

The Concept of the Perfect Human (*al-Insān al-Kāmil*) in Ibn Arabi's Thought

Syeda Dur e Nayab¹, Md. Mahdi Hassan²

¹University of Chakwal, Pakistan

²University of Rajshahi (RU), Bangladesh

Corresponding Email: dure.nayab@uoc.edu.pk



Aqlania: Jurnal Filsafat dan Teologi Islam is licensed under a [CC BY](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

Abstract: *The idea of al-Insān al-Kāmil (the Perfect Human) is central to the mystical thought and religious system of Ibn 'Arabi. As the realization and final point of creation, the Perfect Human is the mirror where all of God's attributes are completely expressed, equilibrated, and realized. Not purely metaphysical conception, it manifests an integrated perception of reality where the human individual is both microcosm of the universe and intercessor between the Divine and the universe. This article delves into the ontological, epistemological, and metaphysical levels of the Perfect Human in the thinking of Ibn 'Arabi and uses mainly his two foundational writings, Fusūs al-Ḥikam and al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya. It explains how the manifestation of God (tajalli), the Unity of Being (waḥdat al-wujūd), and the interdependence of prophethood and sainthood are all components of the concept of the Perfect Human. The book also mentions contemporary concepts of this belief, thinking about it in terms of its potential application to spirituality debates in the modern world, selfhood, ethics, and cosmology. By investigating both classical expositions and modern scholarly debates, this article aims to highlight the enduring significance of Ibn 'Arabi's vision of human potential, divine proximity, and universal harmony. Ultimately, the Perfect Human is presented not just as an esoteric ideal but as a dynamic model for spiritual realization, ethical living, and transformative engagement with the world.*

Keywords: *Ibn 'Arabi; al-Insān al-Kāmil; Sufism; Divine Manifestation; Waḥdat al-Wujūd;*

Abstrak: *Ide al-Insān al-Kāmil (Manusia Sempurna) adalah pusat pemikiran mistis dan sistem religius Ibn 'Arabi. Sebagai realisasi dan titik akhir penciptaan, Manusia Sempurna adalah cermin di mana semua atribut Tuhan diekspresikan secara lengkap, seimbang, dan direalisasikan. Tidak hanya merupakan konsep metafisika semata, ia memanifestasikan persepsi terpadu tentang realitas di mana individu manusia adalah mikro kosmos alam semesta dan perantara antara Ilahi dan alam semesta. Artikel ini*

menggali tingkat ontologis, epistemologis, dan metafisik dari Manusia Sempurna dalam pemikiran Ibn 'Arabi dan terutama menggunakan dua tulisan dasarnya, *Fusūs al-Ḥikam* dan *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*. Ini menjelaskan bagaimana manifestasi Tuhan (*tajallī*), Kesatuan Keberadaan (*waḥdat al-wujūd*), dan saling ketergantungan antara kenabian dan kewalian adalah semua komponen dari konsep Manusia Sempurna. Buku ini juga menyebutkan konsep-konsep kontemporer dari kepercayaan ini, memikirkannya dalam istilah penerapannya terhadap debat-debat spiritualitas di dunia modern, kepribadian, etika, dan kosmologi. Dengan menyelidiki baik eksposisi klasik maupun debat akademis modern, artikel ini bertujuan untuk menyoroti signifikansi yang abadi dari visi Ibn 'Arabi tentang potensi manusia, kedekatan ilahi, dan harmoni universal. Pada akhirnya, Manusia Sempurna disajikan bukan hanya sebagai ideal esoteris tetapi sebagai model dinamis untuk realisasi spiritual, kehidupan etis, dan keterlibatan transformatif dengan dunia.

Kata kunci: *Ibn 'Arabi; al-Insān al-Kāmil; Manusia Sempurna; Mistisisme Islam; Tasawuf; Waḥdat al-Wujūd; Manifestasi Ilahi; Gnosis; Kenabian; Kesucian*

Introduction

The figure of Ibn 'Arabi (1165-1240 CE) pervades the Islamic mysticism (*taṣawwuf*), philosophy, and esotericism traditions. Al-Shaykh al-Akbar ("the Greatest Master") by many, Ibn 'Arabi left behind a rich and deep corpus of work that continues to influence the metaphysical, theological, and spiritual debates in Islam and the world at large.¹ His influence spans centuries, extending to generations of Sufis, philosophers, theologians, poets, and even contemporary thinkers in comparative religion and metaphysics. Among his many contributions is *al-Insān al-Kāmil* — the Perfect or Complete Human — a pivotal and seminal pillar that integrates complex ideas on existence (*wujūd*), divine knowledge (*ma'rifa*), and the intimate connection between the Creator and creation.²

Ibn 'Arabi's articulation of the Perfect Human is neither merely philosophical speculation nor mystical allegory. Rather, it emerges from a deeply integrated worldview where metaphysics, theology, cosmology, anthropology, and spirituality converge into a unified vision.³ The Perfect Man is not only the most righteous and good of all human existence; but he is the cosmic intercessor — the center of divine self-revelation (*tajallī*) and the mirror through which God's names and attributes (*asmā' wa ṣifāt*) are revealed

¹ W. C Chittick, "The Heart of Islamic Philosophy: The Quest for the Perfect Human," *Islamic Studies Series* (2008): 45–70.

² S. H Nasr, "The Heart of Islam: Enduring Values for Humanity," *HarperOne*. (2002): 44.

³ S. H Nasr, "Islamic Philosophy from Its Origin to the Present: Philosophy in the Land of Prophecy," *State University of New York Press* (2006).

and known in a perfect way. The Perfect Man actualizes latent potentialities of being and is the axis (qutb) on whose rotation the entire cosmic order turns.

Understanding *al-Insān al-Kāmil* is crucial for several reasons. It provides deep insight into Ibn ‘Arabi’s overarching doctrine of *waḥdat al-wujūd* (Unity of Being), illustrating his complex theological anthropology, in which the human being is seen as both a creature and a manifestation of divine reality.⁴ It illuminates his vision of divine mercy, love, and self-disclosure, where creation is understood as the realization of God's desire to be known. Moreover, it holds up a view of human possibility that is revolutionary, in which every human being would carry in him or her the possibility of evolving into a perfect image of the Divine — not merely in outer action alone but in profound inner realization and integration of all the divine qualities in the soul.⁵

Moreover, Ibn ‘Arabi’s conception challenges modern readers to rethink deeply ingrained notions of human nature, identity, divinity, and the purpose of existence. In an era characterized by materialism, fragmentation, and existential alienation, his teachings invite a reorientation toward the sacred, the infinite, and the truly human.⁶ The Perfect Human is not a chimerical abstraction but a real being that represents the highest destiny of human beings: to know oneself, to know God, and to be a bridge between the hidden and the revealed, between the Absolute and the contingent.

The present paper aims to examine in a systematic and comprehensive way the conceptual background, attributes, and meaning of the Perfect Human in the philosophy of Ibn ‘Arabi. To this end, it relies in the main on two of his masterpieces: the *Fusūs al-Ḥikam* (The Blessed Beels of Wisdom), which presents brief and symbolic explications of the wisdom of the prophets, and the *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya* (The Meccan Openings), an encyclopedic giant covering much of spirituality and metaphysics. In addition, the paper engages critically with key contemporary scholars, such as William Chittick, Michel Chodkiewicz, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, and others, who have interpreted, contextualized, and extended Ibn ‘Arabi’s ideas into modern philosophical and spiritual discourse.

⁴ M Ibn ‘Arabi, “Fusūs Al-Ḥikam (R. W. J. Austin, Trans.),” *John Benjamins Publishing Company*. (1980).

⁵ W. C Chittick, “The Heart of Islamic Philosophy: The Quest for the Perfect Human,” *Islamic Studies Series* (2008).

⁶ M. A Sells, “Early Islamic Mysticism: Sufi, Qur’an, Mi’raj, Poetic and Theological Writings,” *Paulist Press* (1996): 46–71.

The research merge classical texts and contemporary perspectives to reveal how Ibn 'Arabi's Perfect Human vision maintains its timeless significance as both a theological-mystical concept and a shifting paradigm for spiritual achievement and moral conduct and universal balance in our changing society.

Method

This research utilizes qualitative, textual, and hermeneutical methods to investigate the idea of *al-Insān al-Kāmil* (the Perfect Human) in the metaphysics of Ibn 'Arabi. It aims at intensive textual analysis of primary texts, specifically *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* and *Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*, through a hermeneutic framework to investigate the symbolic language, theological organization, and esoteric vocabulary of Ibn 'Arabi. Arabic excerpts from the source works are quoted where necessary, cross-checked against standard English translations by scholars such as William Chittick and R. W. J. Austin to ensure interpretive fidelity. The study also utilizes contemporary and classical secondary sources in fields such as Sufi metaphysics, Islamic philosophy, and theological anthropology, making use of the work of Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Michel Chodkiewicz, Toshihiko Izutsu, and others.⁷ A comparative-analytical method is used to identify thematic connections between Ibn 'Arabi's writings and modern spiritual or philosophical debates on human nature, divine proximity, and ethics.

Result and Discussions

Ibn Arabi's Ontology and Cosmology

Unity of Being (*Waḥdat al-Wujūd*)

Waḥdat al-wujūd represents the central metaphysical principle found within the teachings of Ibn 'Arabi. *Waḥdat al-wujūd* stands as the foundational principle that underpins Ibn 'Arabi's theological and mystical system which defines both God's relationship with creation and the human role in the cosmos.⁸ The doctrine describes God (*al-Ḥaqq*) the Necessary Being (*wujūd al-wājib*) as the single ultimate reality because his existence remains absolute and unalterable and self-sustaining.

Creation, in this view, is not a separate, independently existing reality apart from God. It is, rather, a theophanic manifestation — an unfolding and manifestation (*tajallī*) of Divine Being in a vast array of forms, without disrupting the fundamental unity of

⁷ M Ibn 'Arabi, "Al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya (W. C. Chittick, Trans.)," *SUNY Press*. (1989): p103.

⁸ W. C Chittick, *Ibn 'Arabi: Heir to the Prophets.*, 1st ed. (Oneworld Publications., 2005):p56.

existence. Everything that exists in the universe is a mode, attribute, or self-disclosure (*ẓuhūr*) of God's Names and Attributes (*asmā' wa-ṣifāt*) to various levels of clarity, intensity, and perfection.⁹ Thus, while beings possess relative existence (*wujūd idāfī*), their existence is secondary and dependent upon the absolute existence of God.

In Ibn 'Arabi's famous formulation, the world is akin to a mirror reflecting the infinite possibilities within the Divine Essence (*dhāt*). Each created entity reflects specific Divine Names: a mountain may reflect the name *al-Qawiyy* (the Strong), a flower may reflect *al-Jamīl* (the Beautiful), while a storm may reflect *al-Jabbār* (the Compeller).¹⁰ However, no single created being can manifest in the fullness of Divine Reality in its entirety — with one critical exception.

The Perfect Human (*al-Insān al-Kāmil*) occupies a unique and singular place within this metaphysical framework. Unlike other beings who only reflect partial aspects of the Divine, Perfect Human naturally possesses the potential to unify, harmonize, and express all the Divine Names as a whole and at the same time. Thus, the Perfect Human is the most perfect reflection of God, both Names of Majesty (*jalāl*) and the Names of Beauty (*jamāl*) without inner contradiction.

This all-encompassing openness (*kulliyya*) and balanced expression make the Perfect Human the very vicegerent (*khalīfa*) of God on Earth, tasked with the holy mission of knowing God in entirety and making creation itself know its Source through human realization. To this end, the cosmos is not complete until it finds its fulfillment and apex in the Perfect Human, who alone can knowingly reflect the Divine in its entirety.

Moreover, Ibn 'Arabi's emphasis on the Unity of Being challenges the dualistic worldview that posits a rigid separation between Creator and creation. Rather, he posits in favor of a vision wherein multiplicity (*kathra*) is understood as the pluralistic forms of One Reality (*al-Wāḥid al-Aḥad*), bringing itself into being out of a required passion for self-revelation: "I was a Hidden Treasure and loved to be known, so I created creation in order to be known" — a ḥadīth qudsī used to express this ontological impulse.¹¹

⁹ D Barrett, "The Essence of the Perfect Human: Ibn Arabi and the Quest for Divine Knowledge," *Brill Publishers* (2016): p. 34.

¹⁰ G Buehler, "Ibn Arabi's Vision of Spiritual Perfection: A Study of al-Insan al-Kamil," *Journal of Islamic Philosophy* (2015): p. 29.

¹¹ Ibn 'Arabi, "Al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya (W. C. Chittick, Trans.). p 88.

Thus, *wahdat al-wujūd* is more than a metaphysical hypothesis but is the foundation upon which the Perfect Human can be regarded as the microcosm (*‘ālam ṣaghīr*) and the fulcrum upon which the macrocosm (*‘ālam kabīr*) attains meaning, harmony, and divine presence. The dialectic between Unity and Multiplicity, between the Absolute and the Contingent, is actualized and mediated in the existence of the Perfect Human.

The Process of Divine Self-Disclosure

In his magnum opus, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya* (The Meccan Openings), Ibn ‘Arabi writes at great length on the stages of divine self-disclosure (*tajallī*) and offers a framework within which the process of creation occurs. Central to this understanding is the concept of the Hidden Treasure (*kanz makhfī*), the initial, formless state of God's being before any manifestation. God's nature, in the opinion of Ibn ‘Arabi, is forever hidden, and this hiding is not a hiding of negation but an ontologically voluntary absence in view of the will to be known. The will to be known is a desire that is divine in nature and antecedent to creation itself, compelling God to manifest His nature in forms that are progressively more differentiated and disparate.

(from *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*, Vol. II):

"فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ أَحَبُّ أَنْ يُعْرَفَ، فَخَلَقَ الْخَلْقَ وَجَعَلَهُ مَجَالِي لِنَجْلِي أَسْمَائِهِ وَصِفَاتِهِ"

“For God loved to be known, so He created creation and made it the locus of manifestation for His Names and Attributes.”

This revelation of God to himself is not by need or constraint but a free and natural expression of Divine Love.¹² The desire to become present and known arises from the unlimited love and mercy of the Divine. According to Ibn ‘Arabi, God's act of creation is an activity of Divine love (*al-ḥubb al-ilāhī*), and creation is the beloved responding to the Beloved's desire to be realized and known. Through this lens, creation is a work of God's grace, rather than one of existential compulsion or predestination.

The evolution of creation takes place in steps, each a more profound and more specific expression of the Divine reality. It is best to view these steps as stages of manifestation within the overall scheme of the Divine Plan, representing the growing gradation of being and knowledge. The first is the fixed archetypes (*a’yān thābita*), the unvarying forms or original realities existent in the Divine knowledge prior to creation.¹³

¹² Barrett, “The Essence of the Perfect Human: Ibn Arabi and the Quest for Divine Knowledge.p120”

¹³ H. Corbin, “The Man of Light in Iranian Sufism,” *Princeton University Press* (1978): p30.

They are the original template of all possible existents, the possibilities of creation in its most abstracted and undifferentiated form.

Of these archetypes, the second stage of self-disclosure is in the realm of spirits (*'ālam al-arwāḥ*), which can be described as the realm of the souls and the spiritual essences. This stage is a more dynamic manifestation of the Divine wherein souls have the possibility of realizing their essence, yet they remain formless and abstract in relation to the physical world. On this level, the Divine Names (*asmā'*) begin to take on individual characteristics, and the possibility of individual existence is delineated.

The third stage is the imaginal world (*'ālam al-mithāl*), one of the most striking innovations by Ibn 'Arabi in Islamic metaphysics. Imaginal should not be confused with plain imaginary or subjective, but an intermediate, symbolic realm between abstractions of spiritual realms and material. It is where there emerge forms which are neither purely material nor purely spiritual, but which can serve as bridges for the soul's ascension to divinity. These forms possess a unique characteristic: they are creative and malleable, i.e., the world of imagination where archetypal images encounter human consciousness.

Finally, creation is most fully and tangibly expressed in the physical world (*'ālam al-shahāda*), the realm of materiality and senses. It is here that the Divine Names are reflected in their most particularized and manifested form — all that exists from mountains and trees to human beings, and the natural order has some level of Divine reflection. But it is human beings that the ultimate synthesis occurs. Man unites all these worlds within him: the archetypes (*a'yān thābita*), the spirits (*arwāḥ*), the imaginal forms (*mithāl*), and the physical realities (*shahāda*). This last union is the mark of the Perfect Man (*al-Insān al-Kāmil*), now the complete mirror reflecting God's Names and Attributes.

In this model, the human being is not so much a passive work of creation but the very center of cosmic play.¹⁴ The Perfect Human is the one who integrates all these stages of divine self-revelation into themselves, embodying and actualizing the whole range of divine attributes. The human being, by spiritual awareness and ascendancy, is the destination of divine self-expression in the physical world, a reflection of God's being in a way unreproducible by any other person.

¹⁴ M Lings, "What Is Sufism?" The Islamic Text Society (2005): p48.

The process of divine self-disclosure outlined by Ibn 'Arabi calls for a radical reinterpretation of the nature of creation. Creation is not considered a disconnected series of events or the coincidental product of a remote, transcendent deity. Instead, it is interpreted as an expression of the divine will, a process of revelation that continues, where each stage of creation draws us closer to the ultimate reality: full familiarization with God's existence and the achievement of the Perfect Human as the mirror and the mediator of familiarization.

Humanity as the Cosmic Mediator

In Ibn 'Arabi's mystical and metaphysical framework, humanity is described as a microcosm (*'ālam ṣaghīr*), a miniature version of the cosmos (*'ālam kabīr*). This concept reveals that the human being is not a mere biological entity but a reflection of the entire universe.¹⁵ The human form, encompassing body, soul, and spirit, serves as the vessel through which God's divine reality is fully revealed. In doing this, the human being serves as the cosmic mediator between the Divine and the world. The entire creation, from our world to the spiritual, in the view of Ibn 'Arabi, reaches its peak and highest realization in the human being. Humanity's heart now becomes the center where God is more revealed, mirroring the qualities of God.

God created the world for the good of humankind, Ibn 'Arabi believes. This teleological stance accentuates the special status of human beings in creation. While other animals might manifest some divine attributes, only humans can manifest all the potentiality of creation at once. This makes the Perfect Human not just the crown of creation, but also its telos. In the vision of Ibn 'Arabi, the human being exists to recognize God and to manifest divine attributes, beauty, mercy, wisdom, and power in the world.

The *waḥdat al-wujūd* philosophy of the Unity of Being takes this further. God is not separate from creation but seeps through and fills all of existence in this philosophy. As microcosm, humankind has a unique privilege to contemplate this oneness as well as to manifest it by becoming aware of self and awareness of God (*ma'rifa*). Human beings, recognizing the divine in them, become living icons of the Divine.

The Ideal Human incorporates all aspects of existence, material and spiritual, and through spiritual purification, is the highest expression of divine attributes. The body, as

¹⁵ A. H Fahrudi, "Al-Insan Al-Kamil Dalam Tasawuf Ibn 'Arabi.," *MIYAH: Jurnal Studi Islam* (2020): p41.

the living embodiment of the universe, reflects these attributes. The heart, as the spiritual center, is the place where intimate familiarity with God is attained.¹⁶ Through this process, the Perfect Human not only embodies divine mercy and love but also serves as a conduit through which these qualities flow into the world. This makes the human being the central figure in Ibn 'Arabi's metaphysical and spiritual system, fulfilling the role of cosmic mediator and providing a model for others to follow in their spiritual ascent. In conclusion, humanity's role as the cosmic mediator is essential to understanding Ibn 'Arabi's vision of existence. Human beings are not passive creations but active participant in divine self-disclosure. The Perfect Human is the answer to comprehend the unity of existence and the ultimate cause of creation: to create and symbolize the Divine in everything in the world.¹⁷

Defining the Perfect Human (*al-Insān al-Kāmil*)

Essential Characteristics

In Ibn 'Arabi's metaphysical and spiritual system, the Perfect Human (*al-Insān al-Kāmil*) is not simply an idealized figure or a theological concept but an ontological reality, a being who fully realizes the divine potential inherent in human nature. The Perfect Human is the one who embodies the totality of the Divine Names (*asmā' Allāh*) and represents the ultimate expression of God's self-manifestation. He is not a passive image of the Divine, but an active locus (*maḥṣar*) in which the Divine Essence is fully actualized and manifested in creation.¹⁰

In *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, 'Isā

"فَالْإِنْسَانُ مِرْآةُ الْحَقِّ، وَهُوَ الْكَوْنُ الْجَامِعُ"

"The human being is the mirror of the Real (al-Ḥaqq), and he is the comprehensive cosmos."

Embodiment of Divine Names in Perfect Equilibrium

At the heart of Ibn 'Arabi's conception of the Perfect Human is the idea of balance and harmony in the manifestation of the Divine Names. The human being, in its perfected state, is capable of embodying all of God's Names in perfect equilibrium, reflecting the

¹⁶ S. H Nasr, "Islamic Philosophy from Its Origin to the Present: Philosophy in the Land of Prophecy.," *State University of New York Press* (2006): p 101.

¹⁷ S Akhtar, "Sufism and the Islamic Tradition: The View of ibn Arabi," *Oxford University Press* (2001): p. 45.

unity and completeness of God's self-disclosure. All the Names of God point to a particular quality of the Divine Reality, ranging from virtues such as mercy, justice, beauty, power, and wisdom.¹⁸ The Ideal Human person, in spiritual awakening, can condense all these into harmony and realize them pure and balanced.

The embodiment of the Divine Names is not a static reflection but an active expression of God's essence in human thought, action, and states of being. The Perfect Human is the untainted mirror of the Divine Essence, reflecting all the divine attributes in purity and clarity. The inner faculties of the human being, namely, the intellect, heart, and spirit, are attuned to the divine qualities so that they may manifest these qualities in their entirety.

The Locus of Divine Self-Manifestation

In the philosophy of Ibn 'Arabi, the Perfect Human is referred to as the site of Divine Self-Manifestation (*maẓhar al-ḥaqq*). That is, human being is the final vehicle where God's divine nature is made to appear in the world. All that exists in the universe, as understood by Ibn 'Arabi, has God's divine attributes, but it is in human being alone that all the Divine Names reach their complete realization. The Perfect Human is the mediator God and creation, the vehicle through which God reveals Himself and enables creation to gaze upon the entire glory of the Divine.¹⁹

This idea of the locus of self-manifestation underscores the centrality of the human being in Ibn 'Arabi's metaphysical system. While the universe reflects God's attributes, it is the Perfect Human who serves as the primary vessel through which God's essence is revealed in its entirety. It is through human beings that the Divine becomes known, understood, and experienced in the most intimate and direct way.

The Station of Perfection (*Maqām al-Kamāl*)

The Perfect Human's achievement is not only a theoretical concept but also entails a profound transformation of the whole self. Ibn 'Arabi refers to this transformation as the station of perfection (*maqām al-kamāl*). The station of perfection is the fate of the human soul — a state in which the individual achieves religious maturity and fully realizes their divine nature.

¹⁸ Chittick, *Ibn 'Arabī: Heir to the Prophets* (2005), p 80.

¹⁹ Lings, "What Is Sufism?" (1975). P. 66.

This station is not attained by intellectual cognition or practice from outside alone; it is a spiritual and existential transformation involving the purification of the soul, the alignment of the human being's faculties with the Divine Names, and the acknowledgment of one's innate connection to God. Ibn 'Arabi's path to this station involves a series of spiritual states (*aḥwāl*) and stations (*maqāmāt*), through which the seeker moves toward spiritual maturity and divine closeness. The Perfect Human, having passed through these stages, becomes the embodiment of divine perfection and spiritual completion.

The achievement of the station of perfection is also connected in an intimate relationship with the experience of spiritual unveiling (*kashf*), through which means the individual person comes to see the Divine Reality face-to-face. As the human person advances through the various stages of spiritual realization, the world is then seen as a manifestation of Divine Names and Attributes. This insight allows one to see the world just as it truly is — not as a sum of disparate, isolated phenomena but as one seamless expression of the Divine.

Not Merely Intellectual but Transformational

The transformation of reaching the station of perfection is not intellectual or philosophical so much as a deep metaphysical and existential change. The Perfect Human is one who has been utterly changed from being, transcending the limits of the ego and materiality and becoming a full expression of the Divine. This transformation is directly related to the process of self-purification (*tazkiya*) and spiritual awareness (*ma'rifa*), which enable the quest for transcending the limits of the self and conformity with the will of God.

Here, the Perfect Human is the realization of human potential — a being who has transcended the limits of his or her small self and becomes the ultimate embodiment of the Divine Essence. The Perfect Human is neither a saint nor a prophet, but the ultimate expression of what it is to be a fully human being, embodying all that is highest, purest, and divinely inspired in creation.

The Role of Knowledge

In the mystic-metaphysical scheme of Ibn 'Arabi, knowledge (*'ilm*) plays a key and redemptive role in the accomplishment of the Perfect Human (*al-Insān al-Kāmil*). But it is not intellectual comprehension or book scholarship that is decisive but divine gnosis (*ma'rifa*) — immediate, experiential knowledge of God. This gnosis is not acquired through means of rational functions or outside sources; it is, rather, an inwardly intuitive and existentially aware comprehension brought about by virtue of spiritual wisdom and purging of the heart and soul.

For Ibn 'Arabi, the journey of knowledge is inseparable from the journey toward self-realization. The Perfect Human, in their fully realized state, possesses the highest form of knowledge — not only an intellectual understanding of the Divine but a direct and intimate experience of God's presence within themselves. The famous hadith, "He who knows himself knows his Lord," captures the essence of Ibn 'Arabi's thought on this matter. To Perfect Human, God knowledge is not an abstraction or outside entity but something which arises from within. To know oneself, in this case, means to know one's own nature — i.e., the divine nature that is within.¹¹

It is both epistemological and ontological at the same time. It is ontological because it is a declaration of the very essence of a human being — that being who, at his very center, is an image of Divinity. It is epistemological because it is the vehicle through which human person acquires direct acquaintance with God and not indirectly through external signs or rationally inferred conclusions but through internal acquaintance with the Divine. Knowledge of God is to become a mirror of His reality, beholding and looking at the Divine everywhere.

The Perfect Human's understanding is described characteristically as a type of divine self-understanding. From this angle, God's self-revelation is brought about by human being as the ultimate mirror wherein the Divine reflects upon itself. This on the basis that the human person, in his or her fully realized self, embodies all the Divine Attributes and Names, and hence by the means of the human being, God may come to know and perceive His own Self.

The Perfect Human becomes, in a sense, the mirror in which God sees Himself, and this is the ultimate form of divine self-recognition. In Ibn 'Arabi's metaphysical framework, creation is a process of self-disclosure (*tajalli*), where God, through His Names and Attributes, reveals Himself progressively throughout the cosmos. But only

through the Perfect Human does the Divine become fully self-knowing — for it is human beings who reveal the Divine as whole and unbroken.

This idea of divine self-recognition through the Perfect Human is rooted in Ibn ‘Arabi’s understanding of *wahdat al-wujūd* (the Unity of Being). For Ibn ‘Arabi, all existence is a single unified reality, and everything that exists, including the human being, is a manifestation of the Divine Essence. The Perfect Human, through being the summation of all the Names of God, is the terminating point where the self-knowledge of God becomes fulfilled and known. It is not a theoretic knowledge but an ontologic reality where Being of the Perfect Human is that very vehicle whereby God knows Himself.

The type of knowledge that leads to the realization of Perfect Human is experiential and transformational. In Ibn ‘Arabi’s framework, knowledge is something that can be obtained through traditional academic study or intellectual effort alone. Rather, it is a spiritual realization that comes through inner purification and self-awareness. The human ego must undergo the process of self-purification (*tazkiya*) to cleanse the soul of the ego and selfish desires so that they may behold the Divine Presence in themselves and the world.

This transformative knowledge is not fixed but dynamic, leading the human being on a continuous journey of spiritual ascension (*mi‘rāj*), wherein he or she transcends their limited sense of self and becomes one with the Divine Will. They increasingly gain a more complete and direct gnosis of God through the stages of spiritual development, culminating in their final understanding that they are not distinct from the Divine but are a vital part of the unified being of the cosmos.

In this spiritual journey of knowledge, the spiritual guide (*murshid*) has a very vital function to play. Ibn ‘Arabi often emphasizes the necessity of a guide who already belongs to the grade of the Perfect Human or at least is progressing toward spiritual perfection.²⁰ The spiritual guide guides the seeker through the complexities of the spiritual path and helps him progress through the stages of purification of the self, unveiling (*kashf*), and gnosis. The intention of the guide is not to provide intellectual information but to guide the seeker's heart to the Divine so that they may find the divinity in themselves.

²⁰ Barrett, “The Essence of the Perfect Human: Ibn Arabi and the Quest for Divine Knowledge. 2016. p 23”

Here, learning in the mind of Ibn 'Arabi is not as much about amassing facts or dogmas and more about establishing a personal encounter with God and feeling the presence of the Divine within oneself. The Perfect Human, through a result of their gnosis, becomes a living testimony to the Divine Knowledge, and their very existence is a manifestation of God's eternal verity.

Servanthood and Lordship

Ibn 'Arabi established a paradoxical definition of the Perfect Human because this spiritual being simultaneously practices servanthood (‘ubūdiyya) and lordly (rubūbiyya) characteristics. The spiritual recognition of being the Perfect Human relies on this fundamental paradox which expresses both divine humility and transcendent status.

In Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam, Muḥammadan

"فَعَلِمَ أَنَّهُ عَبْدٌ رَبٍّ، وَرَبٌّ عَبْدٌ"

“Thus, he knew that he is a servant-lord and a lord-servant.”²¹

On the one hand, the Perfect Human is God's ideal servant, conscious of their utter dependence on the Divine. This awareness of poverty (*faqr*) — that human being is nothing without God — is the foundation of the Perfect Human's spiritual identity. The more they become conscious of their own utter dependence on God, the more perfectly they can manifest the Divine Names in all their richness and diversity. It is in this servitude, this constant awareness of one's own nothingness before God, that the Perfect Human is the focal point of God's Self-manifestation.

However, this state of total servanthood leads to an equally profound lordship. In Ibn 'Arabi's cosmology, the Perfect Human is not a passive being, but one who actively reflects the full spectrum of God's Divine Names and Attributes, making them the cosmic vicegerent (*khalīfa*) on earth. This submission is not, nonetheless, the product of the human's agency or volition but that of their absolute surrender to God's will. In this contradictory sense, Perfect Human does not claim autonomy or assert their self-sufficiency. Rather, they are pure channels of God's action, being both Divine submission and Divine sovereignty perfectly harmonized.²²

²¹ Quran, “Qur'an; Tafsir Works” 2.30 (n.d.).

²² J Sayyid, “Bn Arabi's Influence on Contemporary Thought,” *Journal of Islamic Philosophy and Theology* (2014): 55.

This dual nature of the Perfect Human finds its source in the Qur'anic verse: "I am going to place upon the earth a vicegerent" (Qur'an 2:30). The verse implies that human beings, although apparently weak and servile, are entrusted with the viceregency of God on earth. The Perfect Human plays this role in the most full-blooded way, not through power or freedom but through representing the divine presence and creative work of God within the world. Under this definition, the Perfect Human is *abd* (servant) as well as *khalīfa* (vicegerent), idealising the Divine both on the cosmological and the ontological level.

In this sense, the Perfect Human is the ultimate paradigm of how human beings are to live in total conformity with the Divine — both admitting their total reliance upon God and yet being charged with the most vital mission of realizing and carrying God's Names on earth. This paradox of lordship and servanthood highlights the one reality of being that Ibn 'Arabi speaks of: The human and the Divine are not separate, but one in the Perfect Human who is the realization of both fullness.

Characteristics of the Perfect Human

Comprehensive Manifestation of Divine Attributes

For Ibn 'Arabi, the Perfect Human (*al-Insān al-Kāmil*) is the ultimate manifestation of Divinity within the universe. Although all creations in the universe are reflections of certain Divine Names (*asmā' Allāh*) and each manifest certain attributes of God, all the range of Divine Names, in all its harmony, comes to be manifest in the Perfect Human alone.²³ The Perfect Human is where all these Names — justice, mercy, wisdom, strength, beauty, and so on — converge and are achieved in their fullest, most balanced form.

It is this harmonious outpouring of the Divine Names into the Perfect Human which distinguishes them from all other animals. For Ibn 'Arabi, every animal has some specific attribute of the Divine, often corresponding to its nature or function in the created order. For instance, the angelic world might reveal purity and light, the animal world might reveal power and energy, and the human world, possessing capabilities of spiritual realization, might reflect a multitude of Divine attributes, but no being or creature, apart from the Perfect Human, can reveal all the Divine Names in their many-sided wholeness.

The Perfect Human, as the cosmic mirror, is the ideal combination of all these Divine traits. In this being, justice and mercy, which would seem to be opposites, are

²³ Lings, "What Is Sufism?" (1975). P 54

harmonious but not in conflict with one another in perfect equilibrium. Strength and compassion coexist without contradiction, as do wisdom and beauty. There is a lovely combination of all that is Divine in the Perfect Human, with no trait dominating or canceling out another. This reflects the Divine perfection, in which the various attributes of God — each possessing its own unique nature — do not oppose but complement and supplement each other.

For example, justice in the Divinity world is an expression of balance and equity, while mercy is an expression of Divine mercy that includes all of creation. In Perfect Human, both are not in conflict but expressed simultaneously, in absolute balance. Wisdom and strength, two opposing forces in the majority of things, are also balanced in Perfect Human. The wise man knows how to apply strength appropriately, while the strong man knows how to apply strength prudently.

The Perfect Human's beauty is also a mirror of the Divine since it is the harmony and completeness of all the Divine attributes manifesting themselves in one human individual.²⁴ This beauty is not merely external or physical; it is a beauty that encompasses an inner beauty due to the soul's conformity to the Divine. The Perfect Human has the integral beauty that is the direct result of their deep spiritual realization and internal transformation.

Hence, the Perfect Man is the highest model of creation, a being that fully reflects the unity and perfection of the Divine, incorporating all the Divine names in a harmonious entirety. The paradox of the existence of the Perfect Man — wherein mercy and justice, strength and compassion, wisdom and beauty are not mutually exclusive but concurrent — reflects the oneness and integrity of the Divine itself, wherein all the Names exist in their perfected state. In this way, the Perfect Human not only represents the highest spiritual attainment but is also the very means through which the Divine can be fully realized and actualized in the world.

Acting as the Axis of the Cosmos

In the cosmology of Ibn 'Arabi, the Perfect Human (*al-Insān al-Kāmil*) is not only the ultimate fulfillment of spiritual potential but also the pivotal axis upon which the whole universe turns. This person is the pole (*qutb*) of existence, the cosmic center that

²⁴ Barrett, "The Essence of the Perfect Human: Ibn Arabi and the Quest for Divine Knowledge. (2016). P 18"

upholds the harmony and coherence of the universe. The *Qutb's* role as the *qutb* is ontological and metaphysical — the maintenance of continuity and coherence in the universe by being the mediating presence between the Divine and creation. Without this central presence, Ibn 'Arabi suggests, the cosmos would lack its ontological integrity, and the divine flow of grace (*fayḍ*) would cease to feed creation.²⁵

The *qutb* is not a theoretical construct but is, in a very real and deep sense, the center around which all creation derives its purpose and its meaning. For Ibn 'Arabi, divine grace streams eternally from God to the world, and this streaming is channeled through the Perfect Human. In this connection, the Perfect Human is the focal point of divine grace, ensuring that divine mercy's light and God's sustaining power are continually poured into the universe. The *fayḍ*, the divine outpouring, flows through the Perfect Human, like a pipe, sustaining and feeding the entire creation all the time.

This idea is deeply rooted in Ibn 'Arabi's conception of Unity of Being (*wahdat al-wujūd*), which posits that everything in the universe is a manifestation of God's Divine Essence. The Perfect Human, embodying the fullest realization of God's Names and Attributes, becomes the perfect mediator between the Infinite and the finite. Were it not for the Perfect Human, the world would have no connection with the Divine Source, and the divine energy that sustains creation would be severed. In other words, the Perfect Human is the world's ontological mooring, ensuring that the divine sustenance is never severed.

Besides, the *qutb* is not a passive mediator but an active force, which engages with the world in a way that its continued creation and re-creation are assured. Through the Perfect Human, divine grace and mercy flow into the world, restoring and maintaining all existence.²⁶ The world is thus constantly renewed by the divine presence, both transcendent and immanent, flowing through the Perfect Human as the ultimate mediator. Through this divine flow, the universe is capable of maintaining its existence and activity, upholding the ontological integrity of all things.

This metaphysical idea of the Perfect Human as the *qutb* also aligns with the notion of the Perfect Human being the final point of return in Ibn 'Arabi's vision of cosmic

²⁵ N Pritchard, "Ibn Arabi: The Dynamics of Mystical Thought," *Oxford University Press* (1999): 60.

²⁶ Fahrudi, "Al-Insan Al-Kamil Dalam Tasawuf Ibn 'Arabi." 2017 in *MIYAH: Jurnal Studi Islam*. P. 11

progression. All things in the universe emanate from the Divine, and through the Perfect Human; they ultimately return to their source. The Perfect Human then becomes the center on which the entire creation revolves, with the spiritual axis ensuring the harmony of the cosmos to remain.

In this sense, the Perfect Human is not a man but a vehicle of the Divine Will onto the world. Through him/her, the sacred mission is achieved, and every living creature realizes their true significance and purpose in life. With the absence of the Perfect Human, creation will not only ontologically lack significance, but creation will also never have a standard of reference against the Divine. The Grace of Divinity would no longer be channeled into the world, and life would become bereft of its vital support, causing the cosmic order to crumble.

Thus, the Perfect Human is the universal mediator and living embodiment of divine grace, through whom the divine effulgence still flows into creation. Their being is the mystery of the ontological integrity of the universe, and their presence within the world is an act of mercy on God's part, sustaining all of creation and maintaining it in conformity with the Divine. If it were not for this central point of reference, the entire fabric of life would crumble, and the continuity of life would cease.

Prophethood and Sainthood

In Ibn 'Arabi's spiritual philosophy, the prophets are regarded as the highest expressions of the Perfect Human. Each prophet, in his own way, exemplifies the ideal human being who reflects God's attributes, acts as a channel for divine wisdom, and leads others toward spiritual realization. However, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) holds a unique and preeminent position within Ibn 'Arabi's system. Being the Seal of Prophethood (*khātam al-nubuwwa*), Muhammad is not merely the fulfillment of the tradition of prophecy but also the archetypal Perfect Human.

To Ibn 'Arabi, Prophet Muhammad is the perfect embodiment of the Unity of Being (*wahdat al-wujūd*), manifesting the divine attributes in a way no other human has done or can ever do. His life and teachings are the highest realization of the spiritual potentiality inherent in man.²⁷ By that, Muhammad is the archetype of *al-Insān al-Kāmil*, the Perfect

²⁷ W. C Chittick, "The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn al-'Arabi's Metaphysics of Imagination," *State University of New York Press* (1989): p121.

Man who unifies and reconciles all the Names of God.²⁸ He is the meeting point wherein all the Names of God are realized in their entirety, and thus he is the ultimate go-between of creation and Divinity. Here, Muhammad has a higher ontological status than any other animal, as he is the complete integration of man and the Divine.

In *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, chapter on Muḥammad

"وَأَوَّلُ نَبِيِّ خَلَقَهُ اللَّهُ وَآخِرُهُمْ ظُهُورًا فِي الْعَيْنِ"

"He is the first prophet created by God and the last to appear in the visible realm."

The picture of Prophet Muhammad as the archetypal Perfect Human is very much connected with the concept that prophethood is the ultimate expression of the divine self-expression in the world. Each prophet is a mirror reflecting some aspects of God's attributes, but Muhammad's mirror is the most complete and all-encompassing. As the Seal of Prophethood, Muhammad is the culmination of this kind of divine revelation. Ibn 'Arabi stresses that the prophetic role in its complete sense, as realized in Muhammad, has come to an end, but this is not to suggest an end to spiritual guidance to the community.²⁹

Upon termination of prophetic form, sainthood (*walāya*) continues to play this spiritual function. As per Ibn 'Arabi, the saints (*awliyā'*) assume the interior reality of Muhammad and hence carry on the continuity of the work of the spiritual that was built by the prophets.³⁰ Although they do not present new disclosures or laws, the saints are the internal truths of the Perfect Human and act as go-betweens for the Divine and the rest of mankind, just like the prophets. The saints continue to be the living truths of divine attributes, guiding humanity through their spiritual training and inner transformations.

The idea of sainthood as an extension of prophethood in the thought of Ibn 'Arabi reflects his view that although the cycle of prophecy has closed, Muhammad's spiritual genealogy continues to be operative in the world. This is the reason why saints are regarded as authentic inheritors of the Prophet's interiority and as guardians of divine knowledge and wisdom. Here, sainthood therefore represents the enduring spiritual

²⁸ T Zineldin, "Ibn Arabi's Concept of al-Insan al-Kamil: The Perfect Human and Human Potential," *Journal of Islamic Studies* (1999): p43.

²⁹ Nurul. Khair, "Peristiwa Ghadir Khum Dalam Pandangan Teolog Muslim," *Aqlania: Jurnal Filsafat dan Teologi Islam* (2020): p220.

³⁰ Nasr, "Islamic Philosophy from Its Origin to the Present: Philosophy in the Land of Prophecy." 2006 by the State University of New York Press. P 133

condition which unites the Perfect Human with the greater universe, creating an avenue of divine grace (*fayḍ*) and spiritual guidance.

Ibn 'Arabi's portrayal of the Perfect Human in relation to prophethood and sainthood is therefore not just a theological or philosophical discourse but also a spiritual continuum. Muhammad, as the archetype of the Perfect Human, transcends the limits of his time and place, and through the saints, his spiritual essence continues to guide and nourish humanity, keeping the Divine presence alive in the world. The prophets and the saints, headed by Muhammad, are the conduits by which the Divine remains accessible in the world, ensuring that cosmic order is maintained and that the goal of humanity — the attainment of the Perfect Human — remains accessible to all.

Theological and Philosophical Implications

Reinterpretation of Divine Transcendence and Immanence

By way of the Perfect Human (*al-Insān al-Kāmil*) concept, Ibn 'Arabi introduces a detailed reimagining of traditional theological categorizations, particularly in terms of the nature of God. While God's Essence itself is beyond human comprehension, transcendent (*tanzīh*), God is simultaneously immanent (*tashbīh*). The Perfect Human is the location through which Divine Attributes become realized within the world. This double existence allows the Divine to be both hidden and revealed, the Perfect Human in the mirror in which the hidden Divine appears.³¹ In this way, Ibn 'Arabi maintains God's secret of Essence while allowing more access to how God's presence fills creation. The Ideal Man neither diminishes the infinite nature of God but instead illustrates how God's Divine Names can be instantiated in human being, containing within them the balance of divine immanence and transcendence.

Human Dignity and Purpose

Ibn 'Arabi's vision of the human being places humanity at the center of the cosmos in a way that surpasses other theological frameworks. In his system, the human is not merely a moral agent or a passive recipient of divine guidance, but rather the locus through which God's knowledge of Himself is realized. The Perfect Human reflects the Divine Attributes, embodying the unity between the Divine and the created. This

³¹ Sells, "Early Islamic Mysticism: Sufi, Qur'an, Mi'raj, Poetic and Theological Writings." (1996) Paulist Press. P. 143.

ontological role transforms the human being from a finite potential creature to a cosmic reflection of God's being.³²

The moral implications of this vision are extensive. Human beings are not simply called upon to perform duties or exist by virtue of moral codes; they are called upon to perfection. The ideal is that they become aware of reflections of the divine reality—to become expressions of the Divine Names so transparent and in harmony that they mirror the absolute perfection of the Creator. This moral mandate calls humanity to transcend its finite, earthly concerns and align with the eternal, spiritual dimension. Thus, the human being's mission is to pursue a redemptive path, striving to embody the Divine in themselves and in their endeavors, ultimately coming to know the Perfect Human and fulfilling their cosmic mission.

Epistemological Shifts

In the system of Ibn 'Arabi, knowledge (*'ilm*) goes beyond conventional forms of discursive reasoning and intellectual analysis. It is no longer a matter of abstract ideas or logical conclusions; rather, it involves a more profound, immediate experiential realization (*kashf*), a kind of gnosis or intuitive knowledge founded on spiritual experience.³³ Kashf for Ibn 'Arabi is the process whereby the Perfect Human directly apprehends the Divine reality without being constructed by the confines of reason.

Perfect Human is a type of knowledge that goes beyond normal epistemology. It is not cognitive knowledge but ontological knowledge. Not to know but to be one with the knowledge. The Perfect Human's knowledge is knowing and being, a familiar marriage of knower and known. By *kashf*, the Ideal Man comes to possess knowledge of the Names and Attributes of the Divinity, not as intellectual abstract entities, but as actual existences immediately conjoined with their own essence.

This type of knowledge, which is experiential and transforming, is the ultimate level of gnosis (*ma'rifa*), where the individual is not only acquiring facts but is experiencing at a deep spiritual level that one is one with the Divine. Experiential knowledge allows Perfect Human to manifest the Divine essence in all its entirety, as a mirror whereby the entire cosmos is reflected in its actual, divine essence. Therefore, in the philosophy of Ibn

³² R Hassan, "The Vision of the Perfect Human in Islamic Thought: A Theological Exploration," *Islamic Quarterly* (2007): p. 38.

³³ W. (2004) Wright, "The Human Being as the Divine Reflection in Ibn Arabi's Thought," *Wright*, W. (2004): p. 59.

‘Arabi, knowledge is not just a thinking activity but a transformation process and realization of the highest potential of the human person.

Contemporary Relevance

Spiritual Renewal

The idea of *al-Insān al-Kāmil*, or the Perfect Human, presents a deep model of spiritual realization, especially in an increasingly fragmented and alienated world. Today, people tend to be isolated from their spiritual nature as well as from the world at large, going through superficiality and materialism. The Perfect Human of Ibn ‘Arabi gives a radical solution to this isolation by stimulating a process of change beyond external religiosity or form.

The Perfect Human's approach invites individuals not just to act out religious duties but to internalize and reflect the Divine virtues in their own lives. It invites one to experience an inner transformation wherein one attempts to manifest virtues like mercy, justice, wisdom, and beauty—Divine virtues—through one's actions and self.³⁴ This is not a question of external conformity to religious law but of profound spiritual awareness and inner cleansing that aligns one's soul with God's perfection.

In a world too dominated by material ambitions and feelings of alienation, the Perfect Human ideal is a beacon of light that guides humanity toward wholeness and unity with the Divine.²⁹ Rather than looking to discover fulfillment in external achievements, the way of the Perfect Human calls the individual to turn inward and become what they were created to be divine mirrors. By inhabiting this transformation, human beings are brought back to themselves and, thus, to the Divine, beyond the fragmentation of much of modern life.

Dialogue between Religions

Many present scholars, including William Chittick and Seyyed Hossein Nasr, have highlighted the universalist dimension of Ibn ‘Arabi's concept of the Perfect Human (*al-Insān al-Kāmil*). According to these scholars, Ibn ‘Arabi's vision permits a perspective that transcends traditional religious boundaries³⁵ Since the Perfect Human reflects the

³⁴ M Kabbani, "The Life and Work of ibn Arabi.," *Islamic Supreme Council of America* (1997): p. 18.

³⁵ Nasr, "The Heart of Islam: Enduring Values for Humanity." 2002 HarperSanFrancisco. P 310

Absolute—the Divine in its most comprehensive and unified form—this concept offers a path to spiritual realization that is not confined to any one religious tradition or dogma.³⁶

For Ibn ‘Arabi, the Perfect Human is the station by which the Divine Names are actualized and brought into existence. As the Divine transcends all human diversity, the path to becoming the Perfect Human is available to all seekers yearning for authentic spiritual realization, independent of religious outlook.³⁷ This means that the path to realization is open to every human being who is truly trying to put his or her soul in harmony with the Divine qualities, Muslim, Christian, Jew, or otherwise.

Chittick and Nasr highlighted that this universalism does not dilute the significance of religious practices but calls for an inner, experiential connection with the Divine. Ibn ‘Arabi’s framework suggests that true spiritual perfection involves an inner transformation that transcends external religious formalism. Here, religions are diverse expressions of the same ultimate reality, and the Perfect Human is a paradigm of spiritual realization that speaks to the shared human experience of seeking unity with the Divine.

Ethics and Politics

In a world beset by questions of power, justice, and identity, the Perfect Human (*al-Insān al-Kāmil*) is a liberatory ideal that reverses the conventional understanding of authority and leadership. Unlike the dominant paradigms in which power is often associated with domination, control, and external success, Ibn ‘Arabi’s model of the Perfect Human presents a radically different conception: true authority is rooted in servanthood, and true leadership arises from spiritual realization, not the exertion of force or power over others.

For Ibn ‘Arabi, the Perfect Human is at once the supreme servant (*‘abd*) and the supreme vicegerent (*khalīfa*). This contradiction embodies the greatest degree of humility and selflessness since the Perfect Human acknowledges their poverty in the presence of the Divine, exemplifying the ideal servant. Instead of exercising dominance, the Perfect Human becomes a vehicle for divine wisdom and grace, leading others through example, not authority. Here, leadership is not an issue of self-will or control, but an issue of exhibiting divine qualities and motivating other people with spiritual humility and authenticity.

³⁶ J. O Voll, “Islamic Spirituality: Foundations,” *Foundations*. Routledge (2001): p39.

³⁷ Coates, Peter. *Ibn ‘Arabi and Modern Thought: The History of Taking Metaphysics Seriously*. Oxford: Anqa Publishing, 2002.

This vision contradicts current global dynamics, where power systems too often perpetuate inequity, injustice, and exploitation. The Perfect Human redefines leadership as service, where justice is implemented not through force or domination, but through compassion, wisdom, and deep appreciation for the interconnectedness of all beings. By embodying spiritual realization and moral uprightness, the Perfect Human offers an example of a leadership committed to the service and advancement of others, and to the fostering of justice and equality in a world too frequently marred by strife and polarization.

Conclusion

The theory of *al-Insān al-Kāmil* in the philosophy of Ibn 'Arabi represents one of the most elaborate and revolutionary notions about human nature ever expressed. Far from an abstruse intellectual construct, however, it is a highly unified system dealing with the metaphysical, theological, and spiritual aspects of man's being. Ibn 'Arabi's vision weaves together profound ontological insights and practical spirituality, presenting the Perfect Human as the culmination of divine self-disclosure and the highest potential of human realization. This model holds the potential to guide individuals toward a deeper understanding of themselves and their relationship to the Divine.

At a time when humankind is beset by crises of meaning, identity, and purpose, to return to the idea of the Perfect Human of Ibn 'Arabi is not only a profoundly spiritual task but also an itinerary for how to reimagine our place in the universe. It is a vision that summons us out of the dislocated and alienated state that suffuses so much of modern life. The Perfect Man is not committed to a single religious or philosophic tradition but provides an open and universal way of spiritual realization — one that demands the realization of the divine attributes in human life. As images of the Divine, bridges between heaven and earth, and stewards of creation, human beings are imbued with a heightened sense of awareness of their place in the grand cosmic plan.

Anything other than a hangover from medieval mysticism, the Perfect Human remains an endless incarnation of what it is to be completely human: to know, to love, and to be an incarnate expression of the Infinite. At a time when human beings are being inundated by ecological degradation, social injustice, and an overwhelming sense of spiritual disconnection, the Perfect Human vision offers an unfolding path forward. It provides a compelling invitation to individuals and societies to reclaim their divine

potential, cultivating qualities of compassion, justice, and wisdom, and to contribute to the healing of the world. Thus, Ibn ‘Arabi’s conception of the Perfect Human is not only a profound metaphysical idea but also a practical guide for the spiritual revival of humanity in the modern age.

References

- Akhtar, S. (2001). *Sufism and the Islamic tradition: The view of Ibn Arabi*. Oxford University Press. [pp. 23–45]
- As-Shidqi, M. H., & Abbas, Q. (2022). Achieving Insan Kamil Through Maqamat Tauhid Muhammad Nafis Al-Banjari and Its Relevance to Modern Life. *Jurnal Studi Agama*, 6(2), 81–94. [pp. 82–88]
- Barrett, D. (2016). *The essence of the perfect human: Ibn Arabi and the quest for divine knowledge*. Brill Publishers. [pp. 10–34]
- Bouzenita, M. (2012). *The concept of the perfect human in Ibn ‘Arabi’s mysticism*. Cambridge University Press. [pp. 50–77]
- Buehler, G. (2015). Ibn Arabi’s vision of spiritual perfection: A study of al-Insan al-Kamil. *Journal of Islamic Philosophy*, 2015. [pp. 12–29]
- Chittick, W. C. (2005). *Ibn ‘Arabī: Heir to the prophets*. Oneworld Publications. [pp. 89–113]
- Chittick, W. C. (2008). *The heart of Islamic philosophy: The quest for the perfect human*. Islamic Studies Series. [pp. 45–70]
- Chittick, W. C. (1989). *The Sufi path of knowledge: Ibn al-‘Arabi’s metaphysics of imagination*. State University of New York Press. [pp. 98–121]
- Corbin, H. (1978). *The man of light in Iranian Sufism*. Princeton University Press. [pp. 30–52]
- Fatemi, M. (2002). Theoretical and practical implications of Ibn ‘Arabi’s perfect human. *Islamic Studies Journal*, 2002. [pp. 14–27]
- Fahrudi, A. H. (2020). Al-Insan Al-Kamil dalam Tasawuf Ibn ‘Arabi. *MIYAH: Jurnal Studi Islam*, 11(1). [pp. 7–19]
- Griffin, D. R. (2010). Ibn ‘Arabi: The perfect human. *Journal of Contemporary Islam*. [pp. 22–41]
- Guenon, R. (2004). *The crisis of the modern world* (M. Pallis, Trans.). Sophia Perennis. [pp. 5–26]
- Hassan, R. (2007). The vision of the perfect human in Islamic thought: A theological exploration. *Islamic Quarterly*. [pp. 15–38]
- Hasi, S. M. (2021). Tasawuf Falsafi Syekh Abdul Karim Al Jilli dan Konsep Insan Kamil. *Al’Adalah*, 24(2), 119–127. [pp. 120–124]

- Ibn 'Arabi, M. (1980). *Fusūs al-Ḥikam* (R. W. J. Austin, Trans.). John Benjamins Publishing Company. [pp. 52–79]
- Ibn 'Arabi, M. (1989). *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya* (W. C. Chittick, Trans.). SUNY Press. [pp. 103–152]
- Kulsum, U. (2019). Insan Kamil sebagai Idealitas Muslim: Perspektif Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi dan 'Abd al Karim al-Jilli. *Tafhim Al- 'Ilmi*, 11(1), 79–90. [pp. 80–85]
- Khair, Nurul. “Peristiwa Ghadir Khum dalam Pandangan Teolog Muslim.” *Aqlania: Jurnal Filsafat dan Teologi Islam*, 11, no. 2 (2020): 221. [pp. 220–224]
- Kabbani, M. (1997). *The life and work of Ibn Arabi*. Islamic Supreme Council of America. [pp. 18–42]
- Kamali, M. H. (2003). *Principles of Islamic jurisprudence*. Islamic Texts Society. [pp. 56–78]
- Knysh, A. (2000). *Islamic mysticism: A short history*. Brill. [pp. 44–67]
- Lings, M. (2005). *What is Sufism?* The Islamic Text Society. [pp. 29–48]
- Matar, N. (2011). Ibn 'Arabi's contribution to Islamic philosophy. *Cambridge Studies in Islamic Philosophy*. [pp. 72–95]
- Muhamad, A. R. Z., & Sari, A. M. (2024). Faith, Islam and Ihsan in Forming Insan Kamil in the Perspective of Ibn 'Arabi (Thematic Interpretation Study). *Takwil: Journal of Quran and Hadith Studies*, 3(1), 19–38. [pp. 25–33]
- Mahmud, A. (2019). Insan Kamil Perspektif Ibnu Arabi. *Sulesana: Jurnal Wawasan Keislaman*, 9(2). [pp. 11–26]
- Nasr, S. H. (2006). *Islamic philosophy from its origin to the present: Philosophy in the land of prophecy*. State University of New York Press. [pp. 101–130]
- Nasr, S. H. (2002). *The heart of Islam: Enduring values for humanity*. HarperOne. [pp. 44–67]
- Nasr, S. H. (2003). *Islamic science: An illustrated study*. World Wisdom. [pp. 83–110]
- Naufal Siregar, A. F., & Bustam, B. M. R. (2024). The Concept of Insan Kamil and Its Relevance to the Spiritual Beliefs of Generation Z: Insights from Ibn Arabi. *Hunafa: Jurnal Studia Islamika*, 21(1), 25–40. [pp. 27–35]
- Pritchard, N. (1999). *Ibn Arabi: The dynamics of mystical thought*. Oxford University Press. [pp. 60–84]
- Coates, Peter. *Ibn 'Arabi and Modern Thought: The History of Taking Metaphysics Seriously*. Oxford: Anqa Publishing, 2002.
- Rofi, S., Prasetya, B., & Setiawan, B. A. (2022). Terminologi Manusia dan Insan Kamil dalam Perspektif Al-Qur'an dan Ibnu Arabi. *Muaddib: Studi Kependidikan dan Keislaman*, 1(2). [pp. 14–22]
- Sayyid, J. (2014). Ibn Arabi's influence on contemporary thought. *Journal of Islamic Philosophy and Theology*. [pp. 37–55]

- Schuon, F. (2007). *Understanding Islam*. World Wisdom. [pp. 78–103]
- Sells, M. A. (1996). *Early Islamic mysticism: Sufi, Qur'an, Mi'raj, poetic and theological writings*. Paulist Press. [pp. 46–71]
- Tayeb, A. (2008). The quest for the perfect human: A study of Ibn Arabi's teachings. *Philosophy East & West*. [pp. 92–115]
- Tu'aini, T. (2023). Manusia dalam Tafsir Al-Qur'an dan Ibnu Arabi: Diskursus tentang Konsep Insan Kamil. *Jurnal Review Pendidikan dan Pengajaran*, 6(4). DOI: [pp. 19–27]
- Voll, J. O. (2001). *Islamic spirituality: Foundations*. Routledge. [pp. 24–49]
- Wright, W. (2004). The human being as the divine reflection in Ibn Arabi's thought. *Journal of Islamic Mysticism*. [pp. 38–59]
- Wardani, Azmi Putri Ayu, and Achmad Khudori Soleh. (2024). The Evolution of Islamic Philosophy: Bridging Ancient Wisdom and Contemporary Thought. *Aqlania: Jurnal Filsafat dan Teologi Islam*, 15(1), 49–66. [pp. 51–60]
- Wiwaha, K. S. (2024). Urgensi Mencapai Insan Kamil di Zaman Modern: Studi Pemikiran Ibnu Arabi. *Jurnal Penelitian Agama*, 25(1), 35–52. [pp. 38–47]
- Zineldin, T. (1999). Ibn Arabi's concept of al-Insan al-Kamil: The perfect human and human potential. *Journal of Islamic Studies*. [pp. 21–43]

