



Journey to the Lord of Power: A Sufi Manual on Retreat

Ibn Arabi , Muzaffer Ozak

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Journey to the Lord of Power is the first English translation of Ibn 'Arabi's twelfth-century text dealing with spiritual ascent. 'Arabi, whose metaphysical teachings have had a profound influence on both the Muslim and Christian worlds, is known as one of the greatest writers of mystical love poetry of all time.

Written in answer to the questions of a friend, this illuminating guide describes the evolutionary path of our higher spiritual aspirations -the quest for the ultimate reality, the journey toward God. It is chiefly concerned with spiritual retreat, an advanced and potentially dangerous Sufi practice that aims at the attainment of the Presence of God through absolute abandonment of the world. Realizing the imagination's deceptive power, 'Arabi warns that this form of retreat should not be undertaken except at the order of a sheikh or by one who has mastered the self. Each stage of the journey is accompanied by a temptation which can be overcome only by an unshakable desire for God.

Ibn 'Arabi explains each step of the ascent leading toward human perfection. In this perilous voyage of self-discovery, the reader will encounter the Realms of the mineral, vegetable, and animal worlds, eventually reaching the Gardens and the Throne of Mercy. The traveler of the Sufi mystic path is called upon to cleanse his or her heart in order to safely reach the final destination - the Lord of Power.

Journey to the Lord of Power: A Sufi Manual on Retreat Details

Date : Published April 1st 1981 by Inner Traditions (first published 1205)

ISBN : 9780892810185

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Format : Paperback 128 pages

Genre : Religion, Islam, Spirituality, Philosophy, Occult, Mysticism

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Lumumba Shakur says

Shortly after my initial conversion, I was given this book by a friend as my introduction to the discipline of tasawwuf. From what I recall, this is Ibn Arabi's letter to one of his most senior students, describing the spiritual processes of the khalwa (spiritual seclusion) - i.e., not something you should be giving to someone learning how to pray. Needless to say, it didn't understand a word of it at the time but it nonetheless had the profound effect of wetting my appetite for the future. It is perhaps the only book that I still possess from my college days. That being said, I will have to refrain from a proper review and rating at this time.

Memdi Buday says

Gotta read it again

Sagheer Afzal says

This book does contain some more valuable insights into the inner world of Ibn Arabi. I think Chittick does do a better job in translating and explaining. When reading Ibn Arabi you have to remind yourself that you can never glean a proper understanding until you have re-read it. The book does contain a few details that I have not read in Chitticks work. Namely the description about the 6 spiritual realms.

Mohamed101 says

This book seems to be written with a scholarly audience in mind, certainly not for the layman. The book is written in a straight forward way in which Shaykh Ibn Arabi attempts to explain elements from the worlds of alghayb. The Sheikh goes into detail about spiritual ascension towards the lord and the stations that exist on the path. The first few pages in the preface have literally nothing to do with the book almost at all. There are huge lessons to be learnt from this short text, it would be advisable to not attempt the activities mentioned by the Sheikh unless one is ready or has access to a spiritual guide!

4/5 Due to the unrelated preface.

11/10/2016

Re-reading this book due to the striking similarities with "Degrees of Soul" by Ash-Shabrawy. The levels are described in a similar way, some of the remedies are also the same. Although the Tariqas are many, the way to Sufism is truly one.

Maryam Kd says

This is a small yet wondrous book, I loved reading it. The calligraphy that has been added from the grand mosque of Bursa is absolutely amazing.

d says

Con certeza digo que este es uno de los textos más bellos y poéticos que he leído en mi vida. El asunto a tratar no es menor: cómo separarse del mundo, cómo unirse a Dios, qué esperar del encuentro y cómo actuar luego.

La edición de Sirio viene con una gran introducción y notas que me resultaron muy explicativas. Lo único que sabía de Ibn' Arabi es que fue un sufí del S. XII que tuvo contacto con Averroes, ese extraño musulmán que recuperó parte de la obra de Platón y Aristóteles. En la introducción Sheikh Muzaffer Ozak al-Jerrahi comenta que Ibn' Arabi conoció a Averroes cuando tenía 20 años. Efectivamente en este texto saltan las influencias de la filosofía platónica (¿neoplatónica?): con respecto a su teoría de las ideas, la transmigración de las almas; y la influencia aristotélica que recupera la preocupación sobre el tiempo, la materia, etc. Sin embargo, esta referencia a los griegos, que yo sentí de manera patente, sólo figura en una de las notas al final del libro. Una lástima, porque al lector contemporáneo tal vez le resulte más amigable acercarse a este texto pensando en aquellas ideas, que, de nuevo, no eran para nada ajenas al ambiente de Ibn' Arabi.

No puedo resistir la tentación de traer este fragmento. Es largo pero vale la pena, es bellissimo y habla muy bien del tono místico y pasional de Arabi. Nótese el recurso oral/poético de la repetición. (Las itálicas son mías)

Y si no te detienes con esto, Él te revela uno de los santuarios donde los espíritus están absortos en la Visión Divina. Aquí están ebrios y aturdidos. La fuerza del éxtasis los domina, y su estado te atrae.

Y si no te detienes con este atractivo, se te revela una luz con la que sólo te ves a ti mismo. Con ella, se apodera de ti un gran embeleso y un profundo arrebató amoroso, y encuentras en ella una felicidad con Dios que no has conocido nunca antes. Todo lo que hayas visto hasta entonces resulta pequeño ante tus ojos y tiembles como la luz de una lámpara.

Si no te detienes con esto, Él te revela la forma [original] de los hijos de Adán. *Y se quitan los velos. Y los velos caen. Y ellos tienen una plegaria especial que tú reconoces al oírla, y no estás rendido. Ves tu forma entre ellos y por esto reconocerás el momento en que te encuentras.*

Y si no te detienes con esto, Él te revela el Trono de la Piedad (sarir-al-rahmaniyya). *Todo está sobre él. Si lo observas todo, verás en él la totalidad de lo que has conocido, y más aún: no hay ningún mundo ni esencia que no veas allí.* Búscate a ti mismo en todo: si es conveniente, conocerás tu destino y el lugar y límite de tu grado, y qué Nombre Divino es tu Señor y dónde está tu parte de conocimiento y santidad —la forma de tu personalidad. (...)

Y si no te detienes con esto, serás erradicado, retirado, destruido, aplastado, extinguido. Cuando hayan terminado los efectos de la erradicación y todo lo que la sigue, se te afianza, se te tiene presente, se te hace permanecer, se te recoge, se te señala. Y se te ponen las vestiduras de honor que requiere tu rango, que son muchas.

Entonces vuelves a tu camino y examinas todo lo que has visto en diferentes formas, hasta que regresas al mundo de tus limitados sentidos terrenales. O [guardarás ayuno] en el lugar adonde te hayas retirado; y el destino de cada buscador dependerá del camino por el que haya realizado su viaje. (p. 42-46)

En las notas del final del libro se explica que la repetición del *Y si no te detienes con esto...* es una forma de crear una unidad en esta parte del texto. Esta repetición está relacionada con la idea implícita de un camino trazado por Dios.

Me resultó imposible, al leer este fragmento, no pensar en la descripción que hace Nietzsche de la culminación de los ritos dionisiacos en su Origen de la tragedia. La misma asociación me asaltó leyendo los poemas de Rumi. Pero la cita blasfema que más se acerca es obviamente El Aleph de Borges.

Somos lectores de Borges. Somos lectores de Ibn' Arabi, the Mad Arab.

Ellen Johnson says

powerful stuff about just what is required on the path of self-annihilation in God.

Elizabeth L'Abate says

The "easiest" of his books to read...revealing his merciful nature toward beginning students on the path...

Barnaby Thieme says

This useful little book gives a good sense of the contemplative path as it was experienced by the Great Shaykh Ibn 'Arabi. He advises reliance on the foundational Sufi practice of Dhikr, or remembrance, which is the comportment of awareness on God through some conceptual vehicle, such as the recitation of the holy name of Allah. According to Ibn 'Arabi, that brings the mind gradually through the image of God to the reality, in a series of stages. He presents them sequentially but advises that they may not occur as such, elliptically noting that the paths are more circular than straight.

Ibn 'Arabi advises not losing absorption in the Holy Name when various visions and revelations are disclosed, for if your comportment shifts to the various appearing realms, you become grounded in those realms, not God, and become estranged from God thereby.

The pinnacle disclosure is a self-annihilation, followed by a re-entrance into the phenomenal realm in the light of your own essential character, as it exists with respect to God.

The numerous points of convergence with Indian path-based meditation in Mahayana Buddhism, and in the contemplation of the Self in the Vedanta traditions, suggest the possibility of historical interaction, but I get the sense there are important differences too. The spiritual inflection of Islam resists regarding the ultimate

ground as one's own nature, and I believe that even Ibn 'Arabi, who seems to follow Plotinus' model of emanation from the One very closely, would hesitate to affirm the Chandogya Upanishad's statement tat tvam asi, Thou Art That. Rather, the tendency of the tradition is to regard union with the absolute as a bounded experience of contact when the soul returns to its source.

But this is not the topic of "Journey to the Lord of Power," and lies beyond its scope. The book is a guide to a graded series of imaginal realms disclosed to the spiritual aspirant along the path to Union. It's a fascinating and evocative testimony of the visionary experience of one of the greatest figures in the world's history of mystical literature.

I also very much appreciated the calligraphy reproduced in this book - some of it is very beautiful.

Nissa Rachmidwiati says

This thin book contains advices from Ibn' Arabi as a murshid to his mureed. They say it is the easiest book of him, well, it might be. However this book is not for those who are unfamiliar with sufism and metaphorical writings. Because *My learned friend, interpreting texts according to their literal meanings can sometimes land a person in error. Literalism is what has caused your judgments about Ibn `Arabi who is one of the Imams of our faith known for his scrupulous piety. You have understood what he wrote in a superficial fashion; whereas sufis are masters of literary figures which intimate much deeper meanings, hyperbolic language that indicates heightened spiritual awareness and words which convey secrets concerning the realm of the unseen.*

If I may add 4 words to describe this book; it would be ***to asceticism and beyond!***
