



**ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER**

# Human Perfection from the Perspective of Ibn Arabi's Mysticism and Theravada Buddhism Mysticism

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ARTICLE INFO		ABSTRACT
<p><b>Article History:</b>                      Received: 11 August 2023                      Revised: 26 October 2023                      Accepted: 01 November 2023</p>		<p><b>SUBJECT &amp; OBJECTIVES:</b> This research explored the concept of human perfection through the lenses of Ibn Arabi's Mysticism and Theravada Buddhism Mysticism. The aim was to create a dialogue between Buddhism and Ibn Arabi's mysticism, and to shed light on the similarities and differences in their perspectives on human perfection.</p> <p><b>METHOD &amp; FINDING:</b> This research presented a comparative research study of the profound mystical teachings of Ibn Arabi, a renowned Sufi mystic, and Theravada Buddhism, the oldest existing school of Buddhism. The study examined the nature of self, the significance of the spiritual journey, and the role of love in both traditions. This study found that in the approach of the perfect human from Ibn Arabi's viewpoint, an individual achieves unity with the divine; While Theravada Buddhism seeks human perfection through the attainment of the Arhat, a liberated being free from suffering and ignorance.</p> <p><b>CONCLUSION:</b> The study offered a comprehensive understanding of human perfection from Ibn Arabi's and Buddhist mystical perspectives, and revealed that both traditions challenge the conventional understanding of self and advocate for a transcendent perspective that seeks to realize the ultimate reality of existence. The study also showed that both traditions have different metaphysical and ontological assumptions, as well as different methods and practices of meditation and contemplation. Finally, concluded that the comparative study of Ibn Arabi's Mysticism and Theravada Buddhism Mysticism can enhance dialogue and understanding, as well as provide insights into the nature of human existence.</p>
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## **Introduction**

Throughout history, various philosophical and spiritual traditions have sought to explore the concept of human perfection, aiming to unravel the depths of human potential and the path towards ultimate fulfillment. Among these approaches, the mystical perspectives of Ibn Arabi and Theravada Buddhism offer profound insights into the nature of human existence and the means to attain perfection.

Ibn Arabi, a prominent figure in Islamic mysticism, known as Sufism, delved into the depths of the human soul, emphasizing the realization of divine unity and the journey towards self-realization. His teachings are characterized by a deep understanding of the inherent interconnectedness of all beings and the

transformative power of love and unity with the divine.

On the other hand, Theravada Buddhism, one of the oldest surviving Buddhist traditions, places great emphasis on the attainment of enlightenment and liberation from suffering. With its focus on self-discipline, mindfulness, and insight meditation, Theravada Buddhism offers a systematic approach to understanding the human condition and the path to liberation.

This paper endeavored to provide a comparative analysis of Ibn Arabi's mysticism and Theravada Buddhism mysticism, shedding light on their respective perspectives on human perfection, and it has sought to answer the question, how is human perfection explained in the mystic school of Ibn Arabi and Theravada Buddhism?

Accordingly, through an exploration of their fundamental principles, practices, and goals, we aim to reveal the shared insights and distinctive aspects that can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the nature of human existence and the pursuit of perfection.

### **Theoretical Foundations and Research Background**

Understanding how to live, and how to reach perfection helps to realize hope in life, and make it meaningful. *(Babanejad et al, 2021)*

Human perfection refers to the realization of one's highest potential and the attainment of a state of wholeness, harmony, and self-transcendence, and it encompasses various dimensions, including physical, intellectual,

emotional, and spiritual aspects. *(Chuang, 2020)*

This research explores the concept of human perfection as a central theme within mystical traditions.

Ibn Arabi, a renowned Muslim mystic and philosopher, developed a comprehensive mystical framework that emphasized the unity of existence and the divine nature of human beings. His teachings explore the stages of spiritual development, the nature of reality, and the realization of human perfection.

He envisions the perfect human to be a realized human who embodies the attributes of God. This state of perfection involves a profound union with the divine; Where the individual transcends the ego and merges with the essence of God.

Ibn Arabi emphasizes the importance of self-knowledge, love, and spiritual journey in the pursuit of human perfection. (*Alsharif, 2022*)

On the other hand, in Theravada Buddhism, as one of the oldest Buddhist traditions which offers profound mystical teachings and practices, the concept of human perfection is embodied in the attainment of the Arhat. The Arhat represents the ideal state of liberation from suffering and ignorance, achieved through the practice of the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path.

The path to perfection in Theravada Buddhism emphasizes the development of wisdom, ethical conduct, and meditation as means to overcome the cycle of rebirth and attain nirvana. (*Schneider, 2017*)

This study explores the mystical aspects of Theravada Buddhism and their connection to the pursuit of human perfection.

In terms of the research background, in the school of Ibn Arabi and Theravada Buddhism, there are separate books and articles about human perfection, which are not mentioned for the sake of brevity; But some references used in this research refer to the same works; At the same time, comparing these two schools is a new work.

### **Human Perfection in Ibn Arabi's Mysticism**

Human perfection is one of the terminological and conceptual points that is interwoven in most of Ibn Arabi's writings. First of all, we should know that perfection is different from

completion; Even a complete person needs to reach perfection. (*Zekrgoo, 2011*)

The second point is that when we are talking about human perfection, we mean the highest level of perfection that a man can reach. In Ibn Arabi's mysticism, man has different levels, he can be lower than animals or higher than angels.

From Ibn Arabi's viewpoint, we can define man in two different levels of perfection:

The first level can be common among all human beings, based on this level all mankind has perfect creation; It means the cosmic presence, which is also called Takwini.

The second level is only for individuals (Divine presence); It means that only a small group of people can reach this level of perfection, which is

called perfect human in Ibn Arabi's teachings. (*Mahmoodi, 2012*)

The other human beings are not perfect and they are called animals; It means that only those who attain the level of perfect man, are human beings, the others who are far from this level, are animals. (*Ibn Arabi, 1972, Vol. 2: 468*)

Based on this, although we can distinguish the animal man from other animals through their shape and appearance, we cannot distinguish the perfect man from other human beings through his appearance. (*Alsharif, 2022*)

In other words, Ibn Arabi believes in different degrees of perfection in human beings; the first level which is the highest level of perfection is "Hagigah al-Muhammadiyah", or the degree of Muhammad,

the second level is the level of prophets other than Muhammad, the third level is the level of inheritors of the prophets and finally the fourth one which is the lowest one is the level of animals. (*Chittick, 1997*)

Ibn Arabi's worldview is based on divine manifestation. The manifestation is the process by which God appears in a more objective form. According to this theory, all beings are God's manifestation, and creation is a mirror for His manifestations. (*Gorjian et al, 2020*) Therefore, Everything gains its existence from God and perceives its existence by Him. (*Schimmel, 2011: 267-268*)

Accordingly, the perfect man is like the mirror of all attributes of God, not only in this world; But also all attributes of God in the

hereafter are visible in the perfect man. (*Dogan, 2013*)

In Ibn Arabi's view, a human is essentially an example of the microcosmos; It means that God the Almighty has created in human beings everything that he has created in the world. (*Pye, 2023*)

Ibn Arabi introduces the world as the divine book; therefore, a human is one of God's books and a copy of the world. Based on this explanation microcosm is similar to the macrocosm. (*Albimawi & Nurhakim, 2023*) So, man has many different potentialities that must be realized.

### **1. The Highest Level of Perfection**

Among the key words in Ibn Arabi's mysticism, regarding the final perfection of man is

reaching the stage of Fana and Baqa. Fana is annihilation in God's attributes. It is the passing away of the self and is thus the essential prerequisite to the survival of the self divine qualities placed in man by God. (*Wilcox, 2011*)

The wayfarer in his journey eventually reaches a stage, where he does not see other than God, loses his desires in God's will, and annihilates in God's will. She/he becomes annihilated in God's attributes and qualities. Then finally he is immersed in the existence of God. (*Schimmel, 2011: 143*)

Those who achieve the highest level of human perfection as the perfect man, play two essential roles in the universe:

The first one is to play the role of the prophets in this

world to guide human beings to perfection.

The Second role is an ontological role, which is a full realization of existence form.

To make sense of this, it is relevant that, only through human perfection does existence reach the fullness of its outward manifestation. In other words, this world depends upon them for its existence. (*Chittick, 1997*)

Ibn Arabi considers the perfect human as the soul of this world, and because of the perfections that man has, everything is under his control. (*Schimmel, 2011: 199*)

## **2. How to Reach Perfection?**

After the definition of perfection, it is important to know the way of perfection and to understand how the human being can reach perfection. The most important

question to ask concerning the Perfect Individual is: How does an individual gain this state?

One way to show the way to perfection is to emphasize the definition of perfection from the perspective of Ibn Arabi. As stated, perfection means realizing the full range of complementary divine attributes, so according to Ibn Arabi's anthropology, human beings are defined by the form of God.

The path to perfection involves bringing these attributes out from hiddenness to manifestation; Therefore, the question is how human beings can bring these attributes out from hiddenness to manifestation.

The answer is by god's help and prophetic guidance. To follow the authority of the prophet Muhammad and other

prophets and messengers of God. (*Chittick, 1997*)

In Ibn Arabi's mysticism, generally, there are two main ways to reach perfection, which he calls the two wings of the bird of the spirit. These are the way of love and the way of knowledge. (*Morrissey, 2020*)

The way of love, which is the way of attraction and surrender to God, who is the Beloved and the Desired. This way is based on the experience of the heart, which is the seat of love and the organ of spiritual perception. The way of love is the way of the prophets, who received the divine revelation and guidance through their hearts. (*Chittick, 1993*)

The way of knowledge, which is the way of contemplation and realization of God, who is the Truth and

the Reality. This way is based on the experience of the intellect, which is the faculty of rational and intuitive cognition. The way of knowledge is the way of the saints, who attained the divine gnosis and wisdom through their intellects. (*Morrissey, 2020*)

Ibn Arabi believes that there are some obstacles in the path of perfection and one of the most important ones is ignorance. In many ways the most fundamental dimension of perfection is knowledge and the definitions of perfection are concerned with knowledge. It is important to understand how this knowledge helps to transform the individual into the Perfect Individual.

Based on Ibn Arabi's mysticism, three types of knowledge help man to reach perfection: The first and the most important one is

revelation, the second one is intuition, and the last one is reason. (*Zwanzig, 2008: 17*)

Among these, the genuine valuable knowledge is only the knowledge of God that is obtained through revelation and witnessing; That is, it cannot be obtained from a book or a teacher. (*Chittick, 2012: 126*)

One way to achieve perfection through knowledge is that man knows that Allah has predetermined and controlled his destiny.

The other way to achieve perfection through knowledge is to know divine manifestation. To know what is divine manifestation and what happens in this process?

In this view, the creation of the world is due to the manifestation of God. This divine manifestation is associated with the

disappearance of human traits; In a way, man can see himself in the mirror of God, and the perfect human is God's mirror. (*Herawati, 2013*)

Another way to achieve perfection is to know himself.

The Holy Qur'an says:

*"We will soon show them Our signs in the Universe and in their own souls, until it will become quite clear to them that it is the truth..."*. (*Qur'an, 41: 53*)

Self-knowledge plays a crucial role in the pursuit of perfection in Ibn Arabi's mysticism. It involves deep introspection and understanding of one's true nature, which is ultimately connected to the divine.

According to Ibn Arabi, true self-knowledge leads to the realization that there is no separation between the

individual and God. It is through self-knowledge that one recognizes the divine spark within oneself and understands that the journey to perfection is a journey of self-discovery. (*Nakhaei, 2007*)

Knowing himself has different levels, and the highest level of that is to know that there is nothing in the world but God's self-disclosure. (*Chittick, 2012: 39-40*)

Ibn Arabi divides the knowledge of God into two types: introvertive and extrovertive knowledge. Introvertive knowledge is the direct and immediate experience of God through inner vision and intuition; While extrovertive knowledge is the indirect and mediated knowledge of God through the observation and contemplation of His creation.

According to Ibn Arabi, both types of knowledge are valid and valuable; But they have different degrees and levels of perfection. He argues that introvertive knowledge is superior to extrovertive knowledge; Because it is more comprehensive, more subtle, and more intimate. He explains that introvertive knowledge encompasses extrovertive knowledge, But not vice versa.

In other words, the mystic who has attained introvertive knowledge can also understand and appreciate the extrovertive knowledge; But the one who has only extrovertive knowledge cannot grasp or access the introvertive knowledge.

He also claims that introvertive knowledge is the way to achieve the highest

level of human perfection, which is to become the perfect human who is the mirror of God and the heir of the prophets. (*Herawati, 2013*)

In Ibn Arabi's mysticism, another main way to achieve perfection is the mystical journey. This journey indicates the return of man to God. it is a spiritual journey.

According to Ibn Arabi's mysticism, the soul is a gift from God and will return to God. This journey is achieved through struggling with *Nafs*. (*Schimmel, 2011: 222*)

In a general classification, practical methods proposed by Ibn Arabi's mysticism are as follows:

- **Seclusion**

This means that the wayfarer, on the one hand, must be as influential as other people in society, and on the other

hand, he must only pay attention to God with inner attention and behavioral reflections. So that his heart has no room for anything except God.

Seclusion means staying away from those whose supreme destination is not God. (*Ibn Arabi, 2009: 34-35*)

- **Vigilance**

Vigilance has a general meaning and differs according to the different levels and degrees of the wayfarers.

At the beginning of the journey, vigilance means to avoid what does not benefit his religion and his world, and to try not to be issued and deeds against God's will. In other words, it goes upgrade by degree.

Sometimes vigilance is paying attention to one's silence and sometimes to his

*Nafs* and sometimes to higher levels of truth than the names and attributes of all Divinity. (*Honerkamp, 2012*)

- **Silence**

we have two kinds of silence. In its general meaning, it is to keep the tongue from unneeded speech and immoral speech with people. The wayfarer to reach the path of truth must first clear his tongue of moral vices.

In its particular meaning, it means the wayfarer reaches the level and degree that the material world becomes so small for him and he finds himself alone; Because he does not enjoy being with others.

In other words, this seeker's silence is since he does not have a voice. (*Tabataba'i et al, 2003*)

Hunger; eating too much weakens the soul, and kills the heart. The hungry seeker illuminates his heart; (*Ibn Arabi, 2009: 35-36*) Of course, it is recommended to the extent that not to be harmful to the body and change the mental state. (*Tabataba'i et al, 2003*)

### **Human Perfection in Theravada Buddhism**

Based on Buddhist teachings, man is perfect. Considering Buddha's goal of achieving perfection, the definition of perfection is liberation from the rebirth cycle and samsara, then finally reaching Nirvana. (*Katz, 1985*)

Perfection is not exclusive to physical or mental perfection in Buddhist mysticism; But also includes moral perfection. Based on

Buddhist traditions body and morality are inextricably linked. (*Werner, 2000a*)

The ultimate goal of life in Buddhism is not the perfection of morality, concentration, or having various kinds of knowledge; But the ultimate perfection is Nirvana. (*Corliss, 1986*)

### **1. The Highest Level of Perfection**

Three types of individuals can reach enlightenment:

The first type is the Buddha himself who does not need any teacher to attain the awakening.

The second type called as solitary one, reaches salvation without any help.

The third type is an Arhat, who reaches the level of enlightenment with the help of Buddha and, he also can teach others. The attainment

of Nirvana is the main goal of all three types. (*Eltshinger, 2014*)

- **Lists of Perfections**

The first theory with an emphasis on ten perfections comes from the Pali tradition and Theravada school as early Buddhism. The next one which emphasizes six perfection comes from the Mahayana school and refers to the Bodhisattva's form of practice. There are also ten stages in Mahayana for perfection.

It should be noted that, the Theravada did not developed a theory of stages; Rather they only categorize them in three degrees: Basic, intermediate, and ultimate degree of perfection. (*Katz, 1985*)

- **Nirvana**

As it has been mentioned, the ultimate perfection in Buddhist mysticism is to

reach Nirvana. Nirvana means blowing out. There are some ambiguous points about this meaning. For instance; what is it that is blown out? If a Buddhist says that it is man's soul, you can say that it cannot be the soul that is blown out; Because Buddhism denies the existence of the soul for man. (*Huenemann, 2005*)

One should bear in mind that Nirvana takes two forms: The first one is during life, and the second one is after death.

To make sense of this, the first form of Nirvana means the end of hatred, greed, and delusion in this life, which happened to the Buddha himself at the age of 35. The second form means that man would not be reborn. (*Keown, 2013: 51*)

By meditating and following the basic steps of Buddhist education, one can attain the state of Nirvana, which is one of the last steps taken by the followers of Buddhism. Nirvana is used in a more general sense to describe a person who is in a perfect state and inner peace and is not influenced by external influences. (*Schneider, 2017*)

Nirvana also is a state of renunciation of attachment and material desires, which only suffers. Nirvana indicates a state in which all mental activity ceases or the state of complete spiritual freedom. (*Harvey, 2000: 43*)

Nirvana is described by the Buddha as the highest happiness and ultimate perfection. (*Buddharakkhita, 2019*)

Nirvana is understood with insight-wisdom, and there is no self, no anatta to realize

Nirvana. when an Arhat or a perfect man reaches the level of ultimate perfection, he or she kills all delusion of the existence of Anatta, so that he or she would be free from all mental illness. (*Hongladarom, 2011*)

It doesn't mean that when a man achieves Nirvana, he will destroy five khandas of man's constituent; It means that his understanding and consciousness ends in Nirvana.

Buddha describes Nirvana as follows:

*There is no land there, no water, no fire, no air, no knowledge, no this world, no other world, neither the sun nor the moon. O my followers! I tell you that it is not coming, not going, neither destruction nor production. (Schumann, 1987: 87-88)*

## 2. How to Reach Perfection?

What is understood from the Buddha's tradition is that to attain Nirvana is a spiritual progress, which is explained in terms of moral development; (*Manné, 1998*) as some moral characteristics like self-control, wholesome living, and control of senses can help man to become as a perfect man. (*Harvey, 2000*)

There are four stages to reach Nirvana:

In the first stage, man gets once over “the Deathless”, and joins the liberation for the first time.

In the second stage; a man returns to the human world one more time. it is the last time that he can return to this world.

The third stage is a time when he never comes back to the human world.

In the fourth stage, the perfect man reaches enlightenment as an Arhat and he gets rid of the cycle of Samsara forever. (*Buddharakkhita, 2019*)

The only way to reach Nirvana in Buddhist mysticism can be through relying on human capacities, there is no spiritual existence or supreme power to help you in this way; (*Silananda, 1999*)

However, two points play an important role in this way: The first one is that the wayfarer should trust the Master; The second is faith in the Buddha. Without paying attention to these two points no one can reach Nirvana; (*Konik, 2009*) Because the Buddha considers life to be suffering and he introduces Nirvana as the only way out of this suffering.

He considers ignorance as the first cause of human

suffering: ignorance of the Four Noble Truths; So, the seeker must first know these Four Noble Truths. These are the suffering of life, craving is the cause of suffering, Suffering can end, and finally, there is a way to get rid of suffering. (*Werner, 2000b*)

Without knowledge of this fact, the Buddhist perfection movement will not take shape at all. The four noble truths are the basis of Buddhism and provide a plan to end all human suffering and aspects. These facts show that life is full of various kinds of suffering; Suffering has a cause and an end, and we reach Nirvana when we end these sufferings within ourselves. (*Gable, 2008*)

What is the path which leads to the cessation of suffering? Buddha's answer is the following Eightfold Path:

The four noble truths in human experience describe disease, and the noble eightfold path is the prescription that provides the cure. Understanding the truths and crossing this path will lead to a sense of absolute peace and happiness in life. (*Werner, 2000b*)

About the truth of the path that frees us from suffering it should be noted that to reach perfection man should know two aspects of the Forth Noble Truth: The first aspect is that there is a way to get rid of suffering, with his Eightfold Path. The second aspect is that the path of liberation should be developed. (*Van Oosten, 2008*)

The Eightfold Path is a set of deeds determined by the Buddha as the path to perfection, and it includes some moral practices to

develop the moral behavior of the wayfarer, and it teaches him by doing these deeds how to get rid of suffering.

The focus of this method is on strengthening the body, speech and mind to improve themselves and other beings. *(Xuezhi, 2007)*

The eightfold path shows how a man should live to reach to the level of enlightenment. It's a path of self-transformation.

The Eightfold Path can be divided into three categories: Morality, meditation, and insight.

The eight components of this path are The right perspective, the right intention, the right speech, the right action, the right livelihood, the right effort, the right thought, and the right focus. *(Buddhaghosa, 2003)*

The last part of the eight ways to reach Nirvana, that is,

the right worldview and the right idea, constitutes the vision.

Achieving insight or supreme wisdom, in Buddhism means finding direct access to the reality behind things and finding insight beyond any knowledge. This step comes after the step of righteousness and is the result of a special Buddhist inner exploration.

The right worldview is the full understanding of the four noble Buddhist truths and the true notion, the same compassion and love that purifies the mind of lust, malice, and cruelty. *(Xuezhi, 2007)*

Loving-kindness and compassion are two important concepts in Theravada Buddhism that relate to the cultivation of love and compassion towards all beings.

Loving-kindness (metta) means a mental state of unselfish and unconditional kindness to all beings; while compassion (karuna) means an emotion that elicits the heartfelt wish that sentient beings be free from suffering and the causes of suffering.

Theravada Buddhism underscores the cultivation of loving-kindness and compassion as essential qualities on the path to liberation (Nirvana).

Theravada Buddhism teaches various methods of arousing loving-kindness and compassion; Such as being present, reflection, aspiration, recitation, and the free association method. These methods involve directing positive thoughts and feelings towards oneself and others and wishing them happiness and freedom from suffering. (*Hao et al, 2022*)

The first step in the right view is to know four noble truths. Without knowing it, movement in the path of perfection is not formed. (*Schumann, 1987: 73*)

Once the vision of suffering and that, there is a way out of suffering is created, the movement towards problem solving begins. right view is a tool, and without that, we cannot start the path of perfection. (*Harrison, 1987*)

Right taught, as the second element of this path is a mind state, which can be attained through meditation. This step aims to see and understand the things and the reality clearly. (*Simmer-Brown, 2021*)

The third element refers to the moral aspect of the eightfold path. We are responsible for our own words, and speech. We must

be careful what we say. Science speech has both negative and positive effects, therefore, it has a serious impact on reaching human perfection. (*Werner, 2000b*)

In the right action, as the fourth element of the path to perfection, man tries to help people to ease their suffering by his/her good actions and good deeds. the aim of this element is to be in peace not only personally but also live in peace with other people and the world.

In the fifth element which is right livelihood, man should try to avoid some actions that cause to harm others, avoid gaining money in a harmful and illegal way, or any action that leads to a change of the ecological balance of the plants. As you can see, some of these

elements go back to perfect understanding. (*Bastow, 1988*)

The remaining elements refer to the spirit and heart of man. The goal is to feel peacefulness in the mind, control the thoughts, and try to get rid of wrong feelings. (*Leledaki and Brown, 2008*)

In general, the path to Nirvana can be summed up in three ideas: Have the right mindset and intention, live with good intention, understand the real truth, and have the right beliefs about everything.

### **Comparative Analysis of Two Approaches**

1. Ibn Arabi and Theravada Buddhism, challenge the conventional understanding of self and advocate for a transcendent perspective. Both traditions emphasize the transcendence of the self.

In Theravada Buddhism, the realization of the absence of a self (anatta) is crucial for attaining Nirvana. Ibn Arabi's mysticism also emphasizes self-knowledge and the destruction of the ego in the journey toward perfection; While Ibn Arabi emphasizes the unity of all existence and the merging of the individual self with the divine, Theravada Buddhism views the self as an illusion to be transcended.

2. In Theravada Buddhism, perfection is primarily focused on the attainment of Nirvana, which represents liberation from suffering and the cycle of rebirth.

In Ibn Arabi's mysticism, perfection involves bringing forth the hidden attributes of God within human beings and realizing one's full potential

as a reflection of divine qualities. Also, the perfect man is seen as the highest level of human perfection, reflecting all attributes of God.

In Theravada Buddhism, the concept of the perfect man corresponds to the Arhat, an enlightened being who has attained Nirvana and escaped from the cycle of Samsara.

3. Both traditions recognize the significance of a spiritual journey in the pursuit of human perfection. Ibn Arabi's concept of the spiritual journey parallels the Theravada Buddhist idea of the Noble Eightfold Path, which guides individuals toward the realization of their true nature.

4. Ibn Arabi emphasizes the importance of divine love and compassion in the attainment

of perfection; While Theravada Buddhism underscores the cultivation of loving-kindness and compassion towards all beings as essential qualities on the path to liberation.

5. Both traditions emphasize the attainment of a state of liberation or enlightenment. In Theravada Buddhism, the goal is to achieve Nirvana, which represents the cessation of suffering and the cycle of rebirth. Similarly, in Ibn Arabi's mysticism, the ultimate goal is to reach a state of perfection and closeness to God.

6. Theravada mysticism focuses too much on attaining Nirvana, a state of liberation from suffering and the cycle of rebirth; Rather than on cultivating faith and obedience to God, which are

essential for the salvation of the soul.

Theravada mysticism has been overly influenced by Brahmanism, a Hindu tradition that shares some of the same concepts with Buddhism; Such as karma, reincarnation, and liberation. Thus, it is incompatible with Ibn Arabi's mysticism emphasis on monotheism and revelation by adopting some Brahmanic practices such as rituals, mantras, and sacraments.

7. Theravada mysticism is too individualistic and elitist in its approach to spirituality, and the role of lay people, women, ethnic minorities, and other groups in Buddhism is neglected or marginalized. There is also a tendency to regard other religions as inferior or irrelevant to Buddhism.

A summary of the research following table:  
 results is shown in the

**Table 1. Similarities and Differences of Two Mystical Approaches**

Comparative Cases	Ibn Arabi's Mysticism	Theravada Buddhism Mysticism
The Nature of Self	Emphasizes the transcendence of the self and the unity of all existence. The individual self merges with the divine.	Emphasizes the transcendence of the self and the absence of a self (anatta). The self is an illusion to be transcended.
Concept of Perfection and the Perfect Man	The perfect man reflects all attributes of God.	Perfection involves attaining Nirvana, which is liberation from suffering and the cycle of rebirth. The perfect man is the Arhat, who has attained Nirvana and escaped from Samsara.
Spiritual Journey	It involves self-knowledge and the destruction of the ego. It parallels the Theravada Buddhist idea of the Noble Eightfold Path.	It involves following the Noble Eightfold Path, which guides individuals toward the realization of their true nature.
Divine Love and Compassion	Divine love and compassion are important in the attainment of perfection. They are expressed through the concept of "Wadud", the Loving.	They are essential qualities on the path to liberation. They are cultivated through the practice of metta and karuna.
Goal of Liberation	The goal of liberation is to reach a state of perfection and closeness to God.	The goal of liberation is to achieve Nirvana, which is the cessation of suffering and the cycle of rebirth.

## **Conclusion**

Ibn Arabi's Mysticism, rooted in religious thought, emphasizes the realization of perfect human as the embodiment of divine attributes and the merging of the individual self with the divine. This path towards perfection involves self-knowledge, love, and a transformative spiritual journey.

On the other hand, Theravada Buddhism views human perfection through the lens of the Arhat, a liberated being who attains freedom from suffering and ignorance. The Theravada path toward perfection emphasizes the practice of the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path, focusing on wisdom, ethical conduct, and meditation.

Both Ibn Arabi and Theravada Buddhism challenge

conventional notions of self and advocate for transcending the ego, and a transcendent perspective that seeks to realize the ultimate reality of existence. They recognize the importance of the spiritual journey as a means to attain perfection, albeit with different practices and emphases.

Furthermore, both traditions acknowledge the significance of love and compassion, be it divine love in Ibn Arabi's Mysticism or the cultivation of loving-kindness and compassion towards all beings in Theravada Buddhism.

In general, this comparative research has provided a comprehensive understanding of human perfection, offering dual perspectives from Ibn Arabi and Buddhist mysticism.

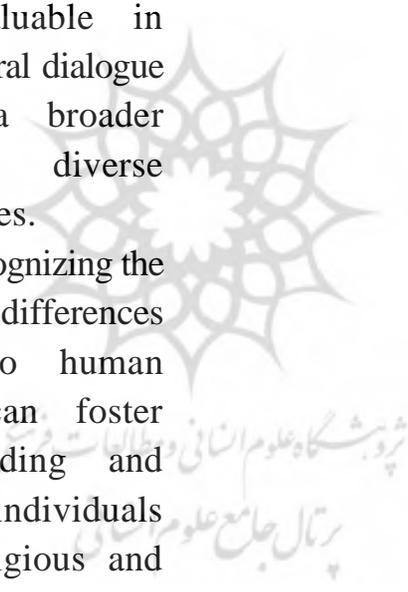
It highlights the richness and diversity of approaches to attaining perfection and underscores the universal themes of self-transcendence and spiritual growth.

In an era of global interconnectivity, such comparative research is invaluable in fostering cross-cultural dialogue and promoting a broader appreciation for diverse spiritual perspectives.

Therefore, By recognizing the commonalities and differences in approaches to human perfection, we can foster mutual understanding and respect among individuals from different religious and cultural backgrounds.

The study also suggested some possible areas for further research; Such as the comparison of other mystical traditions, the application of the concept of human

perfection to contemporary issues, and the exploration of the ethical implications of human perfection.



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