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RYAN BRIZENDINE

INSPIRED KNOWLEDGE IN ISLAMIC THOUGHT FROM AL-GHAZAL TO IBN 'ARABI

The Andalusian mystic Ibn 'Arabi is widely recognized to be the most prolific and, in many estimations, the most influential Sufi author of the Islamic tradition. Despite his seminal importance, a large percentage of his literary corpus remains unstudied, and existing scholarship on his works tends to suffer both from an overly decontextualized approach and an overemphasis upon these works' supposed intractability to analysis. Using Ibn 'Arabi's most important precursor, al-Ghazali, and an especially representative text, the long introduction to Ibn 'Arabi's magnum opus, as examples, this talk argues that his views are not so allusive as to be inscrutable but rather become fully intelligible once set within the combined contexts of his oeuvre as a whole and contemporaneous discussions in philosophy, theology, and Sufism.

Trained at Yale University and the University of Chicago, Ryan Brizendine studies post-classical Islamic philosophical theology and Sufism, Islam in South Asia, literary-linguistic Qur'anic exegesis, and religious poetics in classical Arabic, Persian, and Hindi-Urdu. His dissertation situates Ibn 'Arabi's and Sadr al-Din Qunawi's epistemologies within the philosophical-theological contexts of the thirteenth century. A forthcoming companion study examines the interpretive translation of his *Meccan Openings* into Persian in seventeenth-century Mughal India by the Chishti shaykh Muhibb Allah Ilahabadi.

PLEASE CONTACT SETH SANDERS [SSANDERS@UCDAVIS.EDU](mailto:ssanders@ucdavis.edu) FOR FURTHER INFORMATION