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al-Ḥabābī, Muḥammad ‘Azīz

Muḥammad ‘Azīz al-Ḥabābī (Mohamed Aziz Lahbabi, 25 December 1923–23 August 1993) was a Moroccan writer and philosopher who established a personalist philosophy (*shakhsāniyya*) in a Third World, Arabic, and Muslim context. He was one of the leading figures of modern philosophy in the Arab world during the era of decolonisation, having developed a new philosophical vocabulary and an intercultural hermeneutical approach to reconcile Third World societies and Islamic religious traditions with modernity. Central to his thought is the recognition of the personhood of each human being. He was a candidate for the Nobel Prize in Literature in the late 1980s.

Al-Ḥabābī was born in Fez and brought up in the Moroccan French educational system. He also received traditional Islamic religious instruction. Some of his family members held important positions at Qarawiyyīn University, in Fez, and in the Moroccan religious establishment. He was engaged in the Moroccan nationalist movement, arrested for this activity in 1944, and then imprisoned for eight

months. After this, he went to France to study, first in Caen and later at the École nationale des langues orientales and at the Sorbonne in Paris, where he received his *doctorat ès lettres*. From 1952 to 1959 he served as a research attaché at the Centre national de la recherche scientifique (French National Centre for Scientific Research, CNRS). After Morocco achieved independence in 1956, he returned there and began teaching at the new Mohamed V University of Rabat in 1959 as the first Moroccan professor of philosophy. From 1961 until 1969 he was dean of the university's Faculty of Arts and Human Sciences. Afterwards, he went to Algeria, where he was charged with teaching philosophy at the University of Algiers and revising the Algerian higher education system. In 1974 he returned to Morocco, where he held the position of a researcher. He was a member of many national and international philosophical and cultural organisations, and he was a founder of the Union des écrivains du Maghreb arabe (The Union of Maghreb Writers), the cultural association Rives méditerranéennes (Mediterranean Shores), the review *Āfāq* ("Horizons"), and the