

Correspondences between the Sufi Ideas of Ibn Arabi and Physics

In my opinion, the Sufi Islam of Ibn Arabi can be seen as a culmination of the cultivation of human wisdom, with African IFA = Vodou as its fundamental origin and including (but not necessarily limited to) Vedism, Taoism, Buddhism, Judaism, and Christianity.

Here are

Some Correspondences between the Sufi Ideas of Ibn Arabi and D4-D5-E6-E7-E8 VoDou Physics:

The One (ahadiyah)
or Absolute Unity
which needs no Names

the empty set

Oneness (wahidiyah)
or Absolute possessing
characteristics which are
the Divine Names

binary separation into opposites
described by
all real Clifford Algebras
Cl(N)

thabita are archetypes
or fixed prototypes

structures of $Cl(8) = Cl(1,7)$
that are fundamental components
of all $Cl(8N)$
 $Cl(8N) = Cl(1,7) \times \dots (N \text{ tensors}) \dots \times Cl(1,7)$

The 256 elements of $Cl(8)$ correspond
to the 256 Odu.

The structures of $Cl(8)$ include
+/- half-spinor fermion particles
and antiparticles
vector spacetime
bivector gauge bosons

The 256 elements of $Cl(8)$ correspond
to the 256 Odu

[mumkinat](#) are possible things

possible configurations of [archetypes](#)
forming quantum possibilities
i.e., worlds of the Many-Worlds
and Bohmian beables

[qada](#) is a decisive judgment

[dechoherence of a quantum superpostion
of possibilities](#), i.e.,
choice of which World of the [Many-Worlds](#)
at an event, or
choice made by [Bohm Guiding Potential](#)

[qadar](#) is the outcome of qada

[the World or State](#) that is seen to
come into physical existence at an event

[al-khalq al-jadid](#) is the
new world that is created at
the occurrence of every event

[the branching of the Worlds
of the Many-Worlds at each event](#)

[himmah](#) is the spirtual power
of an arif, or knower

[quantum consciousness resonant connection](#)

[taskhir](#) bi-al-iradah is
constraining by will
whereby a higher order
constrains a lower,
[taskhir](#) bi-al-hal is
constraining by the state
or situation in which
a lower order constrains
a higher, and
both together form a cycle

[Sarfatti post-Bohm Quantum Back-Reaction](#)

[wujudiyah](#) is the cyclic ontology of Divine self-manifestations by new world creations

[Quantum Game of Many Fates](#)

Here are some of

Ibn Arabi's Ideas leading to the Correspondences:

According to the book Sufism and Taoism, by Toshihiko Izutsu (California 1983):

"... Ibn Arabi (born in Spain in 1165 a.D.) died in Damascus in 1240. Fusus al-Hikam ... the Bezels of Wisdom ... written in 1229 ... has often been described as his opus magnum ... Abs al-Razzaq al-Qashani (d. 1330) is one of the greatest figures in the school of Ibn Arabi. ...

... the absolute, pure Unity (ahadiyah) ...[is]... the Unity of Divine Essence ...

... the Unity of multiplicity at the ontological stage of Divine Names and Attributes, is specifically called wahidiyah 'Oneness (of Many)' ...

... The archetypes are 'permanent' or 'permanently subsistent' (thabitah), i.e., they have been fixed once for all in the eternal past and are, therefore, absolutely unalterable and immovable. ...

... Ibn Arabi often refers to the permanent archetypes as 'essences of the possible things' (ayal al-mumkinat) ...

... Ibn Arabi ...[says]... that the 'predetermination' (qada) is a decisive judgment (hukm, or decree) of God concerning the things ... given in strict accordance with His Knowledge of ... themselves and their properties ..."

... It is the qadar that assigns to every event its peculiar time ... Ibn Arabi[says]... the 'allotment' (qadar) is the specification of the appointed time at which each of the things should actually occur in accordance with its archetypal state ...

... Ibn Arabi says that the world goes on being created anew at every single moment ... 'new creation' (al-khalq al-jadid) ... ordinary people are not aware of the process ... the Absolute is continually manifesting itself in the infinity of 'possible' things. This is done by ... 'descent' (nuzul) of the Absolute towards the lower levels of Being ...

... According to Ibn Arabi,

a 'knower' ... (arif) ... Perfect man ... can, if he likes, affect any object by ... concentrating all his spiritual energy upon it; he can even bring into existence a thing which is not actually existent ... This extraordinary power is known as himmah, meaning a concentrated spiritual energy ... [an] object ... created by himmah continues to exist only so long as the himmah maintains it ... In brief, a 'knower' is ... endowed with the power of taskhir ...[Ibn Arabi says]... A true "knowledge" does not allow himmah to be freely exercised. And the higher the knowledge, the less possibility there is for a free exercise of himmah ...

... even the most perfect of all Apostles (akmal al-rusul), Muhammad, did not exercise himmah ... For, being the highest 'knower', he knew better than anybody else that 'miracles' were, in truth, ineffective

...

... Ibn Arabi distinguishes between two kinds of taskhir.

- One ... is called 'constraining by will' (taskhir bi-al-iradah). It refers to a descending order of taskhir, in which a higher being constrains a lower ...
- the second is an ascending order of taskhir, in which a lower being ... constrains a higher being. ... the higher being is constrained by the ... state in which the lower being is found. It is ... called 'constraining by the state (or situation)' (taskhir bi-al-hal). Here the 'constraining' occurs by the ... fact that the lower and the higher happen to be in a certain relationship with each other.

... Al-Qashani ...[says]...

... all the modes of the archetypes are things that have been known to God (from eternity), permanently fixed in potentiality, and God brings them out to actuality incessantly and perpetually ... He goes on transforming the possibilities (isti dadat, lit. 'preparednesses') that have been there from the beginningless past and that are (therefore) essentially uncreated, into infinite possibilities that are actually created. Thus everything is in the state of ascending [ascent (taraqqi)] at this very moment because it is perpetually receiving the endlessly renewed ontological (wujudiyah) Divine self-manifestations, and at every self-manifestation the thing goes on increasing in its receptivity for another (i.e., the next) self-manifestation. ...

... The world in its entirety is perpetually changing. And every thing (in the world) is changing in itself from moment to moment. Thus every thing becomes determined at every moment with a new determination which is different form that with which it was determined a moment ago. ... Thus the Absolute reveals itself perpetually in these successive self-manifestations, while the world is perpetually being lost due to its annihilation at every moment and its renewed birth at the next moment. ... But (ordinary) people do not know the reality of this phenomenon ...

... In this world-view ... of Ibn Arabi ... nothing remains static; the world in its entirety ... transforms itself kaleidoscopically from moment to moment, and yet all these movements of self-development

are the 'ascending' movements of the things toward the Absolute-One, precisely because they are the 'descending' self-expression of the Absolute-One. ... The 'new creation' he speaks of in ...[his book Fusus]... concerns the concrete things of the sensible world ...[and]... not the permanent archetypes [themselves] ... Thus in Ibn Arabi's thought, everything in the world (and therefore the world itself) is constantly changing, but underlying this universal flux of changing things there is Something eternally unchanging. ... The Descent is followed by its reversal, that is, Ascent. ... thus the whole process of creation forms a huge ontological circle in which there is in reality neither an initial point nor a final point. ... the whole circle ... is a trans-temporal or a-temporal phenomenon. ... Everything is an occurrence in an Eternal Now ...".

According to [an Islamic esotericism web page](#) [[my comments are set off by]]:

"... Ibn Arabi saw the cosmos as being ruled by an invisible spiritual hierarchy, consisting of

- the Supreme Pole (Qutb),
 - [[The graded multivector structure of the $Cl(8)$ Clifford algebra is 1 8 28 56 70 56 28 8 1 The grade-0 1 is the scalar.]]
- the two imams;
 - [[The $Cl(N)$ Clifford algebra has 2^N dimensions, and for even N there are two mirror-image half-spinors. The Clifford product of a vector by a multivector is in some sense an extension of the set-theoretic XOR from sets and subsets (for which it describes binary distinctions) to vector spaces and subspaces.]]
- the four "pillars" (awtad) governing the four cardinal points,
 - [[The $Cl(2)$ Clifford algebra Quaternions with basis $\{1, i, j, k\}$ are a subspace of the Octonions with basis $\{1, i, j, k, E, I, J, K\}$.]]
- the seven "substitutes" (abdal) ruling over each of the climates or geographical regions;
 - [[There are 7 imaginary Octonions $\{i, j, k, E, I, J, K\}$.]]
- the twelve chiefs (nuqaba) ruling the twelve signs of the Zodiac, and
 - [[The 12 signs of the Western Zodiac are related to the 28 signs of the Eastern Zodiac by the ratio 3 to 7. The $Cl(8)$ Clifford algebra has a 28-dimensional bivector Lie algebra which, after factoring out a 16-dimensional subalgebra, is seen to contain the 12-dimensional Standard Model $SU(3) \times SU(2) \times U(1)$ Lie algebra.]]
- the eight nobles (nujaba) corresponding to the eight heavenly spheres.
 - [[The $Cl(8)$ Clifford algebra has an 8-dimensional Octonionic vector space and two mirror-image 8-dimensional Octonionic half-spinorspaces, all three of which are isomorphic by Triality.]]

... Ibn Arabi also refers to a succession of worlds or planes of existence. These are called the Hadarat or five "Presences" (sing. Hadra),

- [[The first 5 even-dimensional Clifford algebras $Cl(2N)$

2N

Graded
Structure

Total
Dimension

Algebra
Structure
(depends on signature)

0										$2^0 = 1 = 1 \times 1$	(Real numbers)
2			1	2	1					$2^2 = 4 = 2 \times 2$	(Quaternions or 2×2 real matrices)
4			1	4	6	4	1			$2^4 = 16 = 4 \times 4$	(2×2 Quat matrice or 4×4 real matrices)
6			1	6	15	20	15	6	1	$2^6 = 64 = 8 \times 8$	(4×4 Quat matrices or 8×8 real matrices)
8	1	8	28	56	70	56	28	8	1	$2^8 = 256 = 16 \times 16$	(8×8 Quat matrices or 16×16 real matrices)

include the $Cl(8)$ fundamental component of $Cl(8N)$ and the D_0 to D_4 Lie algebras with dimensions 0, 1, 6, 15, and 28.

Also, there are five known Fermat Primes ($2^k + 1$):

- $2^1 + 1 = 2 + 1 = 3$
- $2^2 + 1 = 4 + 1 = 5$
- $2^4 + 1 = 16 + 1 = 17$
- $2^8 + 1 = 256 + 1 = 257$
- $2^{16} + 1 = 65,536 + 1 = 65,537$.]]

perhaps because of the Divine Presence in each one, or the five Descents (tanazzulut) or Worlds (alam). Although there are always five levels, there is some difference in detail between the different interpretations, and the levels are usually given different names as well; so in fact more than five are referred to [see e.g. Henry Corbin, Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn Arabi, pp. 225, 260-61]. ...".

According to [a web page on Ibn 'Arabi and the Mystical Journey: A First Attempt to Understand Ibn 'Arabi's The Journey to the Lord of Power by John G. Sullivan Department of Philosophy Elon College prepared as part of NEH 1999 Summer Seminar for College Teachers on "The Literature of Islamic Mysticism" held at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill](#) [[my comments are set off by]]:

"... Ibn 'Arabi speaks of three basic sources of knowing -- prophetic reports, rational investigation, and unveiling (a knowing from the heart with strong ties to imagination). Some modern religious sensibilities might rate "knowing through reports" as lowest and either rational investigation or unveiling as higher (as both of the latter appeal to some form of experience). For Ibn 'Arabi, on the contrary, prophetic revelation is the strongest and most solid yet he believes we need both rational investigation and unveiling to have complete knowing of that which the Prophet reveals to us. ...

... Ibn 'Arabi speaks of the two categories of the names of God -- correlated with the "two hands of God."

- The left hand tends to dispersion, ignorance, darkness (at least in a sense). More positively it reminds us that we do not know God (tanzih) -- stressing incomparability. So that the rational investigation would be useful to hold that aspect.
- The right hand would tend to unity and self-awareness -- stressing what is similar (tashbih). ...

[[Compare mirror image half-spinors and the Taoist idea of left-handed

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and right-handed

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swastikas that represent expansion and contraction (somewhat like breathing).]]

... The "qutb" or axis or pivot is the highest station in the Sufi hierarchy. "The qutb is directly responsible for the welfare of the entire world. The qutb is said to be the spiritual successor of Muhammad." (Glossary, Journey to the Lord of Power, p.114) All that has been seen before is, Ibn 'Arabi says, from the world of the left hand. From this station onward, we witness the world of the right hand "and this is the place of the heart." (43) As mentioned above, consider the right hand as representing mercy and unity; the left as representing punishment and separation. From hereon, we more and more realize the unity perspective of the qutb and the mercy flowing from it. the qutb harmonizes both aspects ... the incomparableness of the Divine (tanzih) and the similarity of the Divine (tashbih), being able to hold both the universal perspective of timelessness and the "moving image of eternity" in which humans dwell. ...

... Appendix II: 'Arabi's Cosmic Order using 28 letters of alphabet (from William Chittick Self-Disclosure of God, pp. xxix-xxxii)

[[The Cl(8) Clifford algebra has a 28-dimensional bivector Lie algebra.]]

The Intellective World

- 1. Hamza -- the First Intellect (Highest Pen)
- 2. Ha' -- Universal Soul (Preserved Tablet)
- 3. 'Ayn -- nonmanifest Nature -- what underlies the "four natures" -- (heat and cold) + (dry and wet)
- 4. Ha' (dot below H) -- the Last or Dust Substance (Prime Matter) -- like nature, remains unknown except through traces -- fills the Void and is underlying matter/potential of everything in universe except Intellect and Soul

Higher Realm of Imagination

- 5. Ghayn -- The All Body, the Manifest -- a corporeal substance from which every corporeal and imaginal body is shaped and formed.
- 6. Kha -- Shape, the Wise -- through shape, the bodily things of the universe become distinct from one another
- 7. Qaf -- the Throne, the All-Encompassing -- mentioned in Qu'ran (20:5) as where the All Merciful sat. First bodily thing that assumes a specific shape. Encompasses the entire manifest universe including world of imagination.
- 8. Kaf -- the Footstool, the Grateful -- the first imaginal thing -- locus of where God lets down his "two feet" which are the foot of mercy and the foot of mercy mixed with wrath. Above footstool, only mercy -- Footstool embraces the heavens and the earth (2:255) -- the manifestation of cosmos demands good and evil, suffering and happiness, commands and prohibitions. "True gratitude [is] possible only after this division, . . . true gratitude [recognizes and accepts] God's mercy and guidance and [thanks] Him in every state, whether we consider the state beneficial or harmful." Self -Disclosure of God, xxx)

Bodily World starts here with the Celestial Spheres

- 9. Jim -- the starless sphere -- the black satin sphere, the Independent -- free of the specific stars or planets that designate the lower spheres. (In Dante, the Primum Mobile -- source of motion)
 - [Paradise is located here between the starless sphere and the sphere of fixed stars]
- 10. Shin -- sphere of fixed stars, the Determiner. The twelve constellations of the zodiac appear here and this sphere can be divided into the twenty-eight waystations of the moon. This disequilibrium $12/28 = 6/14 = 3/7$ drives the constant movement and change in the lower realms.
- 11. Ya -- the [7th] or highest heaven -- the Lord -- Saturn (Saturday) -- Abraham
- 12. Dad (dot under D) -- [6th heaven] -- the Knowing -- Jupiter (Thursday) -- Moses
- 13. Lam -- the [5th heaven] -- the Subjugating -- Mars (Tuesday) -- Aaron
- 14. Nun -- the [4th heaven] -- Light -- holds a central spot in bodily/imaginative worlds SUN (Sunday) -- Idris (Enoch)
- 15. Ra' -- the [3rd heaven] -- Form-giver -- Venus (Friday) -- Joseph
- 16. Ta' (dot under T) -- the [2nd heaven] -- Enumerator Mercury (Wed.) -- Jesus
- 17. Dal -- the [1st or lowest heaven] -- Clarifier Moon (Monday) -- Adam
 - [[The 7 heavens correspond to the 7 real Clifford algebras between $Cl(0)$ and $Cl(8)$ that describe the possible structures of the 8-fold periodicity tensor factorization of $Cl(N)$ for large N .

They also correspond to the 7 different independent E_8 lattices. There is a natural 8th lattice that is dependent, so each $Cl(8)$ in a tensor product

$$Cl(8N) = Cl(8) (x) \dots n \text{ times tensor} \dots (x) Cl(8)$$

can be written in 7 different ways, isomorphic to the 7 imaginary Octonions i, j, k, E, I, J, K plus one additional way corresponding to the 8th E_8 lattice, which corresponds to 1. Denote those 8 E_8 lattices by $iE_8, jE_8, kE_8, EE_8, IE_8, JE_8, KE_8$ and $1E_8$. Then each $Cl(8)$ can be written with lattice structure in 8 ways

- $Cl(81E_8)$
- $Cl(8iE_8)$
- $Cl(8jE_8)$
- $Cl(8kE_8)$
- $Cl(8EE_8)$
- $Cl(8IE_8)$
- $Cl(8JE_8)$
- $Cl(8KE_8)$

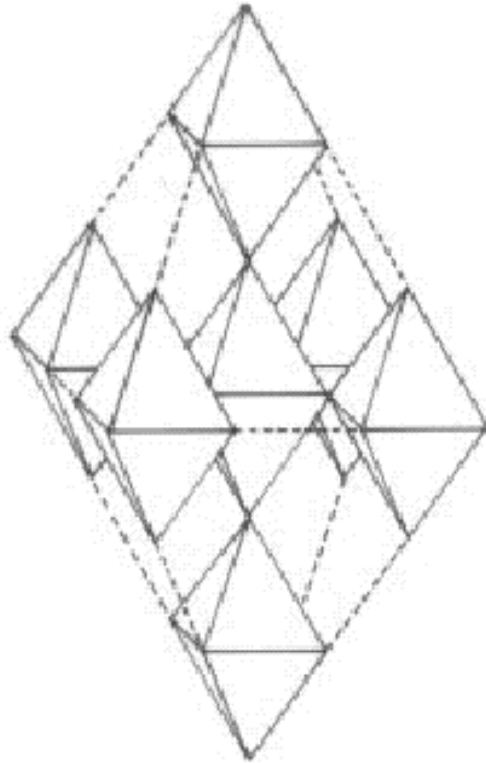
so that there are effectively 8 ways that you can "break down" a given $Cl(8)$ into an E_8 lattice structure and if you look at

$$Cl(8N) = Cl(8) \otimes \dots \otimes Cl(8)$$

there are 8^N ways (8 for each $Cl(8)$) that you can break it down into E_8 lattice structures.

(Compare [the construction of a String Theory containing Gravity and the Standard Model.](#))

Now, based on the octonionic structure of the 8-dim vector space, if you subdivide its E_8 lattices into smaller sub-lattices where the links are shorter, you see that you can get a fractal self-similar nesting into smaller and smaller lattice structures, like Onar Aam described, sort of like this



image

taken from the paper of Battaner at astro-ph/9801276. By doing that, you see that Cl(8) can not only be the basis of a nesting of larger and larger superstructures, but also that Cl(8) can be subdivided into a nesting of smaller and smaller substructures, so that Cl(8) is the key structure of nested super and sub-systems.]]

The Elemental Globes -- pictured as four concentric globes within the influence of moon

- 18. Ta' -- the fire -- the Gripper [The 4 elements can be seen as giving
- 19. Za' -- the air -- the Alive rise to the progeny or kinds of beings
- 20. Sin -- the water -- the Life-giver in the spiritual (though less than God),
- 21. Sad -- the earth -- the Death-giver. in the imaginal and in the bodily worlds.]

The Progeny -- children of the fathers (celestial spheres) and mothers (the 4 elements)

- 22. Za' (dot under Z) minerals -- the Exalted the Spirituals
- 23. Tha' -- plants -- the All-Provider
- 25. Fa' -- the angels (made of light) -- the Strong
- 24. Dhal -- animals -- the Abaser
- 26. Ba' -- the jinn (made of fire) -- the Subtle
- 27. Mim -- human beings (made of clay) -- the All-Comprehensive
- 28. Waw -- the levels, stations -- the Uplifter of degrees ...".

According to [an Ibn Arabi Society web page](#):

"... The Occult Tradition of the Tarot in Tangency with Ibn 'Arabi's Life and Teachings by Jereer El-Moor. ... the author reviews the known facts of the history of playing cards (and the related history of the Tarot). He sets out to present "a credible case for regarding the Tarot as of Near Eastern provenance", and gives a personal view of its interpretation through the centuries. In the second part he goes on to interpret one of the trumps in the light of Ibn 'Arabi's 'Anqa' mughrib. ...".

[[The structure of the 78 cards of Tarot are closely related to the structure of the $Cl(8)$ Clifford algebra. For example, the 52-card subset of the 78 Tarot cards naturally corresponds to the 8 vectors plus the 28 D_4 bivectors plus the 8+8 spinors.]]

[Kent Palmer](#), in e-mail correspondence, said:

"... With respect to Quran the numbers just don't work out directly. The place where the trigrams appear the number eight is not mentioned. ... The trigrams are in the Quran definitely. ... the references to Ilm al Raml are in doubtful hadith. ... The evidences for the I Ching are in the coherences of the structure of the book ...

... in ... the relation between Arabic and Ancient Egyptian ... Maat is like Maut. So Truth is like Death ...

... we will step out into a place where the rainbow descends to earth. We will be lost in the wonder of ... the rainbow of fate"

[[The hieroglyph for Maat (meaning truth, justice, and order) is an ostrich feather because the god Thoth would judge the fate of each deceased Egyptian by weighing the heart against an ostrich feather (Maat), so Truth was indeed what determined the judgment faced at death.]]

Ibn Arabi and Sufi Islam

According to [an Ibn Arabi Society web page](#):

"... Muhammad Ibn Arabi is one of the world's great spiritual teachers. Known as Muhyiddin (the Revivifier of Religion) and the Shaykh al-Akbar (the Greatest Master), he was born in 1165 AD into the Moorish culture of Andalusian Spain, the center of an extraordinary flourishing and cross-fertilization of Jewish, Christian and Islamic thought, through which the major scientific and philosophical works of antiquity were transmitted to Northern Europe. Ibn Arabi's spiritual attainments were evident from an early age, and he was renowned for his great visionary capacity as well as being a superlative teacher. He travelled extensively in the Islamic world and died in Damascus in 1240 AD. ...".

Although Ibn Arabi was Sunni, his work transcends Islamic sectarian boundaries. For example, according to [a web page of Ted Thornton](#):

"... Ruhollah Khomeini was the first Muslim cleric in modern times to create an Islamic government based solely on his personal conception of what such a government should entail. ... Khomeini was descended from the Mussavi Sayyeds, a family tracing its lineage from the Prophet Muhammad through the Shiite seventh imam, Musa al-Kazem. Khomeini's father, Mustapha, a well-known clergyman in Iran, was murdered seven months after Ruhollah's birth. His mother died when he was 16. Ruhollah's education reflected a strong Persian dualist outlook on the world: a tendency to draw sharp boundaries between the worlds of light and darkness, between black and white, between haq ("truth") and batel ("falsehood"). This approach to the world, under girded by a traditional Iranian Shia conviction that the world is unsafe for Shiites, that neither the Prophet Muhammad, his family, nor any of the twelve Shia imams died a natural death ("We are either poisoned or killed."), contributed to the construction within Khomeini of the uncompromising personality of one who feels relentlessly persecuted. Growing up intelligent and introverted in a climate where the religious establishment was losing ground in the face of modernist secular challenges, Khomeini took refuge in mysticism, especially in the works of Ibn Arabi and Rumi [1207-1273] and their notion of the "Perfect Man" who will guide society from multiplicity to unity, from blasphemy to faith and from corruption to a life of absolute perfection. ... On June 5, 1963, Khomeini was arrested by SAVAK, the Shah's secret police. Ten months later, in April, 1964, he was released unrepentant. This led the Shah in November, 1964 to send him into exile, first to Turkey, then in October, 1965, to the holy Shia city of Najaf in Iraq, burial place of the fourth caliph and first Shia Imam Ali (the tomb is located four miles from Kufa where Ali was felled by Kharijite assassins in 661). Khomeini moved to Paris in October, 1978. Throughout 1978, demonstrations against the Shah's regime took place in Iran. Ailing from cancer, the Shah departed Iran on January 16, 1979. Two weeks later, Khomeini's supporters recalled him from exile in Paris, and on February 1, 1979, he returned to construct his revolutionary "reign of virtue" according to his principle of the velayet e-faqih ("vice regency of the theologian"). Iran became a pure theocracy ... [By 2003,] Khomeini's own grandson, Sayyid Hussein Khomeini, ... from his home in Baghdad, described the American invasion of Iraq as a "liberation," and said that people in the region welcomed freedom wherever it came from, even a country which his grandfather had dubbed "the Great Satan." He predicted that unless reforms occurred in Iran, there would be an exodus of Shia scholars from Qom to Najaf, one of the major centers of Shiite learning in Iraq and the burial place of the Shia Imam Ali. ...".

Therefore, I like to see the work of Ibn Arabi as useful for all humans.

According to the book Sufism and Taoism, by Toshihiko Izutsu (California 1983):

"... Ibn Arabi remarks that 'the mystery of qadar is one of the highest knowledges, which God grants only to (a small number of) men who are privileged with a perfect mystical intuition'. If a man happens to obtain the true knowldege of qadar, the knowledge surely brings him a perfect peace of mind and an intolerable pain at the same time.

- The unusual peace of mind arises from the consciousness that everything in the world occurs as it has been determined from eternity. ... Instead of struggling in vain for obtaining what is not in his capacity, he will be happy ...
- He must be tormented, on the other hand, by an intense pain at the sight of all the so-called 'injustices', 'evils', and 'sufferings' that reign rampant around him, being keenly conscious that it is not in his 'preparedness' to remove them from the world. ...".

[Tony Smith's Home Page](#)