



Journey to Union: Exploring Ibn ‘Arabī’s Nomadic Philosophy and Imaginal Spaces in Sufism

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Abstract: This paper sheds light on Ibn ‘Arabī’s concept of the continuous spiritual journey, where the initiated can commune with the prophets of God. Employing the hermeneutics approach to Sufi discourse and Gilles Deleuze’s concept of nomadic thought, this study demonstrates that Ibn ‘Arabī understood Sufi wayfarers as nomads travelling both inwardly and outwardly. Their mobility in the Realm of the Seen and the Realm of the Unseen liberates Sufi practitioners from the confines of the space-time dimension and allows them to access various spiritual states and multiple becomings, ultimately attaining the spiritual stations of stability and certainty.

Contribution: This article explores the breadth and depth of Ibn ‘Arabī’s nomadic philosophy underlying the spiritual journey. It argues that the innate human desire to unite with God is expressed through a series of spiritual movements in an imaginal space, where the mystical wayfarer can communicate with the saints and the prophets of God.

Keywords: nomadic thought; journey; hermeneutic approach; Ibn ‘Arabī; empty space.

Introduction

The Sufi journey is a spiritual journey, with the aim to attain perfection and unification with God. It is an esoteric voyage from the heart on the perpetual quest for knowledge (*ma'rifa*) of the transcendent reality that baffles and bewilders the rational mind. The sole purpose of the spiritual seeker (*sālik*) is to exert himself on reaching the ultimate knowledge diffused through all things.¹ On this mystical journey, the seeker discovers the plurality of human experience in this world and widens his mental horizon by learning about other cultures and religions. It is an opportunity for such a human to engage in self-discovery and realization (*tahaqquq*), achieved through meditative techniques and sincere devotion to God and His creation. As described by Liotta:

The Sufi journey takes on a circular mirror form, between the soul and God, separated and striving for an attainable union along a meandering way from one place and stage to another, sometimes clearly predetermined and guided by the master.²

At the beginning of their journey to God, the seeker becomes an abode of multiple becomings, reflected in a state of continuous flux, “because [s]he continues to rise from one state to another and ... leaves one place for another, but once [s]he has arrived, [s]he becomes stable.”³ In truth, this movement from inconstancy to stability is occasioned by what Deleuze⁴ defines as ‘nomad thought’ or the philosophical process of thinking outside and across institutional boundaries, in other words the decodification and recodification of thought.⁵ This nomadic subjectivity is the primary factor for Sufi illumination, thus warranting further investigation.

The Andalusian mystic and philosopher Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn ‘Arabī (1165–1240) explained, “The journey is based upon toil and the hardships of life, on afflictions and tests and the acceptance of dangers and very great terrors.”⁶ It is not a straightforward and hassle-free journey, where stations can be achieved through mere experience. In his case, the journey to the upper realms allows him to master the science (*‘ilm*) of the

¹ Thomas Patick Hughes, *A Dictionary of Islam* (London: Oxford University Press, 1885), 609.

² Elena Liotta, *On Soul and Earth: The Psychic Value Of Place*, trans. Erika Pauli (London: Routledge, 2013), 137.

³ Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī, *Al-Qushayrī's Epistle on Sufism*, trans. Alexander Knysch (Reading: Garnet Publishing Limited, 2007), 100.

⁴ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Nomad Thought*, trans. David Allison (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1999), 41.

⁵ Michael Starr, *Wells Meets Deleuze: The Scientific Romances Reconsidered* (United States: MacFarland & Company, Inc., 2017), 29.

⁶ Muḥyiddīn Ibn ‘Arabī, *Journey to the Lord of Power: A Sufi Manual on Retreat*, trans. Rabia Terri Harris (Vermont: Inner Traditions, 1981), 27.

secrets of the earth and the heavens, while paving the ground for him to fathom the objective of his existence and to realize his oneness with every particle of it.⁷

The spiritual journey of Ibn ‘Arabī is a form of the immobile voyage, where the body is not the object of movement but the heart. The journey is marked by moving within an empty space, where he experiences different states and multiple stations. The idea of ‘empty space’ is inherent in Anthony Giddens⁸ writings, indicating that it is noetic as well as imaginary, leading him to encounter some invisible characters and spiritual entities.⁹

Ibn ‘Arabī’s ideas on Sufism, especially the mystical union with God, have been examined by several scholars. Lala and Alwazzan, for instance, stated that he was influenced by the Persian physician and philosopher Ibn Sīnā (c. 980-1037) and his idea of ‘necessary being’ (*wājib al-wujūd*). However, Ibn ‘Arabī reinterprets this concept with a focus on God’s main quality of mercy. It is God’s mercy that makes everything possible, unlike the kind of mercy that involves forgiveness or giving favors. Following Ibn Sīnā, all of God’s qualities stem from His essential existence; therefore, all of God’s other qualities flow from this fundamental quality of required mercy.¹⁰ Meanwhile, Amanda Tapp examines the mystical concept of *munāḥāt*, or intimate dialogue, typically between a worshipper and their Lord, and its relationship to Ibn ‘Arabī’s *waḥdat al-wujūd* (*Unity of Being*). The paper first situates *munāḥāt* within the current surrounding body of Sufi devotional literature and the Islamic intellectual tradition. The paper then examines how *munāḥāt*, as prayer, reflects and relates to Ibn ‘Arabī’s larger metaphysical treatises, particularly *waḥdat al-wujūd*, utilizing crucial concepts such as *barzakh*, imagination, and *dhikr* (remembrance). From this, it may be understood that *munāḥāt* is direct communication occurring from God to Himself through the form of man.¹¹ In addition, Bharatwaj Iyer investigated ontological pluralism by comparing Iain Thomson’s Heideggerian framework with Ibn ‘Arabī’s concept of *waḥdat al-wujūd*. Heidegger’s distinction between being and entities underpins an ethic that supports multiple ways of experiencing reality. This idea of

⁷ Ismail Lala, “The Epistemic Status of Mystical Experience in Ibn ‘Arabī’s Legal Reasoning,” *Religions* 13, no. 11 (2022): 1051, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13111051>.

⁸ Antonio Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (California: Polity Press, 1990), 18–19.

⁹ Binyamin Abrahamov, “Ibn Al-‘Arabī y Abū Yazīd Al-Bisṭāmī,” *Al-Qanṭara* 32, no. 2 (2011): 369–385, <https://doi.org/10.3989/alqantara.2011.v32.i2.261>.

¹⁰ Ismail Lala and Reham Alwazzan, “Necessary Existence and Necessary Mercy: Ibn ‘Arabī’s Reformulation of Ibn Sīnā’s Ontological Proof,” *Religions* 14, no. 8 (2023): 1016, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14081016>.

¹¹ Amanda Tapp, “Munāḥāt and Ibn Al-‘Arabī’s Unity of Being,” *Religions* 14, no. 6 (2023): 693, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14060693>.

pluralism is expanded through Ibn 'Arabī's dynamic relationship between transcendence (*tanzīh*) and immanence (*tashbīh*), which is conceptualized as Akbarian "transimmanence." Drawing on Milad Milani's Heideggerian interpretation of Sufism, the paper challenges the notion that pluralism is an exclusively modern Western concept. From a decolonial standpoint, *waḥdat al-wujūd* is presented as a meaningful theoretical framework with ethical implications, exemplified through the lives and writings of figures like Dārā Shikōh and Sarmad Kāshānī.¹²

Despite the abundance of writings on Ibn 'Arabī, there is still a scarcity of research regarding his perception of spiritual travel and the philosophy of the journey to encounter the Divine. This paper explores nomadic thought as conceived by Ibn 'Arabī, which can "be taken as a new metaphor for the [*Sufi*] condition." This research highlights his unique understanding of the spiritual journey and his employment of new methodological tools to describe and explain this multifaceted notion. This study will attempt to detail how Ibn 'Arabī perceived the mystical journey to encounter the Divine, what assets it yields, and how it impacts the life of the Sufi traveler. The rationale behind investigating the notion of nomadic subjectivity in Ibn 'Arabī's works is to argue that the Sufi traveler is in a constant state of metamorphosis and becoming. According to Deleuze, nomadism does not merely mean the movement from one space to another, but more importantly, the movement from one state to another, which Deleuze described in his ABC Primer¹³ as an 'immobile voyage.'

Literature Review

Nomadic Philosophy

Nomadic thought is a repeatedly prevalent theme in Sufi discourse, employing a deterritorializing language that provides possibilities for multiple forms of subjectivity in a continuous state of becoming. Gilles Deleuze coined the concept of the 'nomadic subject' based on his reading of Ibn Khaldūn's *Prolegomena*, where a nomadic civilization thrives in the context of '*aṣābiya*,'¹⁴ a keen sense of belonging or group feeling. Deleuze emphasizes the non-sedentary nature of the nomad, whose way of being is always tied to journey and resistance. The itinerant nomad experiences a continuum

¹² Bharatwaj Iyer, "The Transimmanence of the Real: Ontological Pluralism in the School of Ibn 'Arabī," *Religions* 14, no. 7 (2023): 923, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14070923>.

¹³ Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, "Gilles Deleuze: The ABC Primer / Recording 1 - A to F," *The Deleuze Seminars*, 1988, <https://deleuze.cla.purdue.edu/seminars/gilles-deleuze-abc-primer/lecture-recording-1-f>.

¹⁴ Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, trans. Franz Rosenthal (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005). 26-27.

and spasmodic flux of multiple becomings;¹⁵ therefore, they are not inclined towards sedentary thinking that produces fixed views on subjectivity. On the contrary, the nomad adopts a non-sedentary mode of thinking, which falls under the maxim “to think is to travel”.¹⁶ Based on this notion, the meditative journey the Sufis undertake in their solitude is a non-physical journey, resulting in Divine love—a detachment from the lower world and a profound attachment to the heavenly one.¹⁷

The critical affinities between Sufi discourse and the Deleuzian notion of the nomadic subject, as both entail a subject constantly undergoing permanent transformations towards an ultimate end, for “the two processes, one mystical, one epistemological, are strikingly similar.”¹⁸ In Islamic mysticism, God is viewed as the supreme power—the only real being; consequently, the universe is seen as suffering from illusion and non-reality.¹⁹ Indeed, the task of the Sufi is to dispel illusion and return to reality, thereby embodying virtue and divine traits.

Ibn ‘Arabī and the Spiritual Journey to Unity

Unity of being (*waḥdat al-wujūd*) is the core ontological principle in Ibn ‘Arabī’s philosophy, underpinning all talks about the spiritual journey toward unity. It asserts that reality is fundamentally one, with all apparent diversity being expressions (*tajallī*) of the One Being.²⁰ In this view, God is not just a transcendent separate entity but a reality that reveals itself through different layers of cosmic existence.²¹ The relationship between God, the cosmos, and humans is seen as theophanic: the cosmos acts as a mirror through which God reveals His names and attributes, with man being the most perfect mirror (*insān kāmil*). The process of *tajallī* describes how the mystical experience is not a physical transfer to God but rather the revelation of the unity’s essence that encompasses all of existence.²²

¹⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, *Nomad Thought*, 146.

¹⁶ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 480.

¹⁷ Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Theory: The Portable Rosi Braidotti* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 176.

¹⁸ Laura U. Marks, *Enfoldment, and Infinity: An Islamic Genealogy of New Media Art* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2010), 17.

¹⁹ Marks, 18.

²⁰ Tapp, “Munājāt and Ibn Al-‘Arabī’s Unity of Being.”

²¹ William Chittick, *The (Stanford) Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta and Uri Nodelman (California: Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2020), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2025/entries/ibn-arabi/>.

²² Raha Bistara, “Wahdah Al-Wujud Ibn ‘Arabī Dalam Imajinasi Kreatif Henry Corbin,” *Academic Journal of Islamic Principles and Philosophy* 1, no. 1 (2020): 1–14, <https://doi.org/10.22515/ajipp.v1i1.2344>.

From this perspective, the path to union is not about reaching something that occurs outside oneself; rather, it is a conscious journey toward the fundamental reality that connects all forms of existence. This unity does not erase physical individuality but dissolves the ego's boundaries, allowing the individual to see that their form is intrinsically linked to the absolute form. Therefore, *wahdat al-wujūd* offers a philosophical foundation to understand the spiritual journey as a transformational understanding of the self, the universe, and God.²³ In the journey toward union, the spiritual realm where *sālik* perceives subtle perceptions, symbols, spiritual encounters, and processes of unification in rich, metaphorical forms exists within an imagined space (*‘ālam al-khayyāl*).²⁴ This space facilitates the gradual experience of unity through visual, symbolic, and intuitive revelations. Therefore, the imagined space functions as a cosmological bridge, supporting ontological and epistemological transformation towards a consciousness of the unity of being.²⁵

The imaginal world holds a principal place in Ibn ‘Arabī's cosmological framework. It is positioned as a *barzakh*, an intermediate space bridging the material universe and the pure spiritual realm. *Barzakh* is more than a mere transition zone between life and death; it constitutes a distinct dimension of reality with its own laws and forms. This realm is neither purely material nor entirely immaterial but exists as a unique in-between state.²⁶ Within this framework, Ibn ‘Arabī differentiates between passive fantasy and active imagination (*al-quwwa al-khayyālīya*). The latter is a spiritual capacity allowing individuals to access an imaginative realm, perceive spiritual symbols, and experience metaphysical realities through symbolism. Imagination, therefore, extends beyond mere psychology; it serves as an epistemic tool that grants access to ontological levels that are unreachable by reason alone.²⁷ Henry Corbin expanded this idea with his concept of the *mundus imaginalis*, describing the imaginary world as an objective realm of spiritual experience rather than mere hallucination.²⁸ Likewise, William Chittick concluded that in Ibn ‘Arabī's view, the imaginary world is

²³ Abdul Haq Ansari, "Ibn ‘Arabī: The Doctrine of Wahdat Al-Wujūd," *Islamic Studies* 38, no. 2 (1999): 149–92, <https://doi.org/10.52541/isiri.v38i2.6125>.

²⁴ Jawad Anwar Qureshi, "Ibn ‘Arabi and the Akbarī Tradition," in *Routledge Handbook on Sufism* (Routledge, 2020), 89–102, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315175348-8>.

²⁵ Fuad S Nacem, "The Imaginal World (‘Ālam Al-Mithāl) in the Philosophy of Shāh Walī Allāh Al-Dihlawī," *Islamic Studies* 44, no. 3 (2005): 363–390, <https://doi.org/10.52541/isiri.v44i3.4711>.

²⁶ Ahmed Alarabi, "Ibn ‘Arabī and the Imaginal World and Psychedelic Experiences: A Short Essay," 2023, <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.5292762>.

²⁷ Iyer, "The Transimmanence of the Real," 923.

²⁸ Tapp, "Munājāt and Ibn Al-‘Arabī's Unity of Being."

the space where spiritual meaning appears visibly, facilitating a dialogue between the human soul and divine reality.²⁹

Method

Using insights from the hermeneutics approach as well as the Deleuzian-poststructuralist notion of nomadic subjectivity, this study seeks to underscore the importance of the journey in Ibn ‘Arabī’s discursive legacy, positing that the mystical journey is a nomadic style of thinking capable of shaping different worlds, stations, and possibilities for new forms of voyage. To this end, the purposive sampling method was employed to select and explicate specific quotes from Ibn ‘Arabī’s main texts, such as *Risālat al-Anwār Fīmā Yumnaḥ Ṣāhib al-Khalwa Min al-Asrār* [The Journey to the Lord of Power: A Sufi Manual on Retreat], *Tarjumān al-Ashwāq* [The Interpreter of Desires], and *Kitāb al-Isfār ‘An Natā’ij al-Asfār* [The Secrets of Voyaging].

The hermeneutic approach, grounded in Schütz’s phenomenological theory, underscores the intertwining of present and past experiences through human communication.³⁰ This approach becomes particularly relevant when interpreting Ibn ‘Arabī’s philosophy of journeying. His ability to communicate with absent others in his spiritual journeys aligns with the hermeneutic emphasis on the interconnectedness of experiences, suggesting that his spiritual journeys are deeply embedded in the shared knowledge and collective understanding formed through human interaction.³¹

Results and Discussion

From Sedentary to Nomadism

Ibn ‘Arabī’s journey can be understood within the sedentary vs. nomadic theme framework, which can refer to the contradictory states he was experiencing. In his early youth, he adopted a sedentary mode of thinking by clinging to his native Andalusia, for he had visited his friends and “attended the funeral rites of the philosopher Averroes [Ibn Rushd, 1126–1198], whom he had met as a young boy.”³² This form of sedentary mode of thinking characterizes his early initiation into Sufism and accounts for his hasty

²⁹ William C. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn Al-‘Arabī’s Metaphysics of Imagination* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2010), 145.

³⁰ Alfred Schutz, “Some Leading Concepts of Phenomenology,” in *Essays in Phenomenology*, ed. Maurice Natanson (Springer Dordrecht, 1966), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-017-5403-3_2.

³¹ Oliver Vettori, “Shared Misunderstandings? Competing and Conflicting Meaning Structures in Quality Assurance,” *Quality in Higher Education* 24, no. 2 (2018): 85–101, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13538322.2018.1491786>.

³² See Austen in the introduction to Ibn al-‘Arabī, *The Bezels of Wisdom*, trans. R.W.J. Austin (Michigan: Paulist Press, 1980), 6.

judgments or skeptical comportment about rational philosophy formulated in the two lines he composed over the philosopher's tomb: "This is the Imam and these are his works; would that I knew whether his hopes were realized."³³ However, after Ibn 'Arabī had traveled from Spain to North Africa and then further west to Egypt and Mecca, he became "capable of every form,"³⁴ including the form shaping the pattern of Ibn Rushd's doctrine.

Accordingly, one can say that the more Ibn 'Arabī "travels along the path, [the more] he experiences inconstancy... but once he has arrived,"³⁵ he becomes stable."³⁶ This is because inconstancy is an effect of adopting a sedentary mode of thinking, while stability results from a nomad thought, in which the nomad experiences a continuum flux of multiple becomings towards his final goal.³⁷ In explicating his poetic verses, Ibn 'Arabī elucidates his cryptic expression, "they journeyed continuously"³⁸ in an everlasting and iterative process. His interpretation hinges on the idea that since "the object sought is infinite, the return from it is also a journey towards it."³⁹ This is because a mystical journey is not a one-time event but a persistently ongoing effort to draw closer to God, and his idea of a return from the Divine underscores the cyclical nature of the Sufi journey. Within this framework, seeking and returning emerge as two essential facets shaping the essence of the mystical journey. The return becomes a transformative phase where spiritual wisdom is shared for the benefit of a broader audience. The proposition that "there is no migration except from one Divine Name to another"⁴⁰ suggests a dynamic/nomadic understanding of the Divine, emphasizing the continuous exploration within the framework of divine attributes.

Ibn 'Arabī's doctrine on journey stipulates movement—either by the body or by the heart— as an inevitable step into the ladder of spiritual progression. In so far as Deleuze and Guattari are concerned, the maxim "to think is to voyage"⁴¹ is indicative of a new postmodern style of journeying, in which the notion of place is superseded by an abstract space; the new forms of journey verge on the intellectual, speculative, and

³³ Ibn al-'Arabī, 7.

³⁴ Muhyiddin Ibn al-'Arabī, *Tarjumān Al-Ashwāq*, trans. Reynold A. Nicholson (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1911), 67.

³⁵ In Sufism, there is no endpoint at which the Sufi stops because he/she is always searching for Divine knowledge.

³⁶ Al-Qushayrī, *Al-Qushayrī's Epistle on Sufism*, 100.

³⁷ Deleuze and Guattari, *Nomad Thought*, 146.

³⁸ Ibn al-'Arabī, *Tarjumān Al-Ashwāq*, 73.

³⁹ Ibn al-'Arabī, 70.

⁴⁰ Ibn al-'Arabī, 70.

⁴¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 482.

imaginal. Voyage is no longer a movement from one place to another, but rather a mental activity that may take place in the state of seclusion. Al-Qushayrī spoke of the sedentary Sufi masters who preferred not to travel because they could experience a spiritual journey in their seclusion (*khalwa*).⁴² The latter is a form of noetic journey that replaces the complexities of traditional travel by causing the self to be immersed in multiple stations (*maqāmāt*). The Sufi voyage is thus a nomadic style of thinking, operating in “a field without conduits and channels,”⁴³ which allows them to escape the shackles of physical travel that is essential at the beginning of the path.

Journey through Remembrance (*Dhikr*)

Ibn 'Arabī's philosophy of journey intrinsically relates to the ontological nature of human beings,⁴⁴ whom he described as constant travelers; they are all involved in the process of travelling —an approach “based upon toil and the hardships of life, on afflictions and tests and the acceptance of dangers and very great terrors.”⁴⁵ The Sufi's body thus becomes an abode of multiple streams of continuous conversions, which consolidate his character and broaden his horizon. Arguably, his voyage towards God is laden with dangers and troubles because the more his body suffers, the more his soul becomes purified. Ibn 'Arabī says:

Since God created human beings and brought them out of nothingness into existence, they have not stopped being travelers. They have no resting place from their journey except in the Garden or the Fire, and each Garden and Fire is in accordance with the measure of its people... It is not possible for the traveler to find unimpaired comfort, security, or bliss in this journey.⁴⁶

The philosophy of journey draws on the notion of affliction (*ibtālā*), which explains the existence of good and evil in life. In the Sufi discourse, the theme of good and evil is related to the concept of travel, denoting that human freedom is closely tied with the concept of human trusteeship (*amāna*) and accountability before God on the Day of Judgment. According to Ibn 'Arabī, the Sufi journey likewise ends “in the Garden or in the Fire.”⁴⁷

In his *Journey to the Lord of Power*, Ibn 'Arabī identifies *dhikr* or the rhythmic repetition of the Names of God or His attributes as a fundamental tool on the path to God,

⁴² Al-Qushayrī, *Al-Qushayrī's Epistle on Sufism*, 100.

⁴³ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 371.

⁴⁴ Iyer, “The Transimmanence of the Real”

⁴⁵ Ibn 'Arabī, *Journey to the Lord of Power: A Sufi Manual on Retreat*, 27.

⁴⁶ Ibn 'Arabī, *Journey to the Lord of Power: A Sufi Manual on Retreat*, 27.

⁴⁷ Ibn 'Arabī. *Journey to the Lord*, 76.

as it “moves [you] from the sensory to the imaginal level,”⁴⁸ at which “the world of abstract meanings free of the matter is revealed to you.”⁴⁹ It is a noetic journey in which the remembrance leads to the Remembered (God), who will manifest Himself to the honest seeker. In this state of witnessing God’s manifestation, the seeker loses his agency in the *dhikr* and becomes immersed in the Remembered.⁵⁰ The mystical journey symbolizes the movement from the state of fear (*khawf*) to that of *ḥubb* (love) because in the first state, “unhappiness and the threat of punishment...linger in the memory.”⁵¹ In the second state, “memory is effaced in the actual recollection of Him.”⁵² Where Marcuse harnesses the power of remembrance for collective revolutionary goals, Ibn ‘Arabī uses *dhikr* for personal revolutionary goals. He says, “If you persevere in the *dhikr*, disaster will not overcome you.”⁵³ He also believes that *dhikr* is not only a necessary means to draw nearer to God but a way to becoming perfection through mystical stations. *Dhikr* enables the seekers a kind of non-physical journey which takes place in the heart, allowing them to experience “the different aspects of the Divine Names (*al-asmā’ al-ilāhīya*) of ‘The Manifest’ (*al-Zāhir*) and ‘The Hidden’ (*al-Bāṭin*).”⁵⁴

Encounter with the Noble Servant

Ibn ‘Arabī’s geographical and spiritual journeys made him a nomadic subject capable of every shape and form. Henry Corbin pointed out that although Ibn ‘Arabī’s “numerous journeys and peregrinations brought him into contact with almost all the Sufi masters of his day,” he was “the disciple of an invisible master.”⁵⁵ Through his creative imagination, Ibn ‘Arabī chose the mystical figure of Khidr⁵⁶ to be his spiritual guru and master. Khidr reflects the archetypal image of the spiritual guide to esoteric knowledge (*ilm al-batin*). The figures of Moses as a prophet and Khidr as a spiritual guide reflect the two sources of knowledge, the manifest and the hidden.⁵⁷ Therefore, Ibn ‘Arabī’s physical journeys led him to adopt a nomadic way of thought, which never

⁴⁸ Ibn ‘Arabī, 35.

⁴⁹ Ibn ‘Arabī, 36.

⁵⁰ Ibn ‘Arabī, *Journey to the Lord of Power: A Sufi Manual on Retreat*, 39.

⁵¹ Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955), 212.

⁵² Ibn ‘Arabī, *Journey to the Lord of Power: A Sufi Manual on Retreat*, 36.

⁵³ Ibn ‘Arabī, 40.

⁵⁴ Ibn ‘Arabī, *Journey to the Lord of Power: A Sufi Manual on Retreat*, 40.

⁵⁵ Henry Corbin, *Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn Arabi* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1969), 32.

⁵⁶ In the Holy Qur’an, he is described as a noble servant who shared some of his hidden knowledge with Prophet Moses.

⁵⁷ For more details, see the story of Moses and his encounter with Khidr in QS al-Kahf (18).

clings to a visible master or a specific place. This nomadic subjectivity transcends to the non-physical dimension, where Ibn ‘Arabī’s power of creative imagination connected him to other spiritual masters. As explained by Corbin,

In any event, such a relationship with a hidden spiritual master lends the disciple an essentially “transhistorical” dimension. It presupposes an ability to experience events enacted in reality other than the physical reality of daily life, events which spontaneously transmute themselves into symbols.⁵⁸

The mystical journey is more comprehensive, covering both the physical and the spiritual aspects: the former marks the beginning, whereas the latter marks the end. Concerning the physical journey, it does not serve as a conclusion by itself; instead, it is a means whereby the heart of the Sufi becomes purified, ready to dive into the ocean of spirituality, and finally capable of receiving illuminations. Ibn ‘Arabī purified his heart to perceive God’s Beauty and be receptive to the Divine reality. His heart was purified by undergoing multiple states and stations occasioned by a constant geographical motion from his native Andalusia in the western part of the Muslim world to the eastern parts, culminating in the final destination of Mecca in Arabia. In Mecca, Ibn ‘Arabī met with the Imam of the Holy Shrine in the Great Mosque, Abū Shujā’ Zāhir b. Rustam, whose beautiful and gifted daughter Nizām, was to inspire Ibn ‘Arabī to compose his collection of mystical poems *Tarjumān al-Ashwāq* [The Interpreter of Desires], which can be easily mistaken for sensual love poetry.⁵⁹ The end of Ibn ‘Arabī’s spiritual journey culminates in union and annihilation expressed in his amorous lyrical odes via creative metaphors and imagination.⁶⁰

The Sufi journey also serves as a catalyst for fostering amicable relationships, extending beyond immediate surroundings to encompass a global perspective. Besides acquainting the Sufi traveler with other like-minded individuals in various degrees of spiritual advancement, it entails a profound immersion in the essence of the Other. This immersive engagement transcends the limited confines of the self, thereby expanding the horizon to incorporate the spiritual collective consciousness. Thus, the traveler’s transformative journey transcends individual boundaries, nurturing a holistic connection with the entirety of humanity and the broader global community. Indeed, Ibn ‘Arabī’s engagement with Nizām can be likened to the encounter between Moses and Khidr, representing crucial junctures. These encounters challenge the individuals’

⁵⁸ Corbin, *Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn Arabi*, 32.

⁵⁹ Ibn ‘Arabī, *The Bezels of Wisdom*, 7.

⁶⁰ Rachid Acim, “The Foreign and Imaginal In Ibn ‘Arabī’s Turjuman Al-Ashwaq,” *Üsküdar Üniversitesi Tasavvuf Araştırmaları Enstitüsü Dergisi* 2023, no. 3 (May 2023): 11–25, <https://doi.org/10.32739/ustad.2023.3.36>.

established knowledge of their paths to God and involve a meeting with others endowed with their own distinct properties and traits.⁶¹ This interaction poses a profound questioning of one's spiritual knowledge and attainment, thus prompting a reassessment and expansion of understanding.

Journey as Detachment

In the Sufi discourse, the notion of journey relates to the undoing of all forms of 'immersions in attachments.'⁶² Being in a perpetual state of transit teaches Sufis not to cling to anything save God, including places, people, and worldly images. It signifies the spiritual detachment that liberates humans from the illusions of happiness. The exoteric aspect of happiness always fades away; it is a doorway to boredom and a path towards stagnation and corruption. Sufi seekers constantly travel in search of a transcendent form of joy; they are never bound to a place until their journeys bear fruit.⁶³

During Ibn 'Arabī's peregrinations, he did not grow too attached to a place or a Sufi master, always ready to fold his tent and move on. In the words of al-Qushayrī, "the more [Sufis] travel, the greater the detachment of their hearts is."⁶⁴ Ibn 'Arabī's journey is symbolic for practicing estrangement in the hope of unification with the Real:

Sufism is viewed as a terrain for exercising estrangement by adhering to movement as a freeing agent from all forms of attachment (*ta'alluq*) ... the practice of separation is then achieved through the voyage of the body and heart as well as through—to use Al-Hallaj's terminology—the eclipse of intermediaries (*isqāṭ al-waṣā'it*).⁶⁵

The notion of estrangement does not mean isolation from people and the world, but rather a cambial seclusion which entails an active participation in the affairs of society without expecting worldly gains. Detachment enables the Sufi to be entirely engrossed in the events, states or stations happening to him. It is a temporary abandonment of the world; it causes the Sufi to drink from the water of wisdom until he gets intoxicated.⁶⁶ Upon wakefulness, the Sufi becomes aware of the stages he has gone through and can express his spiritual travel through poetic language that

⁶¹ Mukhtar H. Ali, *Philosophical Sufism: An Introduction to the School of Ibn Al-'Arabi*, 1st ed. (London: Routledge, 2021), 1-232.

⁶² Frank Griffel, *Al-Ghazali's Philosophical Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 44.

⁶³ Qureshi, "Ibn 'Arabi and the Akbarī Tradition," 89–102.

⁶⁴ Al-Qushayrī, *Al-Qushayrī's Epistle on Sufism*, 401.

⁶⁵ Tayeb Bouchoir, "The Strategies of Sufi Discourse in Fostering Communal Immunity: The Sufi as a Nomadic Subject," *Insaniyat : Journal of Islam and Humanities* 7, no. 2 (May 31, 2023): 157–67, <https://doi.org/10.15408/insaniyat.v7i2.29111>.

⁶⁶ Ibn 'Arabī, *Journey to the Lord of Power: A Sufi Manual on Retreat*, 27.

symbolizes his spiritual ascension. Mystical poetry results from a temporary detachment and an abandonment of the sensory world; therefore, it can be easily misunderstood. The mystical language of the traveler moves beyond the standard linguistic conventions that account for meaning production. The language of the layperson is shaped by worldly attachments, where signifieds and signifiers are mutually attached. By contrast, the language of Sufism is found at the moment of detachment, annihilation, and total absorption in God’s presence (*ḥadra*).

Toil, Departure, and Stability

Ibn ‘Arabī spoke of the four primary duties incumbent upon Sufi initiates to gain spiritual results: exoteric knowledge, “then work; then moral heedfulness; then asceticism; then trust.”⁶⁷ The first step in the journey towards God is “to search for the knowledge which establishes your ablution and prayer, your fasting and reverence. You are not obliged to seek out more than this. This is the first doorway of the journey.”⁶⁸ This knowledge stems from the manifest reality; it signals the exoteric face of *Shai‘a*. This stage is primordial, as it has to do with the spiritual “training of character, abandonment of heedlessness, and endurance of indignities.”⁶⁹ The second step in the journey towards God passes through the factor of work because observances without the positive participation in the lives of people draw a blank. Moral heedfulness is another stage where the seeker carefully pays attention to his deeds, constantly admonishing himself to become the best version of himself. Then, the Sufi is granted access to asceticism, which is— contrary to the first stage, in which the Sufi is not permitted to do more than what is required of him— not an end in and of itself but as a means through which the Sufi climbs the ladder of the final stage, which is trust.⁷⁰ Finally, the first degree of trust is marked by certain symbolic signposts that distinguish the Sufi journey from mere asceticism:

These are signs and evidence of attaining the first degree of trust. These signs are crossing the earth, walking on water, traversing the air, and being fed by the universe. And that is the reality within this door. After that, stations, states, miracles, and revelations come to you continuously until death.⁷¹

When these miracles happen to the Sufi on his way to God, revelatory illuminations come to him incessantly. The quote above entails that miracles and

⁶⁷ Ibn ‘Arabī, *Journey to the Lord of Power: A Sufi Manual on Retreat*.

⁶⁸ Ibn ‘Arabī, 30.

⁶⁹ Ibn ‘Arabī.

⁷⁰ Antonio De Diego Gonzalez, “The Challenge of Muhammad Iqbal’s Philosophy of Khudi to Ibn ‘Arabī’s Metaphysical Anthropology,” *Religions* 14, no. 5 (2023): 683, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14050683>.

⁷¹ Ibn ‘Arabī, *Journey to the Lord of Power: A Sufi Manual on Retreat*, 30.

illuminations signify stability after inconstancy. One can deduce that when the Sufi, through his journey to the Lord, reached the state of trust— equivalent to reaching the stage of prophethood— he has attained a state of stability.

The act of departure signifies a transition from the realm of the Seen to the realm of the Unseen. In this context, toil is not merely a physical undertaking in the external world but takes on a more profound significance as a spiritual endurance in the heart of the Sufi traveler, who “bids farewell to patience and the mortal life, because he has quitted the sensible world.”⁷² This departure marks a profound shift in the Sufi’s journey, emphasizing the inner realm and spiritual dimensions of endurance and transition. In his commentary on the fourth poem, Ibn ‘Arabī subtly indicates that the ‘travelers’ are indeed his spiritual masters. Even though they are dead and have departed from this world, these revered figures remain alive within his heart, evoking a lingering sorrow. Ibn ‘Arabī says:

When they departed, endurance and patience left. They departed, although they were dwelling in the core of my heart. I asked them where the travelers rested at noon, and I was answered, ‘Their noonday resting place is where the *shih* and the *ban* trees diffuse a sweet scent.’ Then I said to the wind, ‘Go and overtake them, for they are biding in the shade of the grove, and bear to them a greeting from a sorrowful man whose heart is sorrowful because he is separated from his people.’⁷³

Ibn ‘Arabī’s sixth poem is emblematic of the nature of travelling, which presents the journey as a metaphorical process, suggesting a separation that goes beyond the physical distance. The poem’s lines indicate a profound emotional impact of departure and separation. The poet laments the beloved’s departure because the spiritual parting is more unbearable than the ordinary parting. The phrase ‘noonday resting place’ depicts the destination as a symbolic goal in the spiritual journey, presenting a sought-after point of fulfilment and joy that the poet strives to reach. The poet’s enquiry about the travelers’ resting place and the directive to the wind to disturb their tranquility and send them on an arduous quest. This act of seeking involves toil, reflecting the challenges inherent in the emotional journey to reconnect with the departed.

Seclusion as a Journey to God

Seclusion (*khalwa*) is an essential stage in the journey to God. Ibn ‘Arabī offers plausible justifications for the importance and necessity of seclusion in the path towards God. For him, seclusion is a practice that “the traveler needs to learn what is useful from

⁷² Ibn al-‘Arabī, *Tarjumān Al-Ashwāq*, 59.

⁷³ Ibn al-‘Arabī, 60.

[this] situation.”⁷⁴ It is a form of noetic journey to God, where the Sufi seeker and God are in communion with each other. *Khalwa* is a spiritual dimension, where the Sufi is able to communicate directly with God, without intermediaries, shackles, and veils. The Arabic word *khalwa* entails deeper meanings concerning emptying, purifying, and isolating. Using Deleuze’s conception of a nomad, one can view seclusion as an ‘immobile voyage’, where the body is sedentary and the heart is in motion.⁷⁵ This contradictory state between the sedentary and the nomadic is emblematic of the fact that Sufism is by excellence based on nomadic thought, which is a movement through the heart rather than the body. In the Sufi discourse, sedentary and nomadic styles of thinking are but different forms of the same journey; it is in the sedentary state that the heart is in motion because “in none other than He that you progress and travel since there is naught to be known to save, He since He is Being Itself and therefore also the traveler himself.”⁷⁶

Ibn ‘Arabī’s notion of seclusion relates to the ultimate goal, namely closeness to God, who is omnipresent. Therefore, retreat is a necessary transition to leave everything else behind. He argues that “seclusion from people will become inevitable for [the Sufi], and preference for retreat (*khalwa*), over human associations, for the extent of [his] distance from creation is the extent of [his] closeness to God-outwardly and inwardly.”⁷⁷ This retreat enables the Sufi to be an abode of illuminations instead of being “a receptacle for the superfluous words [people] bring.”⁷⁸ A departure from the people is not the real object of seclusion but the isolation of the self from all thoughts other than He. Once the Sufi stands before God bereft of all attachments, stations of abstraction descend upon him gradually: “to one travelling in the dark, i.e., to those who ascend and journey in the night (like the prophet). God is beyond the reach of mental effort. He is revealed by Divine favor to a heart empty of all thoughts.”⁷⁹

Rabia Terri Harris, who translated Ibn ‘Arabī’s *Risālat al-Anwār* into English, explained the significance of seclusion in the Sufi journey by underscoring the importance of being guided by a spiritual mentor. Thus, *khalwa* is not a solitary pursuit but one that necessitates the wisdom and direction provided by an experienced spiritual guide to navigate its challenges and ensure a meaningful and transformative Sufi journey. Ibn ‘Arabī states:

⁷⁴ Ibn al-‘Arabī, *Tarjumān Al-Ashwāq*.

⁷⁵ Arianne Conty, “Nomad Thought: Using Gregory of Nyssa and Deleuze and Guattari to Deterritorialize Mysticism,” *Religions* 13, no. 10 (2022): 882, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13100882>.

⁷⁶ Ibn ‘Arabī, *Journey to the Lord of Power: A Sufi Manual on Retreat*, 30.

⁷⁷ Ibn ‘Arabī, 30.

⁷⁸ Ibn ‘Arabī, 31.

⁷⁹ Ibn al-‘Arabī, *Tarjumān Al-Ashwāq*, 135.

Khalwa, spiritual retreat, [is] an advanced and dangerous Sufi practice for attaining the Presence of God through absolute abandonment of the world. *Khalwa* is by no means a technique for everyone. Ibn ‘Arabi explicitly states that because of the deceptions of the imagination, it may be undertaken only at the order of a *shaykh* or by one who has mastered himself. He further points out that to pursue the experiences of *khalwa* without thoroughly accomplishing the duties and practices of Islam is to invite spiritual destruction.⁸⁰

On the one hand, the spiritual guide must be found before embarking on the journey of *khalwa*, as only he is able to distinguish between authentic mystical insights and mere imaginings. He can offer the necessary context to the novice’s spiritual experiences, thereby avoiding potential misunderstandings.

Nomadic Prophetic Insights

The story of Moses is relevant for developing the seeker’s spiritual trajectory. Driven by his genuine desire to perceive God bodily, Moses’ attempts went awry, and he, therefore, repented for his wrong action, for God is not perceived bodily or instantly; He is perceived within a sporadic temporality, where the Sufi continuously struggle for approaching God spiritually and by his great Names. In the Qur’an, it is stated:

When Moses came to the place appointed by Us, and his Lord addressed him, he said: “O my Lord! Show (Yourself) to me, that I may look upon You.” Allah said, “By no means can you see Me (direct); but look upon the mount: if it abide in its place, then shall you see Me.” When his Lord manifested His glory on the Mount, He made it as dust, and Moses fell down in a swoon. When he recovered his senses, he said: “Glory be to You! To You I turn in repentance, and I am the first to believe.”⁸¹

The Prophet Moses is an important figure in Sufi narratives, underlining the difference between the *Shari‘a* and Sufism, between the law and spirituality, both completing each other: The Sufi can only achieve spiritual perfection when obeying God in both spheres, as reflected in the two divine Names: The Manifest and The Hidden. Moses approached God exoterically, while Khidr approached Him esoterically, signifying the two different states of the same station of servanthood. Moses did not draw from the knowledge of The Hidden but from The Manifest, so he longed for God physically and instantly; however, following Khidr’s rudiments, Ibn ‘Arabī asked God, “Appear to me in the station of self-subsistence and lovingkindness gradually, not suddenly, lest I perish.”⁸² This distinction symbolizes the two different paths on the journey to God.

⁸⁰ Ibn ‘Arabī, *Journey to the Lord of Power: A Sufi Manual on Retreat*, 2.

⁸¹ QS. Al-A‘rāf (7): 143. Abd Allah Yusuf ‘Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur’ān* (Maryland: Amana Publications, 2009). The obsolete “thee, thou” has been changed to “you.”

⁸² Ibn al-‘Arabī, *Tarjumān Al-Ashwāq*, 135.

In Ibn 'Arabī's noetic ascension (*mī'rāj*), he encountered Moses in the Sixth Heaven, "thanking him for ... reducing the number of daily prayers prescribed for his community."⁸³ They spoke of prayer, not only because it is the most critical pillar in Islam, which spiritually connects people to God, but because it is primordial for every initiate. Thus, this reduction is salient, as it offers the Sufis an extra-temporal domain in which they can take an interest in other forms of worshipping God.⁸⁴ This reference refers to the balance that the newly initiated must accept, so that they can receive illuminations that will never "lead to corrupt imaginings and long, delirious ravings."⁸⁵ The spiritual ranks of the seekers vary, depending on their spiritual experiences and outcomes. Consequently, there exist two primary phases: the phase of revelation, predominant among most Sufis, and the phase of concealment, characteristic of Muhammadan prophecy. Morris says:

The traveler's encounter with Moses in the *Kitāb al-Isrā'* (pp. 25–28), on the other hand, is devoted to entirely different subjects: Moses first stresses the differences between the *ʿarīf* (the 'mystic' who publicly speaks of his spiritual discoveries), and the *wārith* (the Prophetic 'heir' or true 'Muhammadan,' who 'conceals his secrets' and who "sees (God's) Essence in his essence, His Attributes in his (own) attributes, and His Names in his (own) acts."⁸⁶

Ibn 'Arabī's cognitive journey towards God unfolds through separate phases, including the Moses stage, which encapsulates the wisdom derived from Moses' illuminations in the Sixth Heaven. The intersection between Ibn 'Arabī and Moses transpires in an empty space designed to "foster relations between absent others" who are "distant from any given situation of face-to-face interaction."⁸⁷ The notion of place, which "refers to the physical settings of social activity as situated geographically,"⁸⁸ has been surpassed in Sufi discourse by the concept of space, which does not necessarily manifest in the physical settings. This Sufi dialogue, permeating the realm of the imaginal, symbolizes the reconciliation between Sufism and orthodox Islam, as they disseminate the message of God and delve into profound meanings of love and co-existence.

The esoteric interpretation of the Qur'an has garnered increased attention in recent scholarship. Sufi scholars focused on the esoteric meaning of the Qur'an, which goes beyond the confines of *fiqh*, limited to the historical context of revelation and the basic

⁸³ Ibn 'Arabī quoted in James Winston Morris, "The Spiritual Ascension: Ibn 'Arabī and the Mi'rāj Part II," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 108, no. 1 (January 1988): 63–77, <https://doi.org/10.2307/603246>.

⁸⁴ Morris, "The Spiritual Ascension," 63–77.

⁸⁵ Ibn 'Arabī, *Journey to the Lord of Power: A Sufi Manual on Retreat*, 31.

⁸⁶ Morris, "The Spiritual Ascension: Ibn 'Arabī and the Mi'rāj Part II." 42.

⁸⁷ Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*, 18.

⁸⁸ Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*. 18.

tenets of Islamic doctrines and laws. Ibn 'Arabī stands out as the pioneering Sufi who approached the Qur'an from a mystical perspective, exploring the story of Prophet Lot.⁸⁹ According to Ibn 'Arabī, the name Lot (Lūt) signifies a profound 'attachment to the Divine Presence,'⁹⁰ which detaches him from the world of disbelief and heresy prevalent among his people. He offers an esoteric interpretation of QS al-Hūd (11): 81, where Prophet Lot is exhorted to embark on a journey with his family, excluding his wife:

(The Messengers) said, "O Lot! We are the Messengers from your Lord! By no means shall they reach you. Now travel with your family while yet a part of the night remains, and let not any of you look back: but your wife (will remain behind): to her will happen what happens to the people. Morning is their time appointed: Is not the morning nigh?"⁹¹

In this verse, "travel with your family" means, at the esoteric level, that Prophet Lot was commanded to travel with his 'entire essence,' leaving behind that which hinders him from progressing in the form of negative inclinations.⁹² Lot's compliance with the Divine command elevated him to the highest station referred to by Ibn 'Arabī as 'certainty' (*yaqīn*), whereas Prophet Abraham attained this station through doubt. Further, the phrase "morning is their time appointed" points to illuminations that "provided certainty without doubt or equivocation."⁹³ Lot's voyage is marked by "bridges and pontoons that are placed for us to 'cross over' to our essences and the states that are specific to us."⁹⁴

Ibn 'Arabī contemplated on the prophetic journeys of the Prophets Moses, Aaron, Lot, Jesus, and Muhammad, viewing them as quintessential nomads who traversed various stations and led them to undergo diverse states of becoming. These revered figures adopt a distinctive nomadic thinking style on their path to God, the ultimate goal. Take, for instance, the story of Prophet Abraham, whose station Lot eventually reached. Abraham's spiritual odyssey led him through the crucial station of doubt, a phase Prophet Mohammed deemed essential for the human experience.⁹⁵ In QS al-Baqara (2): 260, Prophet Abraham asks God to show him how He "gives life to the dead," whereas God asks him, "Do you not then believe?" Abraham answers, "Yes! But to satisfy my own

⁸⁹ Muḥyiddīn Ibn 'Arabī, *The Secrets of Voyaging*, trans. Angela Jaffray (Oxford: Anqa Publishing, 2015), 96.

⁹⁰ Ibn 'Arabī, *The Secrets of Voyaging*, 96-98.

⁹¹ Ibn 'Arabī, 97.

⁹² Ibn 'Arabī, 96-98.

⁹³ Ibn 'Arabī, 91-92.

⁹⁴ Ibn 'Arabī, 96-98.

⁹⁵ Ibn 'Arabī, 91-98; Abū al-Ḥusain Muslim, *Al-Ṣaḥīḥ* (Cairo: Maṭba'a Muḥammad 'Alī Ṣabīḥ, 1915), 289.

understanding.” Therefore, the journeys undertaken by these Messengers serve as a poignant reminder of “what is within you and what I have called your attention to, so that you will know that you are everything, in everything and part of everything.”⁹⁶ This symbolic journey signifies a profound union with the Transcendent, echoing the Sufi path, where the seeker learns to breathe life into moments of apparent demise, transforming them into opportunities for spiritual rebirth and transcendence.

Conclusion

The concept of nomadic thought has recently found application in the interpretation of literary texts, shedding light on the distinct nature where themes of journey, travel, and migration take center stage. Drawing from Deleuze's conceptualization of nomadic thought, Ibn 'Arabī's mystical journeys have profoundly influenced his various states and stages, encompassing elements such as seclusion and ascension. Ibn 'Arabī eloquently articulated the spiritual trajectory of Sufi travelers, emphasizing their initiation into Islamic observances, their progression through asceticism, and their culmination in trust. *Mīrāj*, the pinnacle of trust, is a station attained by only a select few, including Ibn 'Arabī. In this prophetic realm, he embarks on a celestial journey, each heaven corresponding to a specific prophet with whom he engages in a dialogue on the importance of *dhikr*, prayer, and union. Giddens' definition of ‘an empty space’ resonates perfectly with the interpretation of Ibn 'Arabī's noetic ascension. Here, he skillfully bridges the gap between himself and the souls of the departed prophets. According to Ibn 'Arabī, the heart must not serve as a container of attachments that immerse the self in worldly affairs, thus distancing itself from God. The arduous journey towards God—whether through the heart or the body—is fraught with dangers yet ultimately leads to illumination and a state of stability, according to al-Qushayrī. Ibn 'Arabī's spiritual journey renders him more tolerant, more accepting, and more adaptable. In conclusion, our exploration demonstrated that Ibn 'Arabī embodies a nomadic subject capable of traversing both vertical and horizontal realms on his spiritual journey. This nomadic thinking style has enabled him to undergo diverse transformations, embracing different becomings.

This study is primarily conceptual, interpreting Ibn 'Arabī's writings through the lens of nomadic thought, albeit with limitations stemming from its reliance on textual analysis and secondary theories, such as Deleuze's nomadic philosophy and Giddens' concept of empty space. Future research could compare his thoughts with those of other Sufi thinkers like Abū Ḥamid al-Ghazālī, Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī, and Jalāl al-Dīn al-

⁹⁶ Ibn 'Arabī, *The Secrets of Voyaging*, 98.

Rūmī for insights into the diverse spiritual paths of Islamic mysticism. Future researchers might also examine Ibn ‘Arabī’s noetic ascension in relation to his metaphysical beliefs, especially *waḥdat al-wujūd* and the imaginal, to better understand his spiritual epistemology.

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