"Studies in Sufism"

The doctrine of the Universal Man (al-insān al-kāmil) in Ibn ‘Arabī and his Heirs

Online seminars for 2021 edition
From 26th to 31st July
Introduction

The 2021 edition of the Summer School “Studies in Sufism”, organized by the association Perennia Verba (IT) in collaboration with MIAS (Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi Society) Latina (ES), MIAS (Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi Society) UK, Officina di Studi Medievali, Palermo (IT), will take place in the form of online seminars, from 26th to 31st July, and will represent a unique opportunity to listen to different scholars and discuss with them the doctrine of al-Insān al-kāmil. The “Universal Man” or, as some would translate it, the “Perfect Human”, is one of the fundamental and main topics of Ibn ʻArabi’s teachings, if not the main one, and one which has influenced all subsequent generations of Muslim mystics and intellectuals.

Every lecture will address a different aspect of the teaching of the Shaykh al-Akbar and his followers, from the context in which Ibn ʻArabi emerged in al-Andalus to the technical terminology he used in his works and the way it was later systematized by the following authors.
The idea of Universal (or Perfect) Man (al-Insān al-kāmil) is at the core of Ibn ʻArabī’s cosmology and metaphysics, who was also the first to use it in a technical sense. The notion pervades all his works, but occurs especially in his al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya (The Meccan Openings) and in the Fuṣūṣ al-hikam (The Bezels of Wisdom), where it is rooted in the interpretation of Qur’ānic verses mentioning Man as God’s viceregent on earth. As to his heirs, “All of Qunawi’s teachings revolve around the concept of the Perfect Man”, says William Chittick, and the same can be said of Ibn ʻArabī himself and of many other masters of the Akbarian school. Jurjānī (XV sec.) in his “Book of definitions” refers to the Insān kāmil as ẓill al-ilāh, “shadow of the Divinity”. But it is with ʻAbd al-Karīm al-Jīlī that the idea of Perfect Man as the center of manifestation of the Unique Principle is developed in its full details. Jīlī himself said: "No one before me has addressed this topic with such depth and no one after me will find anything new to add".
The conception of Ḥisn al-kāmil is however a universal one and can be found in the Adam Qadmon of the Jewish tradition, in the anthropos teleios of the Gnostics, in the Vedic Puruṣa, in the Iranian Gayomart, in the Old Norse Ymir, as well as in the Chih-jen of the Daoism. Philo of Alexandria often uses the expression "perfect man" (anthropos teleios), and makes him, like Ibn 'Arabī’s Ḥisn al-kāmil, the perfect manifestation of the Imago Dei.

This edition of the Summer School will focus on the above-mentioned as well as on other Sufi authors who engaged with the centrality of the notion of Ḥisn al-kāmil under diverse points of view, including:

• Ibn ʻArabī (d. 1240)
• al-Qūnawī (d. 1274)
• al-Jīlī (d. 1424)
• al-Nābulusī (d. 1741)
• al-Tijānī (d. 1815) and later Sufi scholars.
Provisional Programme

Lectures will be given by Pablo Beneito (University of Murcia, ES), Alberto Grigio (Perennia Verba Association, IT), Stephen Hirtenstein (Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi Society, UK), Samuela Pagani (University of Lecce, IT), Luca Patrizi (University of Exeter, UK), Michele Petrone (University of Milano, IT), Mohammed Rustom (Carleton University, Canada), Federico Salvaggio (University of Udine, IT), Patrizia Spallino (University of Palermo, IT), Paolo Urizzi (Perennia Verba Association, IT), Gregory Vandamme (PhD UCLouvain, BE), Alberto Ventura (University of Calabria, IT). Lessons will take place from Monday to Saturday and will be divided into morning and afternoon sessions.

In order to provide the students with an opportunity to penetrate the ‘original’ spirit of the concepts discussed, all presenters will make an effort to present the proposed themes from a perspective that is as epistemologically consistent as possible with that of the Sufi authors that dealt with those concepts and ideas and of the historical milieu in which they lived.

From Fusus al-Hikam with the sama’ autographed by Ibn ‘Arabi
Fass Adam, where appears the word al-Insan al-kamil
Monday 26 July

Morning session  10.00-12.00

- The notion of the Perfect Man in Sufism
  Alberto Ventura (University of Calabria, IT)

Afternoon session  17.00-19:00

- “The Invisible Caliph” : Adam in Qaysari’s Commentary on the ‘Fusūs al-Hikam’
  Gregory Vandamme (PhD UCLouvain, BE)

Tuesday 27 July

Morning session  10.00-12.00

- From alif to wāw: perfection and universality according to Ibn ʿArabī and ʿAbdullah Bosnevi
  Stephen Hirtenstein (Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi Society, UK)
**Wednesday 28 July**

**Morning session** 10.00-12.00

- **The zajal on the Red Sulfur: Ibn Arabī's hermeneutical alchemy**
  
Pablo Beneito (University of Murcia, ES)

**Afternoon session** 17.00-19.00

- **The Concept of the Perfect Man in Sadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī**
  
  Patrizia Spallino (University of Palermo, IT)
  
  (Presentation in French with handout and Q&A in English)

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**Thursday 29 July**

**Morning session** 10.00-12.00

- **Akbarian hagiology in Ottoman Damascus: some thoughts on the role of the Perfect Man in the work of ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī**
  
  Samuela Pagani (University of Salento, IT)
**Friday 30 July**

**Morning session** 10.00-12.00

- The “Christic” Vision of the Universal Man in the Writings of Shaykh ‘Abdel-Wāhid Yahyā (René Guénon)

  Paolo Urizzi (Perennia Verba, IT)

**Afternoon session** 17.00-19:00

- *Blessings on al-Insān al-Kāmil from Ibn ʿArabī to the Tiǧāniyya. The Metaphysical Side of Prayer on the Prophet*

  Michele Petrone (University of Milano, IT)

- Knowledge Transcendent: The Sufi Epistemology of 'Ayn al-Qudāt al-Hamadānī

  Mohammed Rustom (Carleton University, Canada)

(Recorded video)
Saturday 31 July

Morning session  10.00-12.00

- The Width of the Kursī: Metaphysical Intermediation and Spatial Symbolism of the Insān al-kāmil
  Luca Patrizi (University of Exeter, UK)

Afternoon session  17.00-19:00

- The Insān al-kāmil in ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī
  Alberto Grigio (Perennia Verba, IT)
The subscription fee is 53 Euros. Members of MIAS (Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi Society) benefit from a reduced fee of 30 Euros (if you are a MIAS member please mention it in your application). The organizers reserve the right to apply a reduced fee also to students with specific financial conditions. The subscription fee is intended to support the organization of the event and will grant you access to all lectures of the Summer School. Please apply only through the form at the following link:

https://studiesinsufism.altervista.org/buy-now/

Before proceeding to the payment we invite you to register, using the form on the website page. Payment information will be given to selected students. You should pay only AFTER having being contacted by us, with a confirmation of your subscription. We invite you to tell us something about your reasons to participate to the Summer School, so that we can start knowing each other before the lessons start!

Please also tell us what your academic qualifications and affiliations (current or last affiliation) are. We would also like to know if you have any knowledge of Arabic. Please notice that only knowledge of English is strictly required but this will help us to better organize lectures and teaching materials. You can insert all these details in the box “Other details” on the website page.

Fees can only be paid through PayPal. After receiving the confirmation of the payment, you will be contacted by the organization team and you will be provided with the access credentials for the Summer School.

Failing to submit the payment before the beginning of the Summer School implies the automatic exclusion from all events, despite any form of previous contact.

Access credentials to the lessons are strictly personal and any user sharing them with others will be automatically excluded from the Summer School and permanently banned from the forum.

There is no refund of the registration fee after the beginning of the Summer School or in case the user will share his personal credential with others. Users with connection issues are kindly requested to contact the organization through the form above.
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*For more information please contact us through the form in the subscription page.*

**Summer School site:** [https://studiesinsufism.altervista.org](https://studiesinsufism.altervista.org)