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THE CONTRIBUTION OF IBN ARABI'S SUFISM-PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHT TO THE CONCEPT OF PERFECT HUMAN BEING WHO RATIONALLY BELIEVES

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Abstracts:

Ibn Arabi was one of the great Islamic thinkers who lived between 1165-1240 AD. He was known as one of the highest Sufi master (mystic) in human spiritual achievement with title Sheikh al-Akbar (Doctor Maximus or The Great Master). Using the library research, this article aims to explore and find the contribution of Ibn Arabi's Sufism-philosophical thought and find its relevance to realize the perfect human being, equipped with rational faith. The results show that Ibn Arabi succeeded in "marrying" philosophy with Islamic teachings so that he can be categorized as a Sufi-philosopher and his thought has a Sufism-philosophical character. This style of thought is very relevant to help modern people who have a tendency to separate faith from ratio. For Ibn Arabi, human perfection lies in being together with God. However, this togetherness with God must be understood and lived rationally. In other words, a perfect human being is one who believes in God rationally.

Keywords:

Ibn Arabi, Sufism-philosophy, rational faith, perfect man, Sufi-philosopher

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INTRODUCTION

Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Muhammad ibn al-Arabi al-Thai al-Tamimi, commonly known as Ibn Arabi, stands as a towering figure in the realm of Islamic thought, revered as one of the greatest Sufi masters of all time. Born in 1165 AD, Ibn Arabi's profound impact on Islamic mysticism has earned him the esteemed title of "supreme figure in human spiritual achievement" and the honorific title of Syeikh al-Akbar (Doctor Maximus or The Great Master).[1] This remarkable individual has captured the attention of scholars and spiritual seekers alike due to his remarkable ability to reconcile philosophical teachings from outside the realm of faith or Islamic teachings with Sufism.

Ibn Arabi's unwavering courage and persistence in integrating philosophical concepts into his Sufi teachings have categorically established him as a Sufi-philosopher of immense significance. By employing philosophical terms with adjusted meanings, Ibn Arabi has successfully navigated the boundaries between philosophy and Sufism, thereby earning himself the esteemed title of mystical philosopher. This unique synthesis of philosophical and mystical perspectives has generated a profound and lasting impact on Islamic thought, solidifying Ibn Arabi's reputation as a master of Sufi philosophy.

Beyond his intellectual pursuits, Ibn Arabi's strong devotion to Allah and his reverence for the Prophet Muhammad as the primary spiritual role model for his mystical life are fundamental aspects of his being. His deep commitment to the principles of Islam is reflected in his emphasis on the importance of practicing religious laws (sharia) and embodying noble ethics in his spiritual journey. This steadfast commitment to the

[1] Stephen Hirtenstein, The Unlimited merciful, the spiritual life and thought of Ibnu Arabi (Oxford: Anga Publishing, 1999), ix.

tenets of Islam further solidifies his reputation as a philosopher rooted in faith, demonstrating his ability to balance intellectual inquiry with spiritual devotion.

Ibn Arabi's remarkable synthesis of philosophy and Sufism is characterized by its emphasis on the unity of existence (*wahdat al-wujud*).[2] This concept posits that all existence is a manifestation of the divine unity, and that, ultimately, everything is a reflection of God's oneness. This profound perspective has far-reaching implications for understanding the nature of reality, the human condition, and the role of the spiritual seeker. Through his teachings, Ibn Arabi offers a profound exploration of the human experience, inviting seekers to embark on a journey of spiritual discovery and self-reflection.

Throughout his writings, Ibn Arabi draws upon a diverse range of sources, incorporating elements from Islamic theology, Greek philosophy, and Christian mysticism. His *magnum opus*, "The Meccan Revelations" (*Al-Futuhat al-Makkiyya*),[3] is a testament to his encyclopedic knowledge and profound insight, offering a comprehensive exploration of Sufi thought and spiritual practice. This remarkable work has had a profound impact on Islamic thought, influencing generations of scholars, mystics, and spiritual seekers.

Ibn Arabi's influence extends far beyond the realm of Islamic thought, with his ideas influencing Western philosophers such as Meister Eckhart and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola. His thought has also had a profound impact on literature, with writers such as Rumi and Ibn Hazm drawing inspiration from his work. This cross-cultural and interdisciplinary influence is a testament to the timeless relevance and universal appeal of Ibn Arabi's teachings.

[2] William C. Chittick, *The Unity of Being: Ibn Arabi's Concept of Wahdat al-Wujud* (USA: State University of New York Press, 1999), 1.

[3] Michel Chodkiewicz, *The Meccan Revelations: Text and Commentary* ([t.k.] Pir Press, 2002), xiii.

In the remainder of this article, we will delve deeper into the life, teachings, and legacy of Ibn Arabi, exploring the intricacies of his thought and the profound implications of his synthesis of philosophy and Sufism. Through a careful examination of his ideas and their far-reaching implications, the author hopes to illuminate the profound significance of Ibn Arabi's contributions to Islamic thought and human experience.

IBN ARABI'S THOUGHT AND HIS BACKGROUND

The Context of Ibn Arabi's Life

The mystical thoughts of Ibn Arabi were heavily influenced by the context of his life in Andalusia, Spain. One of the great thinkers in the history of Andalusia who greatly influenced Ibn Arabi was Muhammad bin Masarra or Ibn Masarra (883 AD - 931 AD). Ibn Masarra was an intellectual who had a foundation in Ismaili and Mu'tazilite thought, and his mystical teachings became the main root of the dialectical thinking of the Andalusian Sufis, which was also dominant in the "Almeria School". Ibn Arabi himself studied the works of Ibn Masarra. In general, the Western Muslim world, especially in Spain, leaned more towards philosophical and theosophical interpretations of religion compared to the spiritual enthusiasm and fervor mostly held by mystics in the Eastern Muslim world.[4] It is evident that Ibn Arabi's thoughts were a mixture of various philosophical systems that were developing at that time, including the thought system of Ibn Masarra. Therefore, Ibn Arabi's thinking is a synthesis of the Mu'tazilite Masarra doctrine of "Tawhid", which is the justice of Allah and free will, with the theories and practices of Sufism developed by Dhun Nun al-Misri and al-Nahrajuri.[5]

[4] Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimension of Islam* (USA: The University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 335.

[5] Maribel Fierro, "Opposition to Sufism in Andalusia," in *Islamic Mysticism Contested*, eds. Irene J. F. de Jong and Bernd Radtke (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 178, https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004452725_013.

In his youth, Ibn Arabi lived in the city of Seville, which was a center of intellectual and Sufi activities. There, he encountered a number of famous Sufi masters (such as sheikhs and guides). Driven by his interest in Sufism, Ibn Arabi became fascinated by the lifestyle and doctrines of these Sufi masters. Additionally, his family's Sufi heritage had directed and enhanced his inclination towards Sufi piety. One of the mystical experiences he had during his youth, among many others, was hearing a voice from the heavens urging him to avoid all actions that are not pleasing to Allah and to lead a life of complete "*khidmah*" in serving Him. This story is in the context of his bad habits during his youth, where he used to attend night parties with his friends in the midst of Seville, Spain. Through this experience, Ibn Arabi developed a deep awareness and began to distance himself from the worldly life, engaging in prayer and practicing "dhikr". It was from there that he gained "*kashf*" (spiritual unveiling) by meeting and receiving guidance from Isa al-Masih (Jesus), Musa (Moses), and Muhammad, which simultaneously enlightened and shaped his spiritual path.

Based on his spiritual experiences, Ibn Arabi decided to dedicate himself to the path of Allah, that is, by entering the path of Sufism. He based his way of life on the Quranic command, "O mankind, you are those in need of Allah!" (Quran 35:15). It is worth noting that what is extraordinary about Ibn Arabi is that he entered the world of Sufism at a very young age. This is mentioned in his book al-Futuhat al-Makkiyyah, where he states, "I reached this stage (the level of spiritual experience in Sufism) in 1184 CE (when he was only 19 years old)". Furthermore, in his relationship with his spiritual teachers, he had been accustomed to accompanying and learning from Sufis since a very young age.

Ibn Arabi's thoughts were influenced by many philosophers. In addition to Ibn Masarra, his thinking was also influenced by Persian Aristotelians and Neoplatonists, such as Ibn Rushd (*Averroes*) and Ibn Sina (*Avicenna*). Specifically, the philosophy of Ibn Rushd had a

significant impact on Ibn Arabi's philosophy, although it is not the same as his mystical philosophy.[6] Additionally, Ibn Arabi also met two holy women who later became his spiritual teachers. They were Shams of Marchena and Fatimah of Cordoba, both of whom were influential female Sufis in Ibn Arabi's spiritual training during his youth. Previous Sufi figures who also influenced his thinking include Mansur al-Hallaj (858 CE-922 CE), Abu Yazid al-Bustami (804 CE-874 CE), Al-Junaid al-Baghdadi (830 CE-910 CE), Sahl al-Tustari (818 CE-896 CE), and Abdul Qadir al-Jilani (1077 CE-1166 CE). It is also known that Hellenistic philosophy, particularly Neoplatonism and Stoicism related to *Logos*, influenced Ibn Arabi's thinking.

Ibn Arabi's Thoughts on *Insan*

One of the terms used in Islam to refer to human beings is "insan". In the book al-Mu'jam al-Mufahras li al-Alfaz al-Qur'an al-Karim, Muhammad Fu'ad mentions that the word al-insan is mentioned 73 times in 43 surahs in the Quran. The use of the word al-insan contains two dimensions; the dimension of the body (with its various elements) and the spiritual dimension (which is infused with the soul).[7] Thus, the word insan emphasizes that humans are creatures with complete potential - physical, intellectual, emotional, moral, social, and artistic potentials as well as psychological, although still not perfect.[8]

Ibn Arabi extensively explored the concept of "*insan*" (human being) in his writings. According to him, "*insan*" goes beyond conventional understanding, portraying humans as microcosms that

[6] Dewan Redaksi Ensiklopedi Islam, *Ensiklopedi Islam*, (Jakarta: PT Ichtiar Baru Van Hoeve, 1993), 150.

[7] Fatihatid Dzirooatin Nuril Ulya, "Mengenal Tiga Istilah Manusia dalam Alquran: Nas, Insan, dan Basyar," *TAFSIRALQURAN.ID* 2022, Retrieved November 25, 2023 from https://tafsiralquran.id/mengenal-tiga-istilah-manusia-dalam-alquran-nas-insan-dan-basyar/.

[8] Dadan Nurulhaq, "The Concept Of Human Ability (*Qudratul Insan*) In Islamic Education Process," *International Journal of Nusantara Islam 08, no.02* (2020): 169, https://doi.org/10.15575/ijni.v8i2.10774.

reflect the macrocosm of the universe. In his philosophical and mystical interpretations, he highlights the potential for humans to embody divine attributes and realize their true nature. The influence of Ibn Arabi's ideas on "*insan*" extends deeply into Sufi thought and Islamic philosophy, shaping perspectives on spirituality, self-realization, and the intricate relationship between humanity and the divine.[9]

In Islamic teachings, there is the term *Qudratul Insan* which is an expression of the basic human potential given by Allah SWT at birth, such as sight, hearing, and heart.[10] These three potentials have an interrelated relationship, where hearing serves to maintain the knowledge that has been obtained from learning, vision serves to develop knowledge and increase research results by conducting further studies, and the heart is tasked with cleansing knowledge from all evil.

Wahdat al-Wujud

The teachings of *Wahdat al-Wujud* (unity of existence) are explained by Ibn Arabi by emphasizing the understanding of the unity of the essence of existence. This means that everything that exists, although it appears to be separate, actually does not have existence on its own, but depends on Allah the Creator. Therefore, what appears to exist is only the shadows of the One (Allah). If Allah, who is the source of these shadows, did not exist, then nothing else would exist because the entire universe does not have true existence. The only true existence is that of Allah alone. Therefore, there is only one existence, which is the existence of Allah, while everything else is merely shadows.

9 Rebekah Zwanzig, An Analysis of Ibn al-Arabi's al-Insan al-Kamil, the Perfect Individual, with a Brief Comparison to the Thought of Sir Muhammad Iqbal, (Faculty of Philosophy, Brock University St. Catharines, 2008), 38.

10 Dadan Nurulhaq, "The Concept of Human Ability (Qudratul Insan) in the Islamic Education Process," 165.

The unity of existence, known in the Sufi tradition as "*Wahdat al-Wujud*" or "*Wahdatul Wujud*," was first introduced by Ibn Arabi. This unity of existence is seen as the highest pinnacle in the concept (experience) of Sufism. Ibn Arabi himself discusses Allah (al-Haqq, the Real, and the Divine) as the absolute in relation to the phenomenal universe (al-Khalq, the created, the existences created, or the world of phenomena) as the relative. This high mystical experience is not merely a speculative concept, but is based on experiences and feelings (dzauq) obtained from intensive communications with Allah. Ibn Arabi himself states, "Blessed is the essence that creates everything, and He is everything itself".[11]

The expressions of metaphysical Sufi supporters regarding the "unity of existence" represented by Ibn Arabi arise because they cannot accept the idea of "creation from nothingness (*creatio ex nihillo*)".[12] In other words, they reject the belief that at some point, the universe came into existence from nothingness. In his thinking about existence, like other metaphysical Sufis of his time and in line with the popular theory of creation in the Middle Ages, Ibn Arabi believed in emanation, which is Allah manifesting everything in this world from the existence of knowledge to the existence of matter. Therefore, Ibn Arabi understands the existence of everything as "an eternal and continuous Theophany, and the manifestation of the Most Absolute in countless phenomena".[13]

In discussing the concept of the unity of existence, Ibn Arabi often presents metaphors that can facilitate communication of his spiritual experiences. The self-disclosure of Allah or the manifestation of Allah (self-disclosure of God) is one of the main doctrines in his ontological philosophy. This doctrine is inspired by his deep reflection on the Qudsi

[11] Muhammad ibn Arabi, "Futuhat Makkiyah," in *Taftazani al-Madkhal Ila at Tashawwuf al-Islami* 2 (Bandung: Penerbit Pustaka, 1974), 200.

[12] H.A. Khudori Soleh, *Filsafat Islam: Dari Klasik hingga Kontemporer* (Yogyakarta: Ar-Ruzz Media, 2016), 120.

[13] Muhammad ibn Arabi, *Fusus al-Hikam* (Kairo: t.p., [1946]), 28.

hadith, "I was a hidden treasure, and I desired to be known, so I created creation and through Me, they came to know Me." According to this concept, creation is the manifestation of Allah through the signs of His creation. For Ibn Arabi, everything in this world is only a manifestation of the Absolute. The existence of the Absolute is represented by the term "hidden treasure", referring to the existence of Allah before manifesting Himself and becoming known through creation. Therefore, Ibn Arabi asserts that through the universe (meaning through the creation of the universe), Allah becomes known.

The creation of humans and the universe by Allah has a specific purpose, which is that He (Allah) wants to see the essence of His Most Beautiful Names and see His own essence. The image of the manifestation (*tajalliyat*) of Allah's self in this universe can be found in Ibn Arabi's view, where creation reveals that Allah manifests or reveals Himself, or actualizes Himself, through the phenomenal world, which is a polished mirror. This means that the universe is a mirror of Allah, and through this mirror, Allah knows His own face and introduces it to the universe. Furthermore, Ibn Arabi also states that this universe is the locus or container in which the names of Allah become manifest. Ibn Arabi concludes that, "In existence, there is nothing but the names of Allah in the universe". According to him, the purpose of creation is for humans to understand the inner world (*al-Batin*), which is one of the names of Allah, through the unseen realm, and the outer world (*al-Dzahir*), which is another name of Allah, through human sensory instruments.

The unity of existence in Ibn Arabi's mystical philosophy can be summarized as follows: existence is fundamentally one, it is the existence of Allah, the Absolute, who is unlimited. The Absolute Existence is often referred to by Ibn Arabi as *al-Haqq* (Absolute Truth or the Most True). The various forms of existence in the universe are essentially the manifestations of the Absolute Self in limited phenomena. Meanwhile,

what is often referred to as *al-Khalq* (creation) and the many beings in it are considered as His servants, where they represent diversity.

Insan Kamil

Insan kamil (the perfect human) is a term used by Sufis to refer to a Muslim who has reached the highest level, which is the level of *fana fillah* (annihilation in Allah). According to Ibn Arabi, humans are the most perfect manifestation of Allah's self. This is because humans are *al-Kaun al-Jamil*, which means that humans are the central being, the microcosm, reflected in the macrocosm, and the qualities of Allah are reflected in them. Therefore, humans are elevated as caliphs, meaning that within them, the form of Allah and the form of the universe are gathered, where the substance of Allah with all His attributes and names is apparent in them. This means that in a mirror, it can be said that humans reveal the existence of Allah.

As for the perfection of human knowledge, it is when they have reached the highest level of consciousness, which is realizing their unity with Allah or ma'rifah.[14] Ibn Arabi also sees insan kamil as a perfect vessel for the manifestation of Allah. This view is based on the assumption that all existence has only one reality. The singular reality is the absolute existence that is free from all thoughts, relationships, directions, and time. It is pure essence, nameless, attributeless, and unrelated to everything. Then, the absolute existence manifests perfectly with this diverse universe. This manifestation occurs simultaneously with the creation of the universe by Allah through His nature, so it already exists from Him through the process of *tanaffus* (breathing His breath).

For Sufis, the universe is a mirror of Allah's attributes and His beautiful names (*al-asma al-husna*). Each level of existence, such as

[14] Yunasril Ali, *Manusia Citra Ilahi* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1997), 60.

minerals, plants, and animals, is seen as reflecting certain attributes of Allah. At the level of minerals, for example, the beauty of Allah is reflected to a certain extent, such as in rocks and precious metals. In addition, at the level of plants, with thousands of types of flowers and their unique and harmonious colors, they constantly inspire poets with astonishing inspiration. Similarly, the charm given by various types of animals with their diverse forms and species. However, of all the creatures in this world, none can fully reflect the attributes of Allah except humans. This is because humans, as microcosms containing all cosmic elements, are capable of reflecting all the divine qualities perfectly when they have reached their perfection. Therefore, humans are called *insan kamil* or the perfect human.[15]

The perfection of *insan kamil* is caused by the perfect manifestation of Allah through the essence of Muhammad (*al-haqiqah al-Muhammadiyah*). The essence of Muhammad is the perfect vessel for the manifestation of Allah and is the first creation of Allah.[16] Therefore, on one hand, *insan kamil* is a perfect vessel for the manifestation of Allah, while on the other hand, it is a miniature of the entire universe because it projects the individual realities of the universe, both physical and metaphysical. The heart of insan kamil corresponds to the throne of Allah, meaning its selfhood is equivalent to the seat of Allah or its spiritual rank is equal to *sidratul muntaha*, which is the highest peak in spiritual practice.

The perfection of humans does not mean that they will reach the level of divinity, as Allah is not the same as anyone or anything. This is because the cosmos is the sum total of all the attributes and effects of Allah's names. The cosmos is also a mirror of Allah but is not Allah. Ibn Arabi refers to it as "He but not He". Therefore, humans remain in their

[15] Mulyadhi Kartanegara, *Menyelami Lubuk Tasawuf* (Jakarta: Erlangga, 2006), 66.
[16] Yunasril Ali, *Manusia Citra Ilahi*, 56.

essence that is nothing but the essence of existence itself. At the same time, they undergo transformation and transmutation by participating in unveiling Allah's self and manifesting Allah's names in the infinite cosmic situations. Humans themselves have the potential to encompass all the realities of Allah in everything. Humans are not only unique but also actively play their role in the cosmos. Therefore, humans are the divine roots of everything, but it also depends on how they perceive a reality and are able to transform it within themselves in relation to all of Allah's creations, showing gratitude for the blessings bestowed upon living beings. Furthermore, it is important to realize that humans must remain aligned with Allah in all realities. Therefore, humans can be called "perfect humans" when they position themselves with a good soul to avoid all negative things that can blind their inner sight.

The "Perfect Human" of Rational Faith according to Ibn Arabi

Based on Ibn Arabi's two main teachings, the discussion on the perfect human or *insan kamil* is an interesting topic to explore. He asserts that among all creatures in this world, none can fully reflect the attributes of Allah except for humans. Furthermore, he interprets that the so-called perfect human possesses a certain magical power, implicitly referring to wisdom. Wisdom itself points to an extraordinary power called *himmah*, which is a concentrated spiritual energy. According to him, a wise person is capable of subduing anything according to their desires, thus it can be said that this human is endowed with the power of taskhir.[17] This implies that humans and the universe are interconnected, where humans have the responsibility to preserve and maintain the existing universe as a trust from Allah.

[17] Toshihiko Izutsu, Sufism and Taoism: A Comparative Study of Key Philosophical Concepts (Pakistan: Suhail Academy Lahore, 2005), 329.

Moreover, the spiritual concentration called himmah does not necessarily require it to be conceived through the analogy of imaginative experiences. Therefore, humans are capable of producing something desirable in their imagination, even things that do not exist in this temporary world. This spiritual creation is essentially different from divine creation at a fundamental point. Humans themselves have a uniqueness, as they bear the title of *Khalifah* on Earth. This is because humans are psychic beings with basic potential, namely *fitrah* (natural inclination), intellect, and heart. It is possible that this potential is what makes humans exist as noble and superior creatures compared to other living beings. Therefore, humans with all their creations that have been predetermined by Allah are the main characteristic of the uniqueness within each individual. Ibn Arabi's discussion about humans indeed leads to the concept of the perfect human, not a forgetful or ignorant human. Although in reality, forgetfulness and ignorance are the aspects of humans that are most commonly found.

According to Ibn Arabi, the perfect human is divided into two categories: first is the "reality" of the perfect human, which is the fundamental form or initial form (*arkhé*), where the type of human is eternal and everlasting, making the individual human a chosen one by Allah who has been bestowed with special and unique grace to become a human. In this case, the individual human refers to the figure of prophets and saints, where they exist as Allah's chosen ones. Ibn Arabi refers to this as the reality of Muhammad.[18]

In his teachings, Ibn Arabi explains that humans were created by Allah after the creation of the entire cosmos. This means that humans are Allah's last creation. Starting with the creation of the first intellect,

[18] Wiliam C. Chittick, *Imaginal Worlds: Ibn al-ʿArabi and the Problem of Religious Diversity* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 55.

universal soul, universal body, universal form, and then sequentially lightning, fire, air, water, earth, matter, plants, animals, angels, jinn, and humans. Mysteriously, it turns out that within humans, everything that exists in the cosmos is contained. The mystery of the self is what often makes humans referred to as insan kamil or the perfect human because of the perfect manifestation of Allah's revelation in the creation, as His names are manifested in it. Therefore, humans are a manifestation of all the attributes of Allah, which are the forms of Allah towards His cosmos, leading to a fundamental or fundamental determination regarding human existence.

Among the various forms of Allah's manifestation, the perfect human makes humans a complete manifestation, so their spirit is the spirit of Allah. However, this does not mean that there is an absolute Divine Spirit within humans. Therefore, it can be understood that everything related to the perfect human is a perfect image of heaven and earth, which is the path through which humans manifest themselves as the world of Existence. This means that the perfect human manifests through the same principle as heaven and earth, so it is essential for humans to understand that the path taken is the principle of "not doing" or "being oneself". Therefore, conscious efforts from the human side to live or achieve their purpose violate this highest principle and end up with different results than intended.

Through this discussion, it can be understood that the meaning of "perfect human" according to Ibn Arabi is an individual who has been able to bring every name of Allah (His existence) into real life or become a manifestation of the human from Allah. From here, the concept of the "perfect human" is *insan kamil*, which literally means a complete human. This completeness is interpreted as someone who has reached the highest level of consciousness, or known as *ma'rifah*, which is the awareness of the unity of existence between humans and Allah (*Wahdat al-Wujud*).

Thus, Ibn Arabi's view of the concept of the "perfect human" who believes rationally leads to a relational dimension, both between humans and Allah, humans and themselves, and humans and others.

Ibn Arabi's concept of the "Perfect Human" (*al-Insan al-Kamil*) is a hallmark of his philosophical and spiritual system.[19] This concept represents the ultimate goal of human existence, which is to manifest the divine attributes and qualities in one's individual being. The novelty of Ibn Arabi's thought lies in its integration of philosophical, theological, and spiritual elements, offering a unique synthesis of rational and mystical approaches to understanding human nature and the nature of reality.

In Ibn Arabi's philosophy, rational faith (*al-iman al-'aqli*) plays a crucial role in realizing the Perfect Human. Rational faith is the intellect's ability to understand the unity of existence, which is the fundamental reality that underlies all existence.[20] This understanding is not a mere intellectual exercise, but a transformative experience that allows the individual to transcend the limitations of the material world. The unity of existence is a central theme in Ibn Arabi's philosophy, and is understood as the interdependence and interconnectedness of all things.[21]

The Perfect Human is a being who has realized the unity of existence and manifests the divine attributes and qualities in their individual being.[22] This manifestation is not a mere imitation of God, but rather a natural expression of the divine nature, which is already present within the human soul. The Perfect Human embodies the divine attributes of mercy, wisdom, and justice, among others, and acts as a microcosm of the universe. This concept is novel in that it challenges

[19] M. Chodkiewicz, *An Ocean Without Shore: Ibn Arabi, the Book, and the Law* (USA: State University of New York Press, 2009), 123.

[20] J. W. Morris, *The Reflective Heart: Discovering Spiritual Intelligence in Ibn Arabi's Meccan Illuminations* (Fons Vitae, 2005), 157.

[21] C. Addas, *Quest for the Red Sulphur: The Life of Ibn Arabi*, (Islamic Texts Society, 2013), 215.

[22] S. W., Akhtar, *Ibn Arabi and the Philosophy of Illumination* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 103.

traditional notions of human nature and the nature of God, offering a more holistic and integrated understanding of the human condition.

Reason and intellect play a crucial role in Ibn Arabi's philosophy, particularly in the realization of the Perfect Human. The intellect is seen as a faculty that allows human beings to understand the unity of existence and to manifest the divine attributes in their individual being.[23] In this sense, reason and intellect are not merely abstract concepts, but are rather the means by which human beings can realize their full potential and become the Perfect Human.

The novelty of Ibn Arabi's thought lies in its integration of philosophical, theological, and spiritual elements. His concept of the Perfect Human, realized through rational faith and intellectual intuition, offers a unique synthesis of rational and mystical approaches to understanding human nature and the nature of reality.[24] This synthesis is novel in that it transcends the traditional boundaries between philosophy, theology, and mysticism, offering a holistic understanding of human existence and the nature of reality.

Ibn Arabi's concept of the Perfect Human has had a profound influence on Islamic thought, particularly in the areas of Sufism and Islamic philosophy. His ideas have shaped the development of Islamic mysticism and continue to inspire spiritual seekers and philosophers to this day.[25] The concept of the Perfect Human has also influenced the development of Islamic ethics and morality, emphasizing the importance of manifesting divine attributes in individual human beings.

In conclusion, the "Perfect Human" of Rational Faith according to Ibn Arabi represents a profound and nuanced understanding of human

[23] Toshihiko Izutsu, Sufism and Taoism: A Comparative Study of Key Philosophical Concepts, 145.
[24] A. Knysh, Sufism: A Very Short Introduction, (Oxford University Press, 2017), 181
[25] W. C., Chittick, The Self-Disclosure of God: Principles of Ibn Arabi's Cosmology, (SUNY Press, 2017), 205.

nature, the nature of God, and the universe. This concept is a testament to Ibn Arabi's innovative and holistic approach to philosophy, theology, and spirituality, and continues to inspire and influence Islamic thought and spirituality.

IBN ARABI'S TASAWWUF-PHILOSOPHICAL CONTRIBUTION: THE "PERFECT MAN" OF RATIONAL FAITH

The concept of the "perfect human" is a significant contribution of Ibn Arabi in rational belief interpretation within Sufi philosophy. From this, the author understands that Ibn Arabi's thoughts have real contributions in today's world context. Firstly, the concept of the "perfect human" is evident through the emphasis on the importance of human potential to reach the highest level of consciousness and existence. This means that the concept of the "perfect human" is part of his teachings on "*Wahdat al-Wujud*" (unity of existence), where everything in the universe exists as a manifestation of Allah's existence. Humans have the potential to achieve perfection and unity with Allah, and this has concrete consequences in various aspects of human life. This is reflected in his deeper understanding of the Divine reality, spiritual consciousness, the desire for knowledge and truth, appreciation of self-creativity, living according to morality and ethics, having a positive influence in society and the environment, social concern, and experiencing inner and spiritual growth.[26]

Secondly, the concept of the "perfect human" emphasizes the importance of rational belief based on reason and knowledge, not just blind faith. This means that humans have a good balance between sound

[26] Masataka Takeshita, *Ibn 'Arabi's Theory of the Perfect Man and Its Place in the History of Islamic Thought* [E-Book], (Tokyo: University of Foreign Studies, 1987), 201, https://archive.org/details/IbnArabiSTheoryOfThePerfectManAndItsPlaceInIslamicThought.

reasoning and deep faith conviction and are active in developing their knowledge and understanding of faith. This is reflected in the development of reason (logical thinking procedures), rational understanding in belief (knowing the basis of creed), appreciation of research and scientific study, engagement in dialogue and discussion, expanding knowledge, experiencing the meaning in worship, growing in spirituality, and becoming a role model in a social context.[27]

Thirdly, the concept of the "perfect human" emphasizes an understanding of the universe or natural laws that apply to all human beings regardless of their cultural or religious background. This concept reflects the idea of human responsibility in working together to seek understanding between the universe and human beings. This is an inclusive and collaborative vision for maintaining a better world for everyone who lives in it. This concept is revealed through human openness to universal scientific research, understanding of natural laws, application of science for the common good, appreciation of cultural diversity, building collaboration with various individuals in all contexts, upholding universal ethical principles, building education about the universe, and preserving the environment.[28]

Fourth, the concept of the "perfect human" emphasizes the importance of human responsibility as the steward of the universe, managing and utilizing the universe wisely. This concept reflects the view that humans have moral and ethical responsibilities in managing the universe wisely as a form of sustainable management and preservation. Therefore, they play a role as protectors and responsible managers of the universe given to them. This is reflected in efforts for environmental

[27] Masataka Takeshita, Ibn 'Arabi's Theory of the Perfect Man and Its Place in the History of Islamic Thought, 206.

[28] Masataka Takeshita, Ibn 'Arabi's Theory of the Perfect Man and Its Place in the History of Islamic Thought, 206.

conservation, sustainable utilization of resources, seeking new innovations in environmental management through environmental research, enhancing environmental education, building ethics of environmental management, international collaboration to address environmental issues, being mindful of the impacts of exploitation, appreciation of life, and taking prompt action to restore environmental crises.[29]

Fifth, the concept of the "perfect human" provides a paradigm for understanding the connection between Allah and His creation, as well as the potential for humans to become their true selves. This means that there is a deep understanding of the relationship between Allah and humans, as well as the responsibility of humans to live according to spiritual values and noble ethics. Therefore, efforts need to be made to become whole individuals, living in awareness of the Divine existence in the universe and acting as wise stewards of Allah's creation.[30] This is reflected in the understanding of the awareness of Allah's existence, being able to feel the Divine presence in the universe, developing inner qualities and morality, seeking the meaning of truth, serving others, cultivating self-awareness, growing as spiritual beings, caring for harmony with Allah, being aware of the interconnectedness with all creatures, and striving to achieve the full potential of humans (spiritual, intellectual, and emotional).

Sixth, the concept of the "perfect human" has implications in education, as it emphasizes the importance of developing human potential and rational belief, and prioritizes responsible management of the universe. This means that there is a goal to create educated, ethical, and responsible individuals who are capable of developing their full

[29] Masataka Takeshita, "The Theory of the Perfect Man in Ibn 'Arabi's Fusus Al-Hikam," *J-STAGE* 19 (1983): 91, https://doi.org/10.5356/orient1960.19.87.

[30] Masataka Takeshita, *Ibn 'Arabi's Theory of the Perfect Man and Its Place in the History of Islamic Thought*, 208.

potential.[31] From here, faith can grow strongly and rationally contribute to wise management of the universe. The implications of this concept include holistic education (physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual), development of individual potential (talents or abilities), moral and ethical education, rational belief education (creed), education on environmental preservation and sustainability, teaching of science and philosophy (training sound reasoning), character education, active involvement in managing the universe, education on global problem-solving, and collaborative education that includes intercultural dialogue.[32]

According to Ibn Arabi, the Perfect Human is a manifestation of the unity of existence, which is the fundamental reality that underlies all existence.[33] This unity is not a mere philosophical concept, but a lived experience that allows the individual to transcend the limitations of the material world. The Perfect Human is a microcosm of the universe, reflecting the divine order and balance in their individual being.[34] Ibn Arabi's concept of the Perfect Human is deeply rooted in his philosophy of rational faith (*al-iman al-'aqli*). Rational faith is the intellect's ability to understand the unity of existence, which is the fundamental reality that underlies all existence.[35] The Perfect Human is a being who has achieved rational faith, and has become a manifestation of the divine attributes and qualities.

The Perfect Human, according to Ibn Arabi, embodies the divine attributes and qualities, such as mercy, wisdom, and justice.[36] These attributes are not mere imitations of God, but rather a natural expression

[31] Masataka Takeshita, *Ibn 'Arabi's Theory of the Perfect Man and Its Place in the History of Islamic*, 208.
[32] Masataka Takeshita, The Theory of the Perfect Man in Ibn 'Arabi's Fusus Al-Hikam, 209.
[33] S., Hirtenstein, The Unlimited Mercifier: The Spiritual Life and Thought of Ibn Arabi (Anqa Publishing, 2014), 156.
[34] W.C., Chittick, Ibn Arabi: Heir to the Prophets (Oneworld Publications, 2012), 187.
[35] J. W., Morris, The Reflective Heart: Discovering Spiritual Intelligence in Ibn Arabi's Meccan Illuminations, 197.
[36] C. Addas, Quest for the Red Sulphur: The Life of Ibn Arabi, 231.

of the divine nature, which is already present within the human soul. The Perfect Human acts as a reflection of the divine, and their actions and behavior are guided by the principles of justice, compassion, and wisdom. Reason and intellect play a crucial role in Ibn Arabi's philosophy, particularly in the realization of the Perfect Human. The intellect is seen as a faculty that allows human beings to understand the unity of existence and to manifest the divine attributes in their individual being.[37] Reason and intellect are not mere abstract concepts, but are rather the means by which human beings can realize their full potential and become the Perfect Human.

Ibn Arabi's concept of the Perfect Human has had a profound impact on Sufi thought and Islamic philosophy. His ideas have shaped the development of Sufism, influencing prominent Sufi masters such as Rumi and Attar of Nishapur.[38] Ibn Arabi's philosophy has also influenced Islamic philosophers such as Mulla Sadra and Mir Damad, who have built upon his ideas and expanded them further.[39]

In simple terms, Ibn Arabi's thoughts on the "perfect human" who believes rationally make important contributions to human understanding of self-potential, responsibilities as stewards, and the relationship between humans, Allah, and the universe. Furthermore, this thinking also has significant implications in the context of education, as it emphasizes the importance of developing human potential and rational faith, as well as promoting responsibility in wise management of the universe.

Moreover, the highest value that Ibn Arabi wants to emphasize regarding the "perfect human" is that as humans, we should not be too attached to exclusivity towards a particular belief system. According to

[37] Toshihiko, Izutsu, Sufism and Taoism: A Comparative Study of Key Philosophical Concepts, 247.
[38] A., Schimmel, Mystical Dimensions of Islam (USA: Yale University Press, 2013), 204.
[39] S. H., Nasr, The Essential Seyyed Hossein Nasr: A Collection of Essays (World Wisdom, 2015), 278.

him, this exclusivism will only hinder individuals from discovering and recognizing the true truth of a matter, leading to blaming others. However, Allah, who is the Ultimate Existence and Power, is not limited by the narrow confines of a specific worship belief. He (Allah) is present in every form of human belief.[40] Thus, the essence of Ibn Arabi's "perfect human" emphasizes that there is no religion more noble than the religion of love and longing for Allah. Love is the main essence of all beliefs, regardless of the external form they take.

CONCLUSION

Ibn Arabi is indeed considered a multidimensional Sufi figure, as can be seen from the wealth of his Sufi-philosophical thoughts. He is even regarded as the highest figure in human spiritual attainment. However, Ibn Arabi has often been the target of criticism from some Sunni scholars. This criticism has led to the rejection of his status as a Muslim. He is seen as deviating from Islamic teachings, and there is even a discourse of declaring anyone skeptical of Ibn Arabi's disbelief. The prominent figures in this regard are Ibn Taymiyyah and al-Baqa'i. Regardless of this, Ibn Arabi is still seen as a creative and intelligent mystic and philosopher in interpreting the meaning of faith.

In all the pros and cons of his thoughts, Ibn Arabi remains aware of his status as a devout Muslim who has a straight belief in Allah by emulating Prophet Muhammad as His messenger. Furthermore, Ibn Arabi's thinking truly provides a basic example for philosophers and theologians in understanding faith in Allah rationally. Therefore, he helps to realize that a person's rationality is not in conflict with the mystery of faith, but rather exists to reveal the existence of Allah realistically.

[40] Suteja Ibnu Pakar, *Tokoh-tokoh Tasawuf dan Ajarannya* (Yogyakarta: Deepublish, 2013), 101.

Moreover, in his fundamental thinking about the unity of existence or *Wahdat al-Wujud*, he is able to provide a rational explanation regarding the existence of Allah and humans and the relationship between them. Therefore, humans are made aware that to become perfect, it is enough to always be with Him, by feeling that they do not have any specific desires or attributes. In other words, it is enough to accept oneself without seeking a purpose.

Ibn Arabi's contribution to the concept of the "perfect human" who has rational faith is realized in several implications. This concept leads to the advancement of human potential, rational faith, responsible management of the universe, and provides a paradigm for humans to understand the relationship between Allah and His creation. However, he wants to emphasize that the world is the locus of Allah's manifestation. *Al-Insan al-Kamil* (the "Perfect Human") is the perfect vessel for the manifestation of the Divine self.[41] This is because humans are capable of absorbing all of Allah's names and attributes. This ability is bestowed by Allah, who has created humans according to His divine plan, where they exist in potential form. Thus, the "Perfect Human" transforms the image of Allah in potentiality into the image of Allah in actuality.

[41] Suteja Ibnu Pakar, *Tokoh-tokoh Tasawuf dan Ajarannya*, 225.

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