent free to all members and fellows. Back issues can be bought at a reduced rate. Libraries and institutions interested in subscribing are welcome to apply for a sample copy.

In addition to the Journal members receive a newsletter, with other publications and special offers becoming available from time to time.

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Society Notices

RECENT EVENTS

The 8th annual symposium of the Society in the USA, entitled 'The Journey of the Heart', took place on 5-6 November at the University of California, Berkeley.

COMING EVENTS

The 12th annual symposium of the Society in the UK was held from 17-21 August 1995 at Cehisholme House, Scotland. Speakers included Michel Chodkiewicz, Souad Hakim, James Morris, Michael Sells, and Peter Young.

PUBLICATIONS

The following books can be purchased from the Secretary: Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi: a Commemorative Volume

Fusus al-Hikam (4 Volumes)

Wird and Hizb-l Wiqayah -(books of prayers by Ibn 'Arabi) Prayer and Contemplation (a volume of four important papers first presented at the 10th annual symposium of the Society in the UK.

M. S. UMAR: Ibn 'Arabi--Recognition and Reappraisal A Bibliographic survey

A catalogue of manuscripts and books held in the Library is available to members and fellows for 14(\$8) plus postage.

MEMBERSHIP

As the Society is not affiliated to any particular organization or institution, it is wholly dependent for funding upon its members and fellows. Membership is annual (details of life membership are available from the Secretary) and subscription can be paid in the UK or the USA. New members can join at any time and will be entitled to all that 'year's benefits: copies of the year's journals; newsletters with articles and details of coming events; discount rates for symposia, for some Society publications, and for occasional limited edition publications; and use of the Society library. In addition, fellows are entitled to elect one of their number to serve on the Society Committee each year.

Membership rates for 1995 (not increased from 1994) are: members: L 25 (\$ 50), fellows: L 30 (\$ 60), students: L 15 (\$ 30) (documentary evidence of status is required).

Special offer for 1994/5: new members receive free copies of Journals I-VIII.

Previous issues of the Journal

are still available...

Volume I, 1982

Ibn 'Arabi, Peter Young; Beginning a study of the work of Ibn 'Arabi, Richard MacEwan; Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi and St Albertus Magnus of Cologne, Adam Dupre; Ibn 'Arabi's own summary of the Fusus: "The Imprint of the Bezels of the Wisdom", translated by William C. Chittick; Ibn 'Arabi', Theophany of Perfection, Translated by Abraham Abadi.

Volume II, 1984

Between the Yea and the Nay, Peter Young; the Feminine Dimension in Ibn al-'Arabi's Thought, R.W.J. Austin; The Book of Alif (or) The Book of Unity, by Ibn 'Arabi translated by Abraham Abadi; The Chapter Headings of the Fusus, William C. Chittick; Reviews and Notices of Books.

On Knowing the Station of Love, translated by Ralph Austin; On Majesty and Beauty: The Kitab al-jalal wa-l jamal, translated by Rabia Terri Harris; Concerning the Station of Purity, Peter Young; A Forerunner of Ibn al 'Arabi: Hakim Tirmidhi, Bernd Radtke; the Golden Bricks of Ibn 'Arabi, Dom Sylvester Houedard; Expression and the Inexpressible, Adam Dupre; Book Reviews.

Volume IX, 1991

Kitab al-fana fi-I mushahadah, translated by Stephen Hirtenstein and Layla Shamash; Ibn 'Arabi and Ottoman Dervish Traditions: The Melami Supra-Order, Part One, Mictoria Rowe Holbrook; The Diffusion of Ibn 'Arabi's Doctrine, Michel Cbodkiewicz; Book Review.

Volume X, 1991

Ibn 'Arabi's "Gentle Now, Doves of the Thornberry and Moringa Thicket", introduced and translated by Michael A. Sells; The Hierarchy of the Saints in Jewish and Islamic Mysticism. Paul B. Fenton; Theophanies and Lights in the Thought of Ibn 'Arabi in Early Naqshbandi Tradition, HamidAlgar; Book Review.

Volume XI, 1992

Notes on the More Than Human Saying; "Unless You Know Your-self You Cannot Know God", Dom Sylvester Houedard; Theophany as Paradox: Ibn al'Arabi's Account of al-Khadir in his Fusus al Hikam, Ian Richard Netton; The Seal of Saints- A Prophet and an Heir, Avraham Abadi; Ibn 'Arabi in the Yemen: His Admirers and Detractors, Alexander Knysh; Book Review.

Volume XII, 1992

Image and Presence in the Thought of Ibn al-'Arabi, Ralph Austin; Ibn-'Arabi

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and Ottoman Dervish Traditions: The Melami Supra Order, Part Two, Victoria Rowe Holbrook; Gnosis: Images of the Real, Elton Hall; Seeing Past the Shadows: Ibn ‘Arabi’s “Divine Comedy”, James Winston Morris; Book Review.

Translation, Studies and Book Reviews Previously published in the Journal

This section is intended as a reference tool, so that the reader can quickly see what the Journal has published, and easily locate any item of interest. There are three separate listings, as follows:

Translations of works by Ibn ‘Arabi Studies, by author Book reviews, by title

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Futuhāt: From Chapter 41 (paper entitled ‘The people

of the night’) Layla Shamash XIV

Naqsh al fusūs: the imprint of the bezels of the wisdom William C. Chittick

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Diwan: selected poems

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kitab al-tajalliyat: poem LXXX, 'Theophany of Perfection'

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K al-Alif the book of Alif (or) The book of Unity

Abraham Abadi II

K al-istilahat al-sufuyyah: sufi terminology

Rabia Terri Harris III

K. Kunh ma la budda minhu lil-murid: what the student needs

Tosun Bayrak al-Jerrahi V

K al-Jalal wa-l Jamal: on Majesty and Beauty

Rabia Terri Harris VIII

K. al-fana' fi'l-mushahadah: the book of annihilation in
contemplation Layla Shamash and Stephen Hirtenstein IX

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Trans. Michel Chodkiewicz IV

Fez, city of /slam by Titus Burckhardt.

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Ibn ‘Arabi: la /niche des lumieres: 101 saintes paroles prophetiques.

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Ibn ‘Arabi: le livrer d’enseignement par les formules indicatives des gens inspires (Kitab-l-i’lam bi isharati ahli-l-ilham).

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Ibn ‘Arabi: traite de l’amour. Trans. Maurice Gloton VIII

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The ninety-nine beautiful names of God by Al-Ghazali.

Trans. David B. Burrell and Nazih Daher XIII

The seals of wisdom--from the Fusus al-hikam by Ibn 'Arabi.

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The seals of wisdom-- Muhyiddin Ibn al-'Arabi.

Trans. 'Aisha 'Abd al-Rahman at-Tarjumana II

The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn al-'Arabi's Metaphysics

of imagination William C. Chittick IX

Universal Man by 'Abd al-Karim al-Jili.

Trans. Titus Burckhardt II

This section reviews important books published on Ibn 'Arabi during the recent past. These works, apart from their contents that concern the issues of Islamic Studies and Ibn 'Arabi doctrines, reveal the interesting phenomenon that the image of Ibn 'Arabi's life and doctrines that is commonly held in Iqbal Studies and Urdu literature is false and misconceived

to a large extent. One has to re-examine many positions taken in Iqbal Studies in the light of the facts unearthed in these works and the interpretation these works provide regarding Ibn ‘Arabi’s doctrines with reference to his original works, especially the Futuhat. In what follows we give information about important works and review some of these separately.

Books published since 1981 dealing with the life and works of Ibn ‘Arabi

I- TRANSLATIONS

Al-Kawkab al-durri fi manaqib dhi’l-Nun al-Misri.

Published as: La vie merveilleuse de Dhu-l Mun l’Egyptien. Roger Deladriere. Paris, 1988.

Futuhat al-Makkiya

Chapter 167. Published as: L’alchimie du bonheur parfait. Stephane Ruspoli. Paris, 1981.

Chapter 178. Published as: Traite de l’amour. Maurice Gloton. Paris, 1985.

Selected texts, with a general introduction. Published as: Les illuminations de la Mecque. Edited by Michel Chodkiewicz with contributions by William C. Chittick, Cyrille Chodkiewicz, Denis Gril, and James W. Morris. Paris, 1989. translations are either in French or English according to the translator.

Hilyat al-abadal. Published as” La parure des abdal. Michel Valsan. Paris, 1992.

Kitab al-fana’ fi’l-mushahadah. Published as: Le livre de l’extinction dans la contemplation. Michel Valsan. Paris, 1984.

Kitab al-i’lam bi-isharat ahl al-ilham. Published as: Le livre d’enseignement par les formules indicatives ades gens inspires. Michel Valsan. Paris, 1985.

Kitab al-isfar ‘an nata’ij al-asfar. Published as: Le devolvement des effets du voyage. Denis Gril. Combas, 1994.

Risalat al-Ittihad al-kawni. Published as: Le livre de l’arbre et du queatre oiseaux. Denis Gril. Paris, 1984.

Shajarat al-kawn. Published as: L ‘arbre du monde. Maurice gloton. Paris, 1982. (A treatise generally, but wrongly, attributed to Ibn ‘Arabi.)

Tadhkirat al-khawass. Published as: La profession de foi. Roger Deladriere. Paris, 2nd edn, 1985.

II STUDIES

Ibn ‘Arabi ou la quete de soufre rouge. Claude Addas. Paris, 1989.

English translation (by Peter Kingsley): Quest for the Red Sulphur: the Life of Ibn ‘Arabi. Cambridge, 1993.

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Lesceau des saints: prophetie et saintete dans la doctrine d ‘Ibn ‘Arabi.

Michel Chodkiexicz. Paris, 1986.

English translation (by Liadain Sherrard): Seal of the Saints; Prophethood and Sainthood in the Doctrine of Ibn ‘Arabi. Cambridge, 1993.

Un ocean sans rivage; Ibn ‘Arabi, le Livre et le Loi. Michel Chodkiewicz. Paris, 1992.

English translation (by David Streight): An Ocean Without Shore: Ibn ‘Arabi, the Book and the Law. Albany, NY, 1993.

The Sufi Path of Knowledge, W.C. Chittick. Albany, NY, 1989.

Imaginal Worlds: Ibn al-’Arabi and ‘the Problem of Religious Diversity, W.C. Chittick. Albany, 1994.

1993 marked a milestone in Ibn 'Arabi studies in the English-speaking world, with the publication of four major works on Ibn 'Arabi: Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi: Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi: a commemorative volume, published by Element for the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society; the English translation of the first full length biography of Ibn 'Arabi, *Quest for the red sulphur* by Claude Addas; and, also in translation form the French, two seminal studies by Michel Chodkiewicz of Ibn 'Arabi's teachings, *Seal of the saints* and *An ocean without shore*.

Quest for the red sulphur: the life of Ibn 'Arabi. Claude Addas. Published by the Islamic Texts Society, Cambridge, 1993.

First published in French in 1989, Claude Addas' biography of Ibn 'Arabi offers a wealth of new and illuminating material about 'Arabi's life. The translation is, in effect, an second edition, with new' material and modification of some passages, and with a full glossary of Arabic terms. It is translated with clarity and insight by Peter Kingsley, and produced to the usual high standards of the Islamic Texts Society.

Seal of the saints: prophethood and sainthood in the doctrine of Ibn 'Arabi. Michel Chodkiewicz. Published by the Islamic Texts Society, Cambridge, 1993. *Seal of the Saints* by Michel Chodkiewicz was first published in France in 1986. It provides a detailed and scholarly exposition of Ibn 'Arabi's teaching on prophethood and sainthood, based on careful analysis of the relevant texts. The translation by L. Sherrard is elegant and authoritative, and once again is published by the Islamic Texts Society.

An Ocean without Shore: Ibn 'Arabi, the Book and the Law. Michel Chodkiewicz. Published by the State University of New York Press, Albany, NY, 1993. French edition reviewed *JMIAS*, Vol. XII by Ralph Austin. English edition reviewed in the present issue by J. W. Morris.

An ocean without shore is Michel Chodkiewicz's most recent contribution to Ibn 'Arabi studies, published in French in 1992. It is now translated with welcome promptness in the United States by the State University of New York Press. Translator David Streight. The subtitle, *Ibn 'Arabi, the Book and the Law* provides the clue to the perspective offered in

the study, which sets out to demonstrate the profound inter-relationship between ‘Arabi’s work and the Qur’an and Sacred Law of Islam.

(Muhammad Suheyl Umar)

Reviews

Muhyiddin Ibn ‘Arabi: a commemorative volume. Edited by Stephen Hirtenstein and Michael Tiernan. Published by Element Books, Shaftesbury, for the Muhyiddin Ibn ‘Arabi Society, 1993.

Ibn ‘Arabi, or Ibn al-Arabi as I prefer to call him (following the second edition of *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*), died in Damascus in 1240 aged 75. This handsomely produced volume, with its beautiful frontispiece illumination from an Almoravid Qur’an manuscript produced in Cordova in 1143, celebrates the 750th anniversary of the Shaykh al-Akbar’s death. The editors are well-qualified for their task: Stephen Hirtenstein edits the *Ibn ‘Arabi Society’s Journal*, has lectured on the Shaykh in the UK and USA and translated, *unter alia*, ‘*The Book of Contemplation in eh Annihilation*’ (*IMIAS*, IX 1991). Michael Tiernan encountered the works of Ibn ‘Arabi while working as a health educator in his native Sydney and had studied the Shaykh for many year. Today he works in publishing.

The contents of this volume are an intellectual feast for all scholars, students and devotees of Ibn al-’Arabi and illustrate both the depth and the range of the Shaykh’s thought. As such they constitute a worthy tribute to one of mystical Islam’s most complex thinkers. They also bear witness to the increasing quantity of scholarly and popular works appearing in print about the Shaykh. As the editors themselves note in their Preface, ‘the quarter century that has elapsed between [1965] and this [work under review] has seen a most dramatic change: the work of the Shaykh has begun to acquire a home among a much wider audience, and there are now full translations of several books available in European languages’ (p xi). For the non-Arabist, of course, a major problem in getting to grips with Ibn al-’Arabi’s massive corpus has been the dearth of good, translations into English. (This deficiency continues to be remedied by *JMIAS* as well as the first part of the volume under review.) the editors also modestly remind us that this volume ‘is very much a beginning, a beginning of the (re-) cognition and (re-)

appraisal of Ibn al-' Arabi's contribution to mankind' (p. xii). While that may be true, it in no way devalues the worth of what is presented here.

This commemorative volume comprises eighteen articles. many of them by internationally regarded scholars of Ibn al-'Arai, divided into two parts: Part One contains five translations from the voluminous oeuvre of the Shaykh; Part Two consists of thirteen studies of the latter's thought. The two sections are complemented by an 'Introduction' by Stephen Hirtenstein (which includes a survey of Ibn al-' Arabi's life), an Index of Qur'anic Citations, and a (rather too brief) general Index.

In Part one, Paul B. Fenton and Maurice Gloton present for the first time an English translation of *Kitab Isha' ad-Dawa'ir al-Ibatiya* (The Book of the Description of the Encompassing Circles), a minor but very important treatise which 'deals with the fundamental premises of [Ibn al-'Arabi's] metaphysics'. This is followed by Roger Boase's and Farid Sahnoun's 'Excerpts from the Epistle on the Spirit of Holiness (Risalah Rub al-Quds)', a work of Sufi spirituality, other parts of which have earlier been translated by Dr. R.W.J. Actin (*Sufis of Andalusia*, London: Allen & Unwin, 1971). By vivid contrast, James Winston Morris, in 'How to study the futuhat: Ibn ' Arabi's Own Advice' provides a useful key to what is perhaps the Shaykh's most complex and extensive text. Morris suggests that in the Introduction (*Muqaddima*) to the *Futuhat*, 'the Shaykh gives perhaps his most complete discussion and explanation of the many different audiences and types of readers for whom he composed that work' (p. 74). This is followed by the well-known translator and scholar of the *Futuhat*, William C. Chittick, giving us two short chapter (nos. 317 and 339) from the *Futuhat* which embrace the two central ideas in the universe of Ibn al-' Arabi of 'Oneness of Being' (*wahdat al-wujud*) and 'Perfect Man' (*al insan al-kamil*). Part One concludes with Michael Sells' chapter entitled 'Towards a Poetic translation of the *Fusus al-Hikam*, in which the translator, in a new translation of Chapter One of the *Fusus*, 'attempts to bring across the poetic aspects of the text, and to keep the form and content as unified as possible' (p. 124).

While the contents of Part One of the volume under review are unified under the aspect of translation, the studies in Part Two are diverse indeed. They are introduced by the article entitled 'The Determinism Implicit to Change' by Avraham Abadi where, unfortunately, an utterly opaque prose

style veils the essence of the ideas beneath. (Ibn al-' Arabi might have approved (!) but surely we all have a duty as scholars to write as clearly as possible about the thought of the Shaykh. If we do not, then his writings will never become disseminated to a wider public.) Claude Addas follows this article with her 'Abu Madyan and Ibn 'Arabi', in which is discussed Ibn al-'Arabi's admiration for the saint Abu Madyan (died 588 AFI). Next, Ralph Austin in 'Ibn al-'Arabi- Poet of Divine Realities' provides a useful corrective via Ibn al-' Arabi's *Diwan al-Kabir* ('his greatest collection of mystical poetry') to the 'rather lopsided picture of the mystical expression of Ibn al-' Arabi' (p. 181). Another major scholar of Ibn al-'Arabi, Michel Chodkiewicz, then proceeds, in his usual masterly way, to examine "The Esoteric Foundations of Political Legitimacy in Ibn 'Arabi', while Mahmoud Al-Ghorab discusses the Shaykh's relationship to Sunnism, Shi'ism and the philosophers, inter alia, in an important article ponderously entitled 'Muhyiddin Ibn al-'Arabi Amidst Religions (adyan) and Schools of Thought (madhahib)'. Al-Ghorab concludes that Ibn al-' Arabi was a 'Muslim, Traditionalist (Salafi), Jurist (usuli) and a Sufi' who was 'one of the leaders (imams) of the people of the tradition and community (ahl al-sunna wa'l-jama'a)' (p. 224).

Al-Ghorab is clearly supported in some of what he says by Denis Gril who notes that 'recent studies of the work of the Shaykh al-Akbar have been bringing more and more clearly to light the fact that his doctrine is rooted in the Qur'an and the *Surma*' (p. 228). In 'Adab and revelation or One of the Foundations of the Hermeneutics of Ibn 'Arabi', Gril surveys so much of what he writes. Souad (p. 228). In 'Adab and Revelation or One of the Foundations of the Hermeneutics of Ibn 'Arabi', Gril surveys Ibn al-'Arabi's definitions of adab and the Qur'anic substrata of so much of what he writes. Souad Hakim then reminds us that 'to know God is the torment of every sufi' and in her chapter 'knowledge of God in Ibn 'Arabi' she studies 'human understanding in Ibn 'Arabi' and attempts to bring 'to light how the disciple realizes gnosis of God' (p. 264). This is an important and neatly organised contribution to the study of Ibn al-'Arabi and epistemology.

Dom Sylvester Houedard, OSB, who has made such a vital and learned contribution to the diverse fields of world mysticism, and whose passing we all mourn, places Ibn al-' Arabi in a wider ecumenical context with his article

Ibn 'Arabi's Contribution to the Wider Ecumenism', while Alexander Knysh, in 'Ibn 'Arabi in the Later Islamic tradition', surveys 'the importance of Ibn 'Arabi for the subsequent generations of his co-religionists' (p. 307). Martin Notcutt, whose previous work has included valuable bibliographical surveys of the Shaykh's works, then surveys 'Ibn 'Arabi in Print' in a useful article which, unfortunately, lacks endnotes. Notcutt poses a number of interesting questions at the end of his article, two of which deserve reiteration:

Can one seriously study Ibn 'Arabi in translation, without learning Arabic?

Can one pretend to study Ibn 'Arabi without the background of a knowledge of Medieval Arabic thought?

The answer of your reviewer, at least, to these questions is an unconditional 'No!' I believe that an extensive knowledge of medieval Arabic language and medieval Arabic thought are both essential for the proper study of Ibn al-'Arabi. (I am also aware that such views may be regarded as controversial by non-Arabist devotees of the Shaykh— However, *de gustibus non est disputandum!*) Hirtenstein's and Tiernan's volume concludes with three very different articles: Frithiof Rundgren's 'The Preface of the Futuhat al-Makkiyyah' (which should be read with Morris' article cited above); Mustafa Tahrali's 'The Polarity of Expression in the Fusus al-Hikam'; and Peter Lamborn Wilson's 'Quantum, Chaos, and the Oneness of Being' which meditates on the Kitab al-Alif.

This is a book for the scholar, the student, and the sufi as well as the general reader. Not all will enjoy, understand or appreciate, everything; most will enjoy and appreciate something.

Hirtenstein and Tiernan are to be congratulated on producing a valuable contribution to the growing body of works about the life and thought. of the Shaykh al-Akbar.

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An Ocean Without Shore: Ibn ‘Arabi, The Book and the Law. Michel Chodkiewicz (Trans. D. Streight), SUNY Press, Albany, NY, 1993, 184 pp.

In most areas of scholarship there are one or two books so uniquely rich in their depth of insight, breadth of understanding, and richness of expression and illustration that even their individual footnotes become, as it were, the seeds of whole volumes of research in later generations. This deceptively short volume, which so ably condenses the fruits of decades of intensive study and reflection on Ibn ‘Arabi (as well as his disciples and heirs throughout the Islamic world) is clearly just such a landmark in ‘Akbari’ studies. Its basic unifying theme- familiar enough to even the novice reader of Ibn ‘Arabi today - is the Qur’anic (and Prophetic) inspiration and aims of all the Shaykh’s writing. But here Professor Chodkiewicz, referring primarily to the ‘ocean’ of al-Futuhat al-Makkiya as well as a host of other untranslated (and often unedited) texts and commentaries, has systematically developed that theme to a depth that goes far beyond academic philology and amply illustrates the profoundly transforming power of Ibn ‘Arabi’s own ‘spiritual hermeneutics’ of Islamic scripture. For those interested in the Shaykh’s own life, this volume also highlights some of the deeper roots of his own extraordinary personal claims with regard to his ‘realization’ of the Qur’an and the inner dimension of prophecy, themes which are examined in more detail in two other recently translated studies, The Seal of the Saints (by the same author) and Claude Addas’ biography, The Quest for the Red Suophur.

There is no question, then, that this is in many respects an ‘advanced’ work, almost an agenda (as well as an indispensable reference work) for future study: indeed very few modern scholars could honestly lay claim to the familiar mastery of Arabic, of the Qur’an and hadith, and of so many different writings of the Shaykh and his disciples which this book often presupposes. On the other hand, serious students of Ibn ‘Arabi will recognize many familiar themes from the works that are available in translation, and— while acknowledging how much of this “ocean” still remains uncharted— will surely be challenged to re-read and re-explore those available texts from new perspectives. The author’s Introduction (pp. 1-18) is an especially striking illustration of that process. At first reading, the Introduction may seem like nothing more than history: a highly condensed

survey of the far-reaching ‘manifestations’ of Ibn ‘Arabi’s work for .centuries throughout the Islamic world, focusing especially on the recent research by the author (as well as his many colleagues and students from France and the Arab world) that has helped to bring out the actual social bases (tariqas, ethical manuals, etc.) for the popular spread of Ibn ‘Arabi’s insights, especially in the Ottoman period, far beyond the line of his avowed disciples and commentators. By the time one has completed reading the book, however, it will be quite evident just how and to what extent those same historical data are also meant to illuminate the nature and seriousness of the Shaykh’s meta-historical claims concerning the ‘Seal of the saints’ and his special inner relationship with both the Qur’an and the ‘Reality of Muhammad’.

Each of the book’s five chapters richly illustrates, at progressively deeper levels of expression and meaning, the full Qur’anic inspiration of all of Ibn ‘Arabi’s works. Not surprisingly, the first two chapters highlight themes and typical methods of scriptural interpretation---such as Ibn Arabi’s consistent focus on the ‘letter’ of revelation even in his apparently most original (or outrageous) insights; his stress on the ongoing, ‘perpetual descent’ of the inner meanings of the Qur’an within each purified heart; or the metaphysical ‘universality’ of the Qur’an and the Source of all prophecy--- which should be familiar to most students of the *Fusus al-Hikam* and other widely available works. The second chapter also includes a very clear and accessible summary of Professor Chodkiewicz’ seminal research on two major topics in the Shaykh’s teaching: his discussion of the various types and ranks and functions of the ‘friends of God’ (from Chapter 73 of the *Futuhāt*), and his uniquely irenic understanding of the principles of *fiqh*, with its compelling practical and intellectual relevance to the contemporary Islamic world.

The following two chapters, though, explore territory which has until now remained largely uncharted, at least in Western scholarship. Chapter 3 demonstrates in rigorous and convincing detail--- focusing on the long *Fad al-Manazil* in the *Futuhāt*--- the multitude of precise ways in which the order, inner structures, and language and style of the Qur’an underlie the corresponding arrangement and meaning of all the Meccan Illuminations, including literally thousands of passages of allusions that would have remained mysteriously indecipherable without these essential ‘keys’. Chapter

4 extends the same approach to revealing both the internal structure of other major works (Such as the early Kitab. al Isra', the K. al-Abadila, the K al-Tajalliyat), and, even more significantly, to suggesting the 'networks' or 'constellations' of Qur'anic allusion that form fundamental linkages--- of both inspiration and cross-referential explanation--- between chapters or sections of the Qur'an, the Futuhat, and each of Ibn 'Arabi's shorter works. While scholars and students of these untranslated (and often unedited) works may have intuitively felt, and even occasionally deciphered, some of these inner connections and allusions, the systematic results of Professor Chodkiewicz' methods and examples here (summarized in 35 pages of dense notes) are rich enough to orient the research of several generations of future scholars. Indeed anyone who has wrestled directly with the constantly recurrent mysteries and opaque passages to be found throughout the Shaykh's writings may well consider these two chapters to constitute a sort of 'Rosetta Stone' in the gradual deciphering of Ibn 'Arabi's work.

The final chapter, focusing on the integral relationship between religious practice and spiritual realization in all the Shaykh's writings, returns to a topic and illustrations (from the Fusus al-Hikam and other translated works) familiar to a wider audience. Again the detailed analyses and synopses here--- of the interplay between right actions and the Attainment of karamat in the Mawaqi al-Nujum; of the roles of God and the individual soul in prayer in the Tanazzulat Mawsiliya; or of the constant allusions to the inner dimensions of salat throughout Tirmidhi's famous 'spiritual questionnaire' in Chapter 73 of the Futubat--- fully demonstrate both the author's mastery of the entire 'Akbari' corpus and the spiritual richness of these many texts that still await translation in order to reach the wider audience they deserve today. Any brief account of Professor Chodkiweicz' book, with its massive illustration of the impact of the Qur'an and (selective) hadith on every dimension of Ibn 'Arabi's writing, almost inevitably suggests a sort of 'apologetic' or narrowly sectarian approach and an intention--- on the part of either the Shaykh or his modern interpreter--- that is in fact almost diametrically opposed to the actual state of affairs. Readers familiar only with the many modern Western studies emphasizing the 'universality' of the Shaykh's outlook, in particular, might find this approach somewhat surprising. But this apparent paradox is no mystery to students familiar with Ibn 'Arabi's own writings: as they know from their own experience, it is

easily resolvable once one begins to appreciate the ‘Reality’ (to use the Shaykh’s own expression) to which Ibn ‘Arabi is actually referring. And few secondary studies in this field bring the reader closer to that constantly revelatory, more than intellectual, experience of the Qur’an than this remarkable work. It is itself an extraordinary illustration of that ‘Ascension into meaning’ (mi’raj al-Kalima, to borrow Souad al-Hakim’s apt expression) which so uniquely typifies Ibn ‘Arabi’s own style and approach to revelation.

The English translation, which includes a substantial index of Qur’anic verses and technical terms (but not, unfortunately, of hadith references), is quite readable on the whole, an especially commendable achievement given that so much of the original French text already consists of translations of Ibn ‘Arabi’s notoriously complex language and close study of difficult Arabic linguistic, religious and grammatical expressions.

Fundamental Symbols: The Universal Language of Sacred Science By Rene Guenon. Translated by Alvin Moore, Jr., Compiled by M. Valsan, and edited by Martin Lings. Cambridge, England: Quinta Essentia, 1995. Pp. 369.20 diagrams. \$ 35.95, cloth; \$ 22.95, paper.

Even among those who have become interested in mythology and symbolism, it is too often forgotten that “myth,” itself from the Greek mythos, is related etymologically to mystery and has to do precisely with the “Divine Mysteries,” while “symbol” comes from the Greek verb symballein meaning to put together or hind, that is, to unite a thing with its origin. The French metaphysician and mathematician Rene Guenon stands as a beacon of light in guiding us to the understanding of symbols and in asserting with certitude the root of symbols in the immutable archetypes which are reflected on different levels of cosmic existence.

Despite the significance of so many of his works such as *The Crisis of the Modern World*, *The Reign of Quantity and the Signs of the Time*, and *The Symbolism of the Cross* (all published in English but now out of print), *Fundamental Symbols* is perhaps the most important after *Man and His Becoming According to the Vedanta* (which appeared in English in 1945 and is also no longer in print). As Martin Lings, himself the author of a major work on symbolism entitled *Symbol and Archetype*, states in his preface,

The universal language of symbolism is as old as humanity; and the light which Guenon throws on the intelligence and the intellectual unanimity of the ancient world is enough to dispel for-ever any lingering illusions about primitive man that we have subconsciously retained from our education.

In this work, Guenon not only speaks about various symbols which concern religion, art, the traditional sciences, and life itself, and in fact provide the language of both sacred art and sacred science, but also discusses the meaning of symbol in general. He demonstrates why symbols are rooted in the ontological reality of things, having their source in the noumenal and archetypal levels of reality rather than in the merely human or psychological.

In seventy-six chapters grouped into eight sections, Guenon deals with the metaphysical and cosmological meaning of symbols drawn from traditions as far apart as the Greek and the Buddhist, the Druid and the Islamic. The titles of the eight sections reveal the vast expanse of this seminal work: “Traditional Symbolism and Some of Its General Applications”; “Symbols of the Center and of the World”; “Symbols of Cyclic Manifestation”; “Some Symbolic Weapons”; “The Symbolism of the Forms of the Cosmos”; “The Symbolism of Building”; “Axial Symbolism and Symbolism of Passage”; and “The Symbolism of the Heart.” This collection, assembled by M. Valsan after Guenon’s death from his scattered essays, was published in the original French as *Symbol’s fondamentaux de la science sacree* (Paris: Gallimard, 1962). It is presented here for the first time in English, with the addition of two essays and the deletion of one from the French text. The English edition opens with a preface by Martin Lings, long-time friend and colleague of Guenon, on the significance of this book, and an introduction by another close associate of Guenon, W. N. Perry, on his life. It concludes with a list of the original sources of the essays, the bibliography of the books of Guenon, and a useful index.

Guenon’s exposition of symbolism is a critique in depth of all those modernist writers who would reduce the symbol to an allegory, an agreed-upon image of a socially defined significance, or a reality of psychological origin emanating from the common historic experiences or collective unconscious of an ethnic or linguistic group. And, like other writings of Guenon, *Fundamental Symbols* is an exposition of metaphysical truths and a criticism of errors in the light of those truths.

The translation of this extensive work has been a real labor of love for both the translator, who has spent a lifetime in the study of Guenon's works, and the editor, himself one of the foremost traditional authors. The result is an English text reflecting the lucidity and clarity of the original French, qualities which characterize Guenon's writings in general. It is a major addition to the English corpus of his work, one that it is hoped will kindle enough interest to bring back into print many of Guenon's books rendered earlier into English but now unavailable.

In any case the translator and editor as well as the publishers are to be congratulated for making this work available in English. The hardcover edition of the book is well-printed with a handsome cover characteristic of the Quinta Essentia imprint. One only wishes that Dr. Lings could have dealt in greater length with Guenon's significance. Perhaps he will do so in a future work, in response to the need in the English-speaking world for the reassertion of the call of tradition in general and the teachings of Guenon in particular.

(S. Hossein Nasr)

Faith and Practice of Islam: Three Thirteenth Century Sufi Texts. Translated, Introduced, and Annotated by William C. Chittick, SUNNY Press, Albany 1992; xv + 306 pages; no price.

With this volume C. W. Chittick introduces, translates and annotates three Persian Sufi texts written in the middle of the 7th century AH (13th century AD). All three texts are succinct compendia of Islamic teachings and were written in Konya, Anatolia, by a resident scholar who, perhaps erroneously (cf. appendix, pp. 255-262), is believed to have been Sadr al-Din al-Qunawi (d. 673/1274), the star disciple of Ibn al'Arabi (d. 638/1240). The value of the three treatises lies in their clear focus on-the essentials of Islam, as explained from the perspective of Ibn al 'Arabi's Sufism, and in the elegant simplicity with which the author presents his ideas in beautiful Persian. While the first treatise, *Matali'-i-iman* (The Rising Places of Faith) was edited by Chittick himself in *Sophia Perennis* 4/1 (1978), 57-80, the second treatise, *Tabsira al-mubtadi wa-tadhkirat al-muntahi* (Clarifications for Beginners and Reminders for the Advanced), was edited by Najaf 'Ali Habibi in *Ma'arif* 1 (1364/1985), 69-128, and the third treatise, *Manahij-i Sayfi* (The Easy Roads

of Sayf al-Din), by Najib Ma' it Hirawi as a separate volume in Tehran: Mawla, 1363/1984. Useful textual emendations to the Persian editions of the second and third treatise are given by Chittick in an appendix to the present volume (pp. 263-270). While the first two treatises were written for Muslims seeking a succinct and simple introduction to the principal dimensions of their faith, the third was addressed to a particular government official of an Anatolian Saljuq court. This man, a certain Say Iqbal Re: ab-Din Tughril, took Islam with sufficient seriousness or desire with an initiation into its basic tenets as well as more detailed guidance toward its faithful practice.

Parts II and III of Chittick's work include the translations of the texts (pp. 35-164) which, together with the author's very helpful annotations (pp. 181-253), could stand by themselves as a separate volume. Chittick again shows himself to be a skilled translator who has a fine and accurate grasp of Persian and a clear idea of the type of English necessary to make a medieval text accessible to the contemporary reader. Part I ("Islam in Three Dimensions," pp. 1-23) and Part IV ("Sufism and Islam," pp. 165-179) serve as a frame for the translated treatises and include Chittick's general reflections on the relationship of orthodox and mystical Islam and on the nature of Islam as a religion and Sufism as a mysticism. In defining Sufism as the third dimension of Islam, the perfection which completes Islam, as works and Islam as faith, Chittick concludes that the authentic Sufi is "the perfect Muslim," and Sufism, simply put, is the "full and complete actualization of the faith and practice of Islam" (p. 178). While the three texts may be understood as an illustration of this broad definition of Sufism, the author's general reflections lack some of the scholarly sophistication that undergirds his annotated translations. In the opinion of this reviewer, Sufism deserves a more historical and source-critical analysis to account for its own specificity.

The Tao of Islam: A Sourcebook on Gender Relationships in Islamic Thought. By Sachiko Murata, Albany SUNNY Press, 1992; x plus 397 pp. n.p.

With The Tao of Islam Sachiko Murata has provided important resource material for those in the field of medieval studies, Islamic studies, and women's studies. The book is dense and demanding. It plunges the reader into the subtle language and vivid imagination of philosophers and mystics of medieval Islam---representatives of what Murata calls Islam's "sapiential

tradition”---as they engage in Qur’anic commentary and metaphysical speculation about cosmic and human realities in terms of gender relationships and symbolism. She presents lengthy excerpts from works of well known Muslim writers and teachers (e.g., Qushayri, Kashani, Ibn ‘Arabi, Rumi, Qunawi) that treat the fundamental realities of God, world, and the human being in a manner analogous to the Taoist philosophers who saw bipolar relationships operating at all levels of created reality and who used the basic symbolism of male/female “qualities” and relationships to describe the cosmos. Murata also provides the hermeneutical tools needed to understand the intentionality of the texts. She is quite aware that she is presenting a side of Islam that is foreign to most Westerners, who see Islam as the “most patriarchal” of patriarchal religions, and to many Muslims, who look at issues of gender simply in terms of the Shari’ab. Moreover, Murata gives evidence as to the diversity of discourses (juridical, theological, philosophical, Sufi) that emerged side by side during Islam’s “classical period,” a diversity which indicates a dynamic tradition of lively and creative interpretation of canonical texts and which cannot help but affect current discussions on ijtibad (new interpretation) of traditional texts, particularly as they relate to the nature and role of women.

Murata introduces her book by describing the circumstances of its genesis. She was asked to teach a course on “feminine spirituality in world religions” and having experienced how Western students tend to have the most negative preconceptions about Islamic religion, decided to develop a “back-door” approach to the subject of women. She searched for a model of comparative study that would circumvent those prejudicial feelings, a model that would not do violence to traditional Islamic sensibilities. She drew on the Chinese tradition, turning to the Taoist analysis of reality in terms of the complementary principles of yin and yang “female” and male,” as a focal point for comparative study. We remember that while the Tao to-Ching affirms the unity and harmony of opposites in nature, it gives a certain primacy to the yin/female (receptive) principle, as if to counterbalance the prevailing social tendency to give primacy to the Yang/male (active) principle. In a similar spirit, Murata wants to affirm the Islamic perspective which celebrates male and female, spirit and body, intellect and soul, but in order to do that, she must bring to light writings that speak positively, or at

least equivocally, about women and things associated symbolically with “the female.”

Murata demonstrates through the use of the texts that there are many-streams of Qur’anic exegesis that affirm a metaphysics of relation and complementarity while upholding the major theological principle of Islam namely tawhid or divine unity and transcendence. This line of thought sees the symbols and images associated with male and female (e.g. man and woman, but also, heaven and earth, intellect and soul, spirit and body) as carrying both positive and negative valuation, depending on the relationship described, and understands this type of language as pointing to underlying ontological structures of reality (both cosmic and human). Indeed, for Murata and her sapiential representatives, the world was created from an attitude of relation (she refers to the well-known hadith qudsi. or “divine saying”: “I was a hidden treasure and I loved/desired to be known”) and all orders of creation are driven by the attitude of longing for the return of their “natural” state of equilibrium and unity (represented by the primordial covenant, al-mithaq, in the Qur’an). Her hope seems to be that the revisiting and subtle understanding of traditional Islamic texts and their models of God/world, God/human, and male/ female relationships can be applied currently at the level of social structures; that knowledge has the power to transform behavior and power structures.

The Book is divided into four parts. Part One contains Murata’s explanation of the phrase, the “Tao (way) of Islam,” and she introduces the three “great realities” that constitute “the tao”: God, cosmos, and human being. She describes how in the “sapiential tradition” these elements are inseparable, each manifesting the same “qualities” or attributes but in different modes, each containing the principles of yin and yang in harmony. The remainder, and bulk, of the book is textual evidence for this position. part Two, therefore, deals with theology, specifically, traditional Islamic conception of God. Part Three deals with cosmology, or the genesis and structure of the “macrocosm,” al-’alam al-akbar, that is, the created order. Part Four focuses on the human “microcosm, al-’alam al-saghir, that is, what constitutes human nature (potentially and actually) and knowledge. The following summary may give some glimpse as to the book’s contents and argument.

Part one introduces the framework of images that will recur in the primary source materials which will be presented in the following chapters. The images are derived from the Qur'anic assertion that God's "signs" (ayat) can be seen "upon the horizons and within their own souls"(41:53); that the signs of God are found outside the human being, in the world of nature, and inside the human being, in the world of human nature (spiritual anthropology). This was interpreted by the sapientials to mean that to know "the Real" was to see the mirroring of God and nature, the mirroring of God and human being, the mirroring of human being and nature. To know the Real was to perceive the polarities operating within each of the three fundamental "realities" of God, the world, and human being.

In Part Two, Murata looks at the polar terms used to describe the Divine; the most basic duality being "incomparability," or distance, and "similarity," or accessibility. Looking at the traditional lists of the Divine Names, one sees "sets" of complementary attributes, and the sapiential commentators looked at such Qur'anic images as the "Two hands of God" as indicating this fundamental "polarization of being". These attributes include such yang" qualities as beauty, mercy, gentleness (rendering the human response of love). According to the commentators, the nature of creature (other than insan, the human being) is to manifest certain of these qualities more than others, while it is the unique privilege of insan to (potentially) manifest all the Divine Names and Qualities. Human beings are called to "realize" their true nature and, in a sense, participate in the governance of the cosmos by his/her own integration and mirroring of the totality of the Divine Names, both female and male.

Murata also presents discussions dealing with the created order, focusing on such fundamental linguistic and ontological correlations as heaven and earth, the Pen and the Tablet, intellect and soul--all of which have traditional symbolic association with "male" and "female". Among the points developed is the notion that these terms, which counterpoise spiritual and material realms, each carry both "downward" and "upward" symbolism; all levels of reality ("spiritual" or "material") can be seen, according to the sapiential commentators, in their movement "away" from their divine source and unity, and in their natural movement of ("toward") surrender and reintegration. That is, there is no absolute "spirit-good vs. matter-bad dualism" in-

Qur'anic worldview. In looking at the Yin/Yang implications of the Pen and Tablet image (a primary Qur'anic image of God's creative activity), in which the Pen is traditionally related to the "male" principle of activity and the Tablet to the "feminine" principle of receptivity (which has tended to become a model for "absolutizing" the metaphor in terms of the primacy of man over woman), Murata presents commentators who explain to their readers that relational and polymorphic nature of the language, that a "father" is anything in nature that exercises an effect and a "mother" is anything that receives an effect. Indeed the whole universe is, in a sense, female with respect to god. These commentators, moreover, foreground the traditional feminine images associated with God's creative activity (e.g., God creates through his *rahma* his mercy, a term related to "womb") and utilize traditional, joyous images of marriage to speak of creation (a "divine marriage" whose "celebration" is continuous). The selections of Ibn 'Arabi's views on his own growth in understanding and appreciation of sexuality and "human marriage" are fascinating.

Part Four is on Spiritual Psychology, and the Sufis of course are well-known for their development of sophisticated analyses of spiritual and emotional tendencies in human beings and methods of "treatment" for the unbalanced and disintegrated human personality. Murata presents texts which describe various psychological characteristics in terms of male and female imagery, but which indicate that these characteristics are tendencies that exist within both men and women. Thus when Rumi says that the intellect is Adam, the body is Eve, sensory intuition is Iblis, anger is the serpent, and good qualities are Paradise, he makes it clear that these "elements" exist in all human beings and need to be properly understood and integrated, for, only "He who knows himself knows his Lord." Also of interest is the discussion of the human heart, which in the sapiential tradition is the locus of "true" perception and the highest form of knowledge precisely because of its (Yin) characteristics of softness, flexibility, shyness, receptivity.

Murata knows that her line of thought will not satisfy those who feel that healing the iniquities in social structures, especially as they relate to women, requires the rejection of hierarchies of any kind (which the ontology of the sapientials presumes) and the rejection of the legacy of associating human attributes and conduct with male and female symbolism. She rejects

the philosophical presuppositions of this view as well as what she sees as the domineering, moralistic, imperialistic, orientalist, yes, “male” attitude with which this critique is imposed upon non-western scholars.

She also knows that she will be criticized for building her argument--that there is a “feminine-affirmative” and bipolar, correlational ontological tradition in Islam---with texts that are not representative of “the mainstream” in Islam. She points out, however, that a major problem in the field of Islamic studies is that Muslims and non-Muslims have both tended to assert an Islamic ““orthodoxy,” and that while Shari sal) discussions of what people ought “to do” in everyday life became the dominant discourse in the Islamic community, the Islamic tradition must be seen in the full range of its discussions on human nature and conduct. The latter approach would itself manifest a more inclusivistic, “both-and”, “yin” approach to scholarship and “orthodoxy.” She sees many strategies of thought within the Islamic intellectual tradition itself that could improve the lot of women without the unconditional surrender to western secular models.

Sachiko Murata should be commended on the collecting, organizing, and elucidation of these important primary source materials. My main criticism of the presentation is that the term” sapiential tradition” has connotations of a certain learned, elite class, while in fact, as Murata would want us to know, the language and ideas of the “sapientials” were very much felt and transmitted at the popular level through the use of stories, music, poetry, and the “simple” teachings of the Sufi shaykhs. Moreover, these teachings did translate into a more inclusivistic stance toward participation of women (in Sufi spirituality), thus giving some evidence as to the effect that discussions on the “supremundane” can have on the social realities of woman.

Seton Hall University Gisela Webb South Orange, New Jersey The Need for a Sacred Science. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, State University of New York Press, Albany, N.Y, pp. 187, \$ 16.95.

Ever since the colonial period, Muslim leaders, intellectuals and writers have fallen prostrate before the twin idols of modern science and technological progress, convinced beyond doubt that to master and propagate them is a religious duty, a panaceas automatically solving all

problems and bestowing health, wealth, prosperity and power upon their countries and peoples. On this subject, modernists and militant revivalists/activists completely agree with each other. Contemporary Muslim writers have expressed the simplistic assumption that the combination of oriental spirituality with occidental technological progress would immediately usher in a paradise on earth. Even otherwise conservative Muslim leaders think that by a futile distinction between westernization and modernization Muslims can adopt the latter without the former and, in this way, derive full benefits from scientific/technological progress without any ill-effects upon Islamic beliefs, practices, society and culture. They say that modern science is not western but international, the common property of all the peoples of the world. Natural resources are awaiting industrial exploitation in unlimited abundance therefore no need to be concerned about the impact of technology upon the environment. Above all, they believe that modern inventions are value-free and morally and spiritually neutral; their compatibility with Islam depending entirely on how they are used by the pious and God-fearing. In this way, even a bulldozer, computer, jet-plane or nuclear reactor can be “Islamic” if used “for God”.

Dr. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, alone among major living Muslim writers and intellectuals, is not deluded by any of these illusions and, one by one, effectively refutes them in this book under review. He shows that modern science is synonymous with western civilization, the exclusive product of the agnostic humanists of the European Renaissance. Since then, the West became an abnormal monstrosity, totally at variance with the rest of mankind. With irrefutable arguments, he proves that there is absolutely no way at all the Muslim world can make it their own uncritically wholesale without a corresponding destruction of traditional Islamic civilization and disintegration of Islamic society as the general acceptance of materialistic urban life-styles and mental outlook, with all their devastating consequences, prevail.

Is all this inevitable and irreversible? Is there any other viable alternative? Nasr replies emphatically in the affirmative. His answer is the still-living Islamic tradition in its full richness. The Islamic tradition was not limited to theology and jurisprudence. It was also a very rich aesthetic, intellectual, philosophical and esoteric heritage which included all the sciences of nature,

medieval Muslim scientists could not conceive of the study of creation without reference to the Creator. Thus did the traditional Islamic sciences proceed without open rebellion against the established spiritual, moral and social order or environmental destruction. In those days knowledge was integrated into a unified whole exemplified in the Sage or Hakim in contrast to the extremely specialized fragments of modern knowledge, each having no connection or relation to the other and without meaning or purpose. In the Holy Qur'an nature is regarded as a friend to man to be respected and cherished not as an enemy to be conquered. Islamic civilization thus sought harmony and equilibrium with the natural order as its traditional architecture, public works and urban planning so clearly demonstrate. Above all, the great Muslims in history sought beauty everywhere both natural and man-made. Industrialism has resulted in the unprecedented spread of the most degrading and dehumanizing ugliness nothing ugly can possibly be considered as Islamic.

The environmental crisis is the physical expression of the spiritual malaise of western man which has become global. Only submission to

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spiritual authority and discipline can restrain the passions of selfishness and greed which have caused the rape of the earth. The traditional sciences of Islam include the inner life and demand spiritual and moral as well as academic qualification.

In his total rejection of modernism, Nasr in no way implies ignorance, isolation or segregation. On the contrary, he urges Muslim youth to acquire all modern western knowledge on the condition that it be subjected to rigorous criticism by orthodox Islamic standards and values. If the human body did not reject part of its nourishment, it would soon perish.

Nasr has been harshly condemned by so-called "fundamentalist" Muslims because of the respect he gives to other traditions including Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism and even American Indians. Why has Nasr understood the issue between modernism and traditionalism instead of Islam and Kufr? The reason is because the latter would involve placing materialist ideologies and neo-paganisms into the same category with

authentic traditions indiscriminately, thoroughly confusing and distorting any true understanding of the spiritual crisis we face today. The Holy Qur'an clearly distinguishes between Ahl al Kitab and paganism, and there are many kinds and degrees of Kufr.

Nasr's book is one of the most perceptive, enlightening and unapologetic on the subject of Muslim versus modern science and the revival of Islamic civilization.

(Maryam Jameelah)