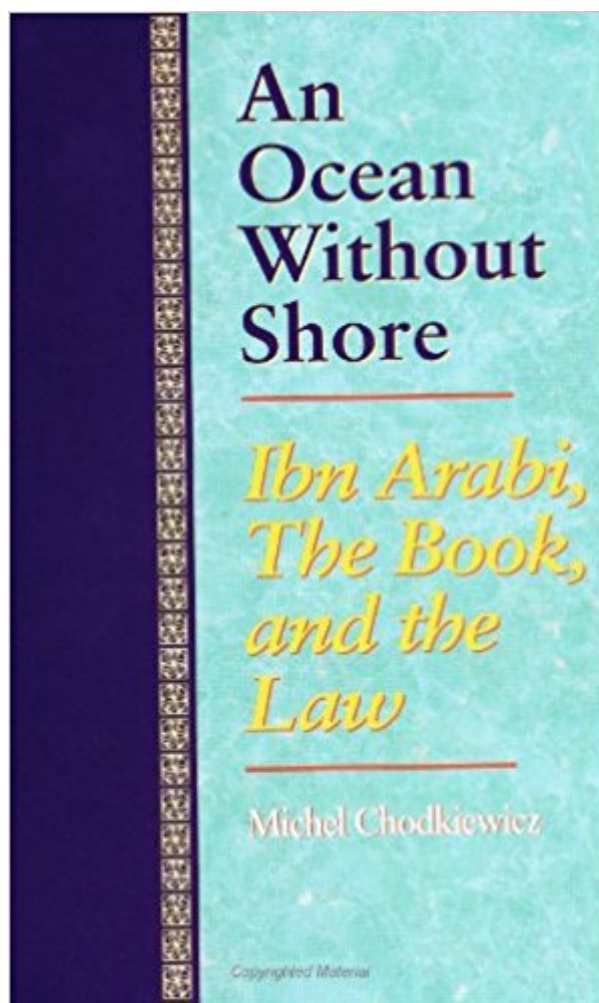


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An Ocean Without Shore: Ibn Arabi, The Book, And The Law



Synopsis

An Ocean Without Shore is a study of Ibn Arabi, known in Islam as al-Shaykh al-Akbar, the Greatest Spiritual Master. In the introduction, Chodkiewicz provides a good deal of documentation for the often heard claim that Ibn Arabi has been the most influential thinker in Islam over the past seven hundred years. He shows that this has been true, not only among the intellectual elite, but also among the common believers. He explains why a few Muslims have considered Ibn al-Arabi the greatest heretic of Islam, while for many others he is Islam's greatest spiritual teacher. In the main body of the book, Chodkiewicz demonstrates that Ibn Arabi's writings are firmly grounded in the Koran. In doing this he also shows that Ibn Arabi's Koranic roots run far deeper than has heretofore been imagined. He explains that principles of Ibn Arabi's Koranic hermeneutics with unprecedented clarity, and in bringing out the primary importance of the Shaykh's magnum opus, The Futuhat Makkiyya, he solves a good number of riddles about the text that have puzzled modern readers. Chodkiewicz's work shows how, for Ibn Arabi, the initiatory voyage is a voyage in the divine word itself.

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Customer Reviews

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 'Arabī (as well as his disciples and heirs throughout the Islamic world) is

clearly just such a landmark in "AkbarĀfĀ®" studies. Its basic unifying theme - familiar enough to even the novice reader of Ibn 'ArabĀfĀ® 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-FutĀfĀ»hĀfĀĉt al-MakkĀfĀ®ya 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 'ArabĀfĀ®'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 Sulphur.

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