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IBN AL ‘ARABI’S PHILOSOPHY AND SUFISM: IMPACT ON MOROCCAN CONTEMPORARY THOUGHT

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Abstract

The paper explores the influence and impacts of Ibn al Arabi’s philosophy and Sufism on the contemporary Moroccan thought. To achieve that, a few key doctrines and messages of Ibn al ‘Arabi have been highlighted in the first few sections, and then a brief literature survey was conducted for relevant thinkers, Sufis and writers of Morocco and greater world, some such names have been listed and specified in the paper. Also, few interviews of writers, professors and intellectuals were conducted by the author and visits took place to libraries, historical Ibn al ‘Arabi specific sites. It was found that, at least seven Moroccan sages and spiritual writers maintained Ibn al ‘Arabi’s legacy from the 13th to the 19th century. Also, on Moroccan Contemporary Thought, a brief study and investigation of modern writers, authors, publishers and

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music bands in Morocco and neighbouring countries, reveal a direct influence of Ibn al ‘Arabi and his messages in writings, songs, in prayers and ritual practices. The trend showed the progressive adoption of the principles of Universal Humanism and Religious Diversity, which were the key doctrines and messages propagated by Ibn al ‘Arabi in his prolific writings. A brief study and review of 55 books and articles, reveal that majority of those writers were found to be Moroccan who wrote during the present century and the last centuries. Amongst the majority of books and articles reviewed, it was found that almost 80% were written on Sufism mentioning the aspects of Ibn al ‘Arabi’s teaching, and approximately 20% of those books were written on contemporary philosophical topics proposed by Ibn al ‘Arabi. From the interviews of professors and academic scholars, it was found that many prominent Moroccan universities have been conducting research on Ibn al ‘Arabi. Also based on findings, the article discovered the opinion that the Morocco’s state-based support to Sufism, which is currently part of its religious identity, emphasizing its role in promoting moderation and tolerance, especially in the 2011 constitution commitment to religious and cultural diversity, indicates an influence of Ibn al ‘Arabi and other similar Sufi thinkers of the Muslim world. Finally, the article concludes that Ibn ‘Arabi’s legacy is fully alive in Morocco even as of today. The influence and impact of Ibn al ‘Arabi on the Moroccan Contemporary Thought is fully prevalent, mostly in Sufis and Philosophers circles.

Keywords: Philosophical sufism, Universal humanism, *Insaniat al-‘Alamiyya*, Religious pluralism and diversity, *Wahdat al Wujūd*, Oneness of Being, Divine Self-Disclosure, *Tajallia al-ilahiyya*, Perfect human being, *al-Insān al-Kāmil*, Religion of love, Divine love, *Mohabbah ilahiyya*.

1.0 Introduction

Muhammad bin Ali bin al-'Arabi al Hatimi al Ta'i was a sage and one the greatest philosophers in the history of mankind. He was a towering figure in the history of mystical philosophy and a prolific author who authored more than 550 books and treaties on the subjects of philosophy, science, psychology, spirituality, and literature. He was famously known as Muḥyi al Din Ibn al 'Arabi the *Shaykh al Akbar*. He was born in Murcia in Spain in 1165 AD and died in Syria in 1240 AD. However, he also lived in Morocco for approximately five years and wrote more than six books when he was there (Izutsu, 1998).

From the teachings and thoughts of Ibn al 'Arabi a detailed metaphysical system was developed by later thinkers of Islamic world that integrates Sufism with philosophical inquiry. His principal teachings revolve around several key concepts like Oneness of Being (*Wahdat al-Wujūd*), God's Self-Disclosure (*Tajalliya ilahiyya*), The Perfect Human Being (*Al-Insan al-Kāmil*), The Imaginal World (*'Alam al-Mithāl*). All these ideas and concepts are illustrated in his *magnum opus*, a 10,000-page book, *Meccan Revelations (al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya)*, a philosophical book received in a dream from the Prophet (SAW) - *Bezels of Wisdom (Fuṣūṣ al-Hikam)*, *the Twilight of the Stars (Māwaqī' al Nujūm)*. In *Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya* and *Fuṣūṣ al-Hikam*, Ibn al 'Arabi explores how the Divine Names (*Asmā' al Husna*) manifest in creation. Each created being reflects a particular aspect of Allah (SWT), and spiritual realization involves recognizing these divine qualities within oneself (Ibn al 'Arabi, ca. 1231-1238/ 1988 C.E., p. 21). In *Kitab al-Isfār* and *Risālat al-Anwār*, he discusses the Imaginal Realm, an intermediary world between the physical and purely spiritual

dimensions. This realm allows for mystical visions and spiritual experiences. A central theme in *Mawaqi al-Nujum* and *Tadribat al-Ilahiyya* is the concept of the Perfect Human, who fully embodies divine attributes and serves as a bridge between God and creation. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is the supreme example of this realization (al- Jîlî, ca. 1365-1424/1983 C.E, p. 42). In *Anqa Maghrib* and *Ittehad al-Kawn*, Ibn al ‘Arabi describes *Tajalli*, the process of divine manifestation. Reality is continuously unveiled in different forms, and spiritual seekers must refine their perception to witness these unveilings. In addition, he shared in *Anqa Maghrib*, his experience which unfolded to him gradually, beginning as an intimation of love, then knowledge, and finally becoming manifest in a rapturous breakthrough of Divine-prophetic Light (Ibn al ‘Arabi, ca. 1195-1205/ 1999 C.E., p. 54). His other book, *Journey to the Lord of Power (Risalat al-Anwar)* outlines the stages of spiritual ascent, where the seeker moves beyond material limitations toward divine proximity (Ibn al ‘Arabî, ca. 1205 C.E/ 1981, p. 29). Ibn al Arabi’s works remain foundational in Sufi metaphysics, influencing later thinkers like Sadr al-Din al-Qunawi, Abd al-Rahman Jami, Ahmed Sirhindi, Mulla Sadra, Shah Waliullah Dehlawi. His synthesis of philosophy and mysticism continues to shape Islamic thought today.

The objective of this paper is to study and research on the influence and impacts of his philosophy and Sufism on the contemporary Moroccan thought. The scope of the paper covers a brief study of Ibn al ‘Arabi and his activities in Morocco which included internet research, literature review, site visits, interviews to key personalities in the field of academia, literary and artistic circles. However, items like, detailed study of Ibn al

'Arabi and his teachings on Philosophy and Sufism or a detailed study of Moroccan contemporary thought was beyond the scope of this paper.

I have organised the paper into 7 sections, first section starts with introduction where outline of the article is provided. In section 2.0, a few key messages of Ibn al 'Arabi's Philosophy and Sufism are highlighted, then in section 3.0, a brief history of Ibn al 'Arabi's stay in Morocco was provided. After that, in section 4.0, by looking into books, writers, Sufi scholars, Ibn al 'Arabi's legacy was reviewed. Then in section 5.0, in the Contemporary Thought, Sufism, Humanism and Religious Diversity ideas, as proposed by Ibn al 'Arabi, were looked into. Then finally in section 6.0 Conclusion was provided with the last section 7.0 References.

2.0 Ibn al 'Arabi's Philosophy and Sufism

Ibn al 'Arabī in his magnum opus, *al-Kitab al-Futūhāt al-Makkiyya* writes,

فهو المتجلي في كل وجه، والمطلوب من كل آية، والمنظور إليه بكل والمعبود في كل معبود والمقصود في الغيب والشهود لا يفقده أحد من خلقه بفطرته وجبلته. فجميع العالم له مصل، وإليه ساجد، وبحمده مسبح. (Ibn al 'Arabī, ca. 1202-1238 C.E./2017, p. 376)

It is He who is revealed in every face, sought in every sign, gazed upon by every eye, worshipped in every object of worship, and pursued in the unseen and the visible. Not a single one of His creatures can fail to find Him in its primordial and original nature (Ibn al 'Arabī, ca. 1202-1238 C.E./2017, p. 376).

2.1 Few Key Messages of Ibn al ‘Arabi’s Philosophy

Out of many philosophical inquiries available in Ibn al ‘Arabi’s teachings, we would look into few key messages like, (1) Oneness of being – *Waḥdat al-Wujūd*, (2) Universal Humanism – *Insāniyat al-‘Alamiyya* and (3) God’s Self Disclosure – *Tajalliāt al-ilahiyya* - God manifests Himself in His Self-Disclosures in new configurations in every moment- *Khalqun Jadidun*.

2.1.1 Oneness of Being – *Waḥdat al Wujūd*

Although Ibn al ‘Arabi never used this phrase in anywhere in his works, he has been made prominent for floating this doctrine of “Oneness of Being” or “*Waḥdat al Wujūd*”. Here is a brief definition, Emir Abdelkader al-Jazāiri, an Ibn al ‘Arabi follower in 19th century, “*Waḥdat al-Wujūd*” or the “Unity of Being” is the mystical station of separation (*furqan*), in which the creatures are perceived as subsisting in God. In this station, the Divine attributes and the relative diversity are simultaneously present, and it is obligatory to fulfil the commandments and be concerned with worldly affairs, as required by the *Sharī‘a*. The people of *Waḥdat al-wujūd* perceive both God and His creation (*al-Haqq wa al-Khalq*), the internal things in the external and the external things in the internal, without each being concealed from the other. Knowing God (*ma’rifā*) means to perceive the reality from a combination of these two perspectives, the Divine and the earthly (Weismann, 2019, p. 5).

The principle of *Waḥdat al-wujūd* thus gives rise to a concept of mutual relationship between God and His creatures. Ibn ‘Arabi maintained that the possible entities, namely the creatures in potential, and God in His degree of divinity, not as Himself but in His manifestation as Creator, are as-if mutually dependent

(*kal-mutaḍayyifin*). Just as we need God to realize our prototypes (*wujûd al-a'yan al-thabita*) so He needs us to make manifest His manifestations (*zuhur mazahirihi*). Yet this existential mutuality is entirely vested in God, the only One who really exists. The world can thus be defined as the shadow of God, His external name, and his specific manifestations, definitions and particularizations. In the same vein, 'Abdelkader explains the command "be" in the sense of "Receive your specific character through My existence and My manifestation in you and thus be My manifestation, not that you become existent (*mawjûd*)."

Whatever is found on earth is in a state of non-existence, and the perception of existence is merely an illusion of the senses or of the intellect" (Weismann, 2019, p. 4).

"*Waḥdat al-wujûd*" is not a pantheism, the belief that God and the universe are identical, meaning that everything collectively constitutes God. In pantheism, there is no distinction between the creator and the creation; they are one and the same. That belief is not supported by Ibn al 'Arabi. His concept of *Waḥdat al-Wujûd* (*Unity of Being*) is more nuanced, emphasizing that while everything in existence reflects God's presence, God remains transcendent and distinct from His creation (Rustom, 2006, p. 4). Also, we refer to Dr. Muhammed Chtatou's paper on Ibn al 'Arabi, where he says, "From the point of view of poorly understood esotericism, we sometimes reduce God to His manifestation in the material world and therefore to His immanence, going as far as a kind of pantheism. The difficulty of perceiving "*Waḥdat al-wujûd*" is linked to our perception of unity and multiplicity and our ability to reconcile them because we are used to thinking in a binary way of thinking and we need to delimit things. Now, God is infinite and to be so, he must

overcome all opposition and determination. So, God is both transcendent and immanent ...” (Chtatou, 2020, p. 9).

2.1.2 Universal Humanism – *Insaniat al-‘Alamiyya*

A humanist perspective of Ibn al Arabi is well expressed by the prominent female Sufi author, Souad al Hakim, who writes, “... Humanism is one of the central concepts in contemporary philosophy. It involves three dimensions of learning as a human right. The human need of individual self-knowledge, knowledge of the surrounding world and knowledge of what is beyond the visible world” (Hakim, 2004, p.1).

She illustrates further by saying, “In modern societies, these three dimensions have become a human right, which is claimed and safeguarded. Whoever conceals information about one of these dimensions has some explaining to do to humanity, whether such information is in the field of medicine, social science, politics, economics or scientific discovery” (Hakim, 2004, p.1).

Similarly, the Moroccan author, Dr. Mounir Ichki, provides a detailed reflection of Ibn al ‘Arabi’s Humanism, in his book, “Humanism in Ibn ‘Arabi”, where he writes, “The human efficacy between the discourse of philosophy and the discourse of Sufism in Ibn al ‘Arabi’s message to humanity. the human project, in an existential understanding, remains open not only to the capabilities of reason alone, but also to other activities related to the modes of existence of this human being. Ibn al ‘Arabi provided a new meaning and content for the concept of humanism, by placing philosophy and Sufism face to face in confronting the question of humanity and its existential

issue” (Ichki, 2016, p. 8). He argued that by applying universal humanitarian approach in the teachings of Ibn al Arabi, the world can charter and navigate to a peaceful and harmonious future for humanity.

2.1.3 God's Self Disclosure – *Tajallia Ilahiyya*

God manifests Himself in His Self-Disclosures in new configurations in every moment- (*Khalqun Jadid*), which is reflected in this qur'anic verse, Qur'an, 55:29, “*every day He manifests Himself in yet another new way*” indicates, God's self-disclosure is happening in every moment (his perpetual new creation – *khalq jadid*).

On this divine self-disclosure, by quoting Ibn al 'Arabi, William Chittick writes, “Everything in the universe is the self-disclosures of God (*tajallia ilahiyya*), then, like the spirit, they manifest the attributes of God through their very existence, since *wujūd* ('Being' or 'existence' or 'finding') is the Real Himself” (Chittick, 1993, pp. 90-123)

Ibn al 'Arabi's understanding of the divine “nearness” expressed in this Koranic phrase is intimately bound up with the reality of “perpetual creation” (*khalqin jadidin*) expressed in the rest of the verse and its immediate context: “...yet they are in confusion about the (ever-) renewed creation (*khalqin jadidin*); but surely We created human [*al-insan*] and We know what his/her soul insinuates to him and We are closer to a human than his/her jugular vein” (Qur'an. 50:15-16) (Morris, 1988, pp. 63-77).

2.2 Few Key Messages of Ibn al ‘Arabi Sufism

In the last section, we covered the key messages of Ibn al ‘Arabi on philosophical topics, however, in this section, we’ll cover a few of his key messages on Sufism, which includes, (1) Perfect Human Being – *al-Insan al-Kāmil*, (2) The Religion of Love – Multi-faith, Religious Pluralism, Humanism and Diversity and (3) Asceticism – Purity of Heart- if your heart is chained with desires, how can you reach God.

Now let’s explore each message separately.

2.2.1 Perfect Human Being – *al-Insan-al-Kāmil*

“*Al-Insān al-Kāmil*” is an honorific title to describe prophet Muhammad (SAW). The phrase means “the person who has reached perfection”, literally “the complete person”, (Morrissey, 2020). It is an important concept in Islamic culture of the prototype of human being, pure consciousness, one’s true identity, to be contrasted with the material human who is bound by his/her senses and materialism. The term was originally used by Sunni Sufis and is still used by them, but it is also used by Alawis and Alevis (Weissmann, 2019). This idea is based upon a hadith, which was used by Ibn al ‘Arabi, that states about Prophet Muhammad: “I was a prophet when Adam was between water and clay.” (Hadith- Musnad Aḥmad, al-Ṭabarānī, al-Ḥākim)

“*Al-insan al-kāmil*”, or the perfect being, was first deeply discussed in a written form by Ibn al ‘Arabi in one of his most prolific works entitled “*Fuṣūṣ al-Hikam*”. (Ibn al‘Arabī, 1229, p. 51)

When an individual understands that there is no separation between human and God, he/she begins on the path of ultimate

Oneness. The one who decides to walk in this path of Oneness, he/she pursues the true reality and responds to God's longing to be known. The search "within" for this Reality of Oneness causes one to be reunited with God, as well as improve self-consciousness (Weissmann, 2019, p. 6).

The Perfect Human through this developed self-consciousness and self-realization prompts divine self-manifestation. This causes the Perfect Human to be of both divine and earthly origin, Ibn al 'Arabi calls him/her the Isthmus (*Barzakh*). Being the Isthmus between the Heaven and Earth, the perfect human fulfills God's desire to be known, and God's presence can be realized through him/her by others (Alucard, 2007, p.1). Additionally, through self-manifestation one acquires divine knowledge, which is the primordial spirit of Muhammad (SAW) and all its perfection. Al 'Arabi details that the perfect human is of the cosmos to the divine and conveys the divine spirit to the cosmos (Alucard, 2007, p.1)

2.2.2 The Religion of Love – Multi-faith, Religious Pluralism, Humanism and Diversity

The idea of Religion of Love, Religious Pluralism, Humanism and Diversity is depicted in Ibn al 'Arabi's famous poem line (a verse from his prominent poetry book, *Tarjumān al Ashwāq*), which is usually quoted along with the two verses leading up to it. If we read these as well, along with Ibn al 'Arabi's commentary, we can see that he is explaining some of the implications of the religion of the Muhammadeans, which is perfect imitation of the Prophet by attaining to the Station of No Station. The verses are these:

“My heart has become the receptacle for every form,
a pasture for gazelles, a monastery for monks,

A house of idols, a Ka‘bah for the circumambulator,
tablets for the Torah, a volume for the Quran”. (Nicholson, 1911,
p. 67)

‘My heart has become a receptacle for every form’ alludes to the Station of No Station, the realized consciousness of the human being who recognizes that every belief is true for those who hold it. The Perfect Human Being, in other words, shares in the all-comprehensive vision set down by the *Qur‘an*, the vision that embraces all teachings of all 124,000 prophets. In the heart of the Perfect Human, all ‘knots’ (*‘uqda*) have been untied. These knots are the ‘beliefs’ (*‘aqīda*) that bind the hearts of ordinary mortals, which conveys the message of Religious Pluralism, Humanism and Diversity (Chittick, 2013, p. 7).

2.2.3 Asceticism – Purity of Heart- if your heart is chained with Desires, how can you reach God

Purity of Heart is one of the Ibn ‘Arabi’s ascetic principle to achieve human perfection. We may refer to Dr Chtatou’s article on “Ibn ‘Arabî and the Search for humility and purity”, (Chtatou, 2020, p. 1) where he mentioned that “Ibn al ‘Arabî represents the Sufi tradition in all its purity and universality. Here he quotes Ibn al ‘Arabi, who says, “How can heart travel to God, when it is chained by its desire” (Chtatou, 2020, p. 1).

3.0 Brief History of Ibn al ‘Arabi’s Stay in Morocco

In this section, we provide a brief history of Ibn al ‘Arabi who lived in Morocco for five years. In her book, *Quest for the Red Sulphur – The Life of Ibn Arabi*, Claude Addas writes, “During the time of Ibn al ‘Arabi, Fez was under the rule of the Almohads, and Fez was called ‘The citadel of Moroccan Sufism’, because

it was a religious and intellectual centre, with poets, literati and religious thinkers were coming there from all over the Almohad empire. ... Ibn al 'Arabi visited Morocco three times: in 1195 AD, in 1197-8 AD, and finally in 1201 AD. ... His first visit was marked by his meeting with 'Abd al-Rahman al-Tamîmî al-Fâsî (d. 1206), a well-known *muhaddith* and Sufi who was the Imâm of the *al-Azhar* Mosque in the *Ayn al-Khail* district, who offered him the second investiture of *khirqâ* of Khidr" (Addas, 1993, p.134).

In this visit, Ibn al 'Arabi attained the "Station of Light". Let's refer to the 'quote' below:

I obtained this station in 593H at Fez, during the 'asr prayer at the *al-Azhar* Mosque in the '*Ayn al-Khail*'. It appeared to me in the form of a light that was if anything more visible than what was in front of me. Also, when I saw this light the status of the direction 'behind' ceased for me. I no longer had a back or nape of a neck, and while the vision lasted, I could no longer distinguish between different sides of myself. I was like a sphere; I was no longer aware of myself as having any 'side' except as the result of a mental process - not an experienced reality." -Ibn al 'Arabi (*Futûhât*, 2/486).

This is something similar to Prophetic miracle, a Hadith from Sahih Bukhari, where through Abu Huraira, Allah's Apostle said, "Do you consider or see that my face is towards the Qibla? By Allah, neither your submissiveness nor your bowing is hidden from me, surely, I see you from my back" (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Book 8, Hadith 418).

His second visit was longer, lasting between 2 and 3 years. He travelled there with his family, (his mother and his two sisters, plus a maternal cousin), settling them in Fez and so releasing himself from his domestic obligations. In Marrakech,

Ibn al ‘Arabi had a vision, as was illustrated below:

“Know,” he will say in the *Futūhāt el-Makkiyya*, “that God has placed pillars of light to support the divine throne, I do not know the number, but I saw them. Their light resembles the light of lightning. However, the throne casts a shadow where lies an unspeakable tranquillity. This shadow is that of the concavity of the throne; she veils the light of the One who is seated, the Merciful. I also live on Treasure which is under the throne and from which the Word came out: “no strength or power if not by God the Sublime, the Magnificent.” This treasure is Adam, peace be on him. I live below many other treasures that I recognized, and beautiful birds flying all around ... I was in Marrakech when it was all for me unveiled.” (Addas, 1993, p. 178)

Station of *al-Khatmiya*: “Seal of Saints”; He was informed about him reaching this station, twice in two different visions: once in 594H and another in 595H. “When he was in Salla, he met there Abu Ishaq Kumi and Abdul Hakim Gamman (who was buried in Salla). When he was in a place called Igilis, between Salla and Marrakech, he was shown that he reached his 3rd *maqam*, called *Maqam al-Qurba*, Station of Proximity. He was afraid and unsure of that station, as he saw no one there. So, he spoke to Abdur Rahman al Sulami (947–1034 AD), who wrote a book on ‘*Tabaqat as-Sufiyya*’, he confirmed to him that it was a very high station, between station of ‘Siddiq’ and station of Prophet”. (Alam, 2020, p. 5)

4.0 How Ibn al ‘Arabi’s Legacy continued till today

Ibn al ‘Arabi’s legacy continued since his death. We looked into aspects of his legacy how it continued in Morocco only. So, we are not going to mention the details here: how Ibn al ‘Arabi’s stepson and his direct disciple Sadrudin al Qunawi and Ibn al

'Arabi's son Abdullah propagated many of his works all over the world.

But if we investigate the few names listed here in the sections below, it will be found that except, Emir Abdelkader al-Jaza'iri, everyone listed is of Moroccan origin that continued his legacy.

4.1 Early Followers who were influenced by Ibn al 'Arabi

Based on our research, we found only five of these people from the Moroccan origin who were influenced by Ibn al 'Arabi. All of them either practiced in their life, his teachings or authored books about him during the period from 13th Century to the 19th Century.

For example, such Ibn al 'Arabi followers include, (1) Ibn al-Bannā' al-Marrākushī (1256 AD -1321 AD) was a Moroccan Sufi Scholar. He wrote between 51 and 74 treatises, encompassing such varied topics as Algebra, Astronomy, Linguistics, Rhetoric, and Logic. Ahmad Ibn al Bannā' al-Murrākushī, was a companion of the great Sufi Abū Zayd al-Ḥumayrī, known for following the Sunnah tradition. He also authored several books, including *al-Iqtidāb and Marāsim ṭarīqah fī fahm al-ḥaqīqah*, as well as a Treatise on Prophetic Miracles. (Faitour, 2020). (2) Abu Ali al-Hasan ibn Mas'ud Yusi [ca. 1631-1691 AD] - (Sidi LaHasen) – a Moroccan savant, theologian, mystic and saint. He is considered to be the greatest Moroccan scholar of the seventeenth century. (3) Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Ajīb al-Ḥasanī (1747–1809 AD), was an influential 18th-century Moroccan scholar and poet in the Sunni Darqawa Sufi lineage. The Immense Ocean (*al-Baḥr al-Madīd*), better known as Tafsir Ibn 'Ajiba is very famous, influence of Ibn al 'Arabi is evident in this tafsir. (5)

Emir Abdelkader al-Jazairi (1808-1883 AD), he was a warrior who fought against French Army. Later he lived in Syria and became a powerful Sufi Shaykh in the lineage of Ibn al 'Arabi. His *kitab al Mawāqif*, was the surest evidence of his inheritance of *ma'rifa* (secret knowledge) of Ibn al 'Arabi. (6) Ahmad Ibn Idris, (d.1837 AD) – a mystic and founder of Idrisi order. Prayers and teachings show considerable traces of the influence of Ibn al Arabi (d.1240). His Idrisi Sufi tradition spread to the Balkans and Istanbul, Syria, Cyrenaica, the central Sahara, Sudan, Somalia, Indonesia, and Malaysia, (Esposito, 2008). Also, an ardent follower of Ibn Idris is Abu'l 'Abbas Al Dandarawi (1898–1953 AD), an Egyptian Sufi scholar and the sheikh of Dandarawiya tariqa. They follow Ibn al 'Arabi's teachings. The famous female Sufi author Souad al Hakim, who did her PhD thesis to produce the famous "*Mu'jam al Şufi – al Hikmah fi hudud al Kalimah*", a compilation of şufi terminologies available in all of Ibn al 'Arabi books like *Futūhat al Makkiyya*, *Fuṣus al Hikam* et el. And (7) Muhammad b. Ja'far b. Idris al-Kattani (1857 – 1927 AD) was a Moroccan scholar and theologian from the 19th century. His best-known book is the famous Saints from Fe (*Salwa al-Anfās*).

4.2 The 20th Century and 21st Century Thinkers and Philosophers

Quite a few of these authors were personally met and interviewed by the author of this article. Specially the key authors like Professor Dr 'Adluni, Professor, Dr. Abdelilah Benarafa, Professor Dr. Mounir Ichki and Dr. Mohammed Chtatou. The list of Interviews and contents were not provided in this article but submitted as a part of the research paper. Anecdotal evidences were present in the content of the interviews conducted by the author of this article.

The brief list of the 20th Century and 21st Century Thinkers and Philosophers, who are renowned in the academia and literary world of Arab countries, although most of them are alive today, they are Moroccan and specialised in Ibn al 'Arabi. Examples include (1) Taha Abderrahmane, PhD (b.1944) – “Taha Abderrahmane is a larger-than-life philosopher from Morocco— his life has spanned a plurality of Muslim crises and he has sought to set forth, through logic, Kalām, language, and *Usūl al-fiqh*, an entirely new way of living by which non-Muslims may see the dazzling wonder of Islamic civilization, and by which Muslims may abandon all forms of Taqlīd towards Western epistemology, ontology, and phenomenology.” (Baseer, 2023, p. 34). He was a professor of philosophy of language and logic at Mohammad V University from 1970 until his retirement in 2005. He published more than 20 books and publications and was greatly influenced by Ibn al Arabi and the great philosopher, even Shah Waliullah Dehlawi. (2) Muhammad al-A'dluni al-Idrisi, PhD - He is a professor of philosophy and humanities, a professor of philosophical Sufism, and a member of the Moroccan Writers Union. A founding member and advisor to Awarif Seasonal magazine. He wrote more 31 books, published critical edition of Ibn Barrajan Qur'an Tafsir and many others ibn al Arabi's books. He gave an online lecture to MIAS-ARABIC platform, on the topic, “Philosophical Sufism in the Thought of Ibn al Arabi al-Hatimi: The Theory of Existence as a Model” (*al tasawwuf al falsafa fi fikr ibn al arabi – nazriat al wujud anmudhaja*) (3) Abdel-Ilah Benarafa, PhD, is a well-known author in Morocco. He published 4-volume *Dewan al Kabir Li Ibn al Arabi al Hatimi*, a collection of 10,000 poems by ibn al Arabi, He wrote many *irfāni* novels, but the one on the life of Ibn al Arabi titled, “*Jabal Qaf*”, on the life al Ghazali,

“*Tawasin al Ghazali*” are well-known. Currently he is serving as D. Director General at ICESCO. (4) Mohamed Mesbahi, PhD, was a professor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences, in Mohammad V University in Rabat. He edited a large compilation titled “Ibn al ‘Arabi and the World Today”, with more than 50 articles in English and Arabic. Also, his book “Yes and No, in the Open-Minded Thoughts of Ibn al ‘Arabi” and another book titled, “Writing through Contrariety: Freedom in Ibn al ‘Arabi Thinking” is very well known. (5) Abdel Baqi Miftahi (b. 1952), a Sufi Shaykh and Author, who wrote more than 50 books on Ibn al ‘Arabi. His famous books include, “Keys of Bezels of Wisdom” (*Mafātih Fuṣuṣ al Hikam*), “Commentary on Ibn al ‘Arabi *Kitab Anqa Maghrib*” (*Sharḥ Anqa’a Maghrib*), Commentary on Ibn al ‘Arabi *kitab Shurūḥ ‘Ala Kitāb ishārāt al Qurān fi ‘ālam al insān lil Shaykh al Akbar Muhi al Din Ibn al ‘Arabi*, Quranic Commentary on Ibn al Arabi’s book, “Contemplation of the Holy Mysteries” (*al sharḥ al qur’āni li-kitāb mashahid al ‘asrār al qudusiat wa matalie al ‘anwār al ‘ilahiyati l-Ibn al ‘Arabi*). He gave two lectures in MIAS-Arabic, one of the topics is titled, “Solving the problem of arranging the chapters of the book *Fuṣuṣ al-Hikam* by Ibn al ‘Arabi” (Abbadi, 2023) (6) Mohammed al-Amraani, PhD. He wrote more than 10 books on Ibn al ‘Arabi and topics of Sufism and psychology. He was the Former Head of the Department of Philosophy, Sociology and Psychology, Qadi Ayad University in Marrakech. He was also the Former Director of the Research Group on Psychosocial Adaptation, Employment and Integration (RAEFCTI) at the same university. His famous book, titled “Commentary on the *Kitab khal’a al n’alain li shaikh al akbar Muhi al din Ibn al ‘Arabi al Hatimi*”, He gave on-line lecture to MIAS-Arabic on the same topic as his book. (7) Ahmed Kaza (b.

1956), PhD, is a Professor at the Chouaib Doukkali University - Faculty of Arts and Humanities - El Jadida, Morocco. He wrote quite a few books on philosophical Sufism, out of which this book titled, "The image between concealment and manifestation in Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi" (*al ṣuwwat bayn al khafa' wa al tajaliy' eind Muhyi al dīn Ibn al 'Arabi*) became more popular. He published more than 50 articles on the matters of Sufism, philosophy and psychology. He also gave a lecture in MIAS-Arabic one line seminar with a title, Ibn al 'Arabi and his creative liberation path (*Ibn al 'Arabī wa masaruh al 'iibdaeu al taḥaruri*), in which he talks about "metapsychic phase", Independence of intellect from thought, and independence of thought from sense (*al istiqlal al 'aql 'an al fikri, wa istiqlal al fikr 'an al ḥisi*). (Abbadi, 2023).

(8) Mohammad Am'Arech - Holds a PhD from Mohammed V University, Faculty of Arts and Humanities. He is a writer and researcher on issues of interpretation and Sufi discourses, published numerous peer-reviewed studies and translations in various fields of the humanities since 1984. He has published two books: (a) "Text and Difference: Hermeneutics of the Divine Image in Ibn Arabi," Beirut, 2017 (b) "Think Outside the Fist: Studies in Ibn Arabi's Sufism" Cairo, Egypt, 2019. He also gave a lecture in MIAS-Arabic online seminar with the title, "Human in Gnosticism (*Irfān*) - Ibn al 'Arabi as a Model (*al insān fi al 'aerfān – Ibn al 'Arabi namudhajān*)".

(9) Al-Gelalī Karim, PhD – He is a prominent Shaykh in the *Bashiriyya Tariqa* in Morocco, mostly popular in Settāt and Berrechid provinces. His book titled, "Studies in the History of Sufism in Morocco (*dirasāt fi tārikh al taṣawwuf bi-l maghrib*), provides details of various sufi tariqas active in Morocco. According to him, the most sufi tariqas like *al-Shādhiliyya*, *Syed Ibrahim Bashiriyya* (his own *Tariqa*), *Al-Darqāwiyya*, all of those are influenced by

the thoughts and teachings of Ibn al ‘Arabi. (10) Mounir Ichki (b.1977) holds PhD degree with thesis title, “Humanism in Ibn al Arabi (*al nazeat al ‘iinsaniat eind Ibn al ‘Arabi*)”. He published a book on the same subject and title in 2017. He published more than 10 articles in national and international journals. He is an associate professor in the faculty of Arts and Human Science in the Qadi Ayad University, Marrakech, Morocco. He gave a lecture in MIAS-Arabic with a title, “The Spiritual History of the World in Ibn Arabi’s Thought: Its Implications and Dimensions (*al taarikh al ruwhiyu lil ālam fi fikr Ibn al ‘Arabi: dilalatih wa ‘ab ‘aduhu*) (Abbadi, 2023)

5.0 Contemporary Thought: Sufism and Modernity – Humanism and Diversity.

Based on themes and titles of conferences and seminars held during the past 40 years during this and last century, it was envisaged that modern contemporary thoughts in Morocco revolved around Sufism and Modernity – Humanism and Diversity.

A brief list of sources/ methods in arriving at the header for the contemporary thought can be included as, (1) The 55 books and articles which were reviewed by the author of this article, out of which majority writers are Moroccan who wrote during the last 40 years (Mesbahi, 2003). (2) That review in (1) reveals that almost 80% books were written on Sufism aspects of Ibn al ‘Arabi. (3) Approximately 20% books were written on contemporary Philosophical topics. (4) On the analysis of themes of 21 conferences from the period between late 1990s till 2020, it was found that the majority of conferences discussed

about Humanism and Diversity (Mesbahi, 2003). (5) Also many professors in academia and authors were interviewed by the author of this article, who expressed the opinion that the Morocco's state based support to Sufism is part of its religious identity, emphasizing its role in promoting moderation and tolerance, especially in the 2011 constitution commitment to religious and cultural diversity, indicates an influence of Ibn al 'Arabi and other similar Sufi thinkers of the Muslim world. (Faitour, Oulema, 2019)

Here we included a brief extract from selective sources, some from the articles included in the book titled "Ibn 'Arabi and the World Today", compiled by Mohamed Mesbahi and many other books studied and reviewed by the author of this article.

Let's review few examples of such extracts, like (1) "... a desire to bring Ibn 'Arabi and Ibn Rushd together again and reconcile their philosophical perspectives after the failure of their first encounter in Cordova in the twelfth century" (Mesbahi, 2003, p.7), (2) "we dare say frankly that the aim of the aim from this reconciliation is to provide means of fertilizing philosophical thought and to open it to other perspectives, thoughts and fields it has been oblivious to in the past" (Mesbahi, 2003, p.7), (3) "First aim .. Is not to consider Ibn al 'Arabi himself, but to go beyond him .. Consider him as an inciter of thought and creativity ... to embrace horizons of freedom, experience and astonishment" (Mesbahi, 2003, p. 8). (4) "Modern clash of civilisations ..assumes, world has a room of one and unique civilisation. Ibn al 'Arabi's cry and voice .. The heart of civilisation is like that of everybody, big enough to contain all cultures, ready to accept all images of Truth without any preferences, since all that exists is Truth" (Mesbahi, 2003, p. 8).

As Ibn 'Arabi said, in his book *Tarjaman al-Aswaq* ... "My heart has become a receptacle of every form; it is a pasture for gazelles and a convent for Christian monks, and a temple for idols, and pilgrims' *Ka'bah*, and the tablets of the torah, and the book of the Qu'ran. I follow the religion of love, whichever way its camels take. For this is my religion and my faith." (Nicholson, 1911, p. 67).

In another example, we find the in the Mounir Ichki's book "Humanism in Ibn al 'Arabi" where he writes, "(1).. Humanism is one of the central concepts in contemporary philosophy. It involves three dimensions of learning as a human right. The human need of individual self-knowledge, knowledge of the surrounding world and knowledge of what is beyond the visible world" ... (2) "The human efficacy between the discourse of philosophy and the discourse of Sufism in Ibn al 'Arabi's message to humanity" is reflection of Ibn al 'Arabi's Humanism (Ichki, 2016, p. 5).

Similar example is found in the article titled, "Unity of Being in Ibn Arabi" by Souad Hakim, where she writes, "In modern societies, these three dimensions have become a human right, which is claimed and safeguarded. Whoever conceals information about one of these dimensions has some explaining to do to humanity, whether such information is in the field of medicine, social science, politics, economics or scientific discovery" (Hakim, 2004, p. 1).

Also, the idea of Ibn al 'Arabi's "Oneness of Being" adopted by local sufi circles which was evident in the writings about Paul Bowles (1910-1999 AD) who was an American writer who restlessly travelled throughout the world until he finally chose Morocco as a country of permanent residence. He settled in Tangier from 1947 AD until his death in November

1999 AD. One of the reasons, he chose to settle in Morocco was the fact that he was influenced by the Ibn al 'Arabi Philosophy of "Oneness of Being" and relevant mystical experiences he achieved through Moroccan Sufism (Bouachrine, 2014, p.199).

6.0 Evidence of Influences and Impacts

In order to gather evidence of influences and impacts, the author of this article used the methods and approaches like, (1) Internet search for research articles, books and dissertations; (2) Face to face interviews with academics and literary personalities; (3) Visits of historical sites where Ibn al 'Arabi received spiritual stations specially in Fez, Marrakech, Seville, Cordova; (4) Visits to libraries in Rabat, Marrakech and Casablanca; found that book shelves are still filled with not only lots of Ibn al 'Arabi books but also many books written about him by many thinkers of different ages; (5) Visit to Tangiers - where found at least two Andalusian Music Band music bands who performs Ibn al 'Arabi poems as spiritual songs- one of the important personalities spoke to was from Ahmed al-Khalee' (al-Khalee', 2015); (6) Visit to the Moroccan national library in Rabat, found many of Ibn 'Arabi manuscripts still kept intact.

7.0 Research Findings

Using the methods and approaches mentioned above, and evidences collected from site visits and book reviews, here is a quick summary list of Research Findings: (1) Number of Books available in libraries – lots of books on Ibn al 'Arabi (pictures were submitted with the research report); (2) Number of authors from Morocco and the region – out of 55 books reviewed 43 of them were written by Moroccans (78%); (3) Number of activities

like seminars, conferences and festivals taking place in Morocco mentioning Ibn al ‘Arabi – multiple conferences almost every years; (4) Cultural sector – Andalusian Music – playing Ibn al ‘Arabi Poems – multiple bands/groups; (5) Casablanca al-Saud Foundation library alone has 166 titles/ books of Ibn al Arabi’s authorship; (6) Casablanca al-Saud Foundation library alone has 977 titles/ books written about Ibn al ‘Arabi. The author himself visited many libraries, where he found many books of Ibn al ‘Arabi, however, few libraries have only less than 20 books but other libraries have over 300 books on Ibn al ‘Arabi works or related commentary on his works. For example, libraries like, *Dar Atthakafa* – Casablanca, Moktobat Shater – Marrakech, *Dar al-A’aman* – Rabat and Moktobat Alfia – Rabat, they all have over 300 books either authored by Ibn Arabi, many Arabic critical edition books or the commentaries written on Ibn al ‘Arabi works, especially the name of the authors mention in Section 4.2 above.

8.0 Conclusions

The author of this paper, through all the evidence and research findings mentioned above, concludes that, Ibn ‘Arabi’s legacy continues in the region strongly, especially in Morocco where, presence of Ibn ‘Arabi is extraordinarily strong. His influence in modern contemporary thought is strongly prevalent in Morocco, especially in Literary, Sufism and Philosophical circles. He observed that the private publication and printing sector is rich by publishing substantial number of Arabic books on Ibn ‘Arabi; specially lots of manuscripts are published for the first time in 800 years. The most prominent authors, like Dr. Benarafa, Dr. ‘Adluni and Dr. Miftahi published huge number of new books, not only by Moroccan publishers but also by publishers in Cairo and Beirut.

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