

The Status of Reading in the Refinement of Morals According to Mohyiddin Ibn 'Arabī

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Abstract

Purpose: The present research aimed to call for a different understanding of our relation with "reading". It will be suggested that beyond the pragmatic relation with reading that reduce it to an instrument for changing the external world, we can realize a virtue-based relation with it.

Methodology: The phenomenon of reading is regarded as an informational phenomenon and investigated by using angeletic analysis.

Findings: Ibn 'Arabī regards "reading" as a preparatory tool for removing vices and developing virtues by intellectual soul. According to him, reading is valuable to the extent that fosters virtues. This conception of reading that can be traced all over the classic traditional-religious period, originates from the fundamental experience of traditional man that considers "being-in-the-world" as "being-in-the-temple" and makes self-purification necessary for faithfully dwelling in the "world-temple". Such a sacred and virtue-based traditional relation with reading essentially differs from secular and consequence-based modern relation.

Originality/Value: This article reveals the historicity of the phenomenon of reading, through historical investigation in Islamic texts and demonstrates the difference between traditional and modern conceptions of reading.

Keywords: reading, refinement of morals, Mohyiddin Ibn 'Arabī, hermeneutics, angeletics