



THE CONCEPT OF *INSĀN RABBĀNĪ* IN IBN 'ARABĪ'S THOUGHT: A SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS THROUGH CHARLES S. PEIRCE'S FRAMEWORK

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Abstrak

Kata Kunci:

Ibn Arabi, Insān Rabbānī, Semiotika, Charles S. Pierce

Manusia diciptakan dengan jiwa, akal, dan pikiran yang sempurna. Tetapi sering melupakan tujuan penciptaannya. Sebagai cermin Ilahi, manusia dapat mencapai kesadaran diri Ilahi, seperti sabda Nabi Muhammad, "Barang siapa yang mengenal dirinya akan mengenal Tuhannya." Menurut Ibn 'Arabī, manusia yang mengenal Tuhannya disebut insān kāmīl, dan insān kāmīl yang diakui Allah disebut insān rabbānī. Artikel ini mengkaji langkah dan cara menuju insān rabbānī menurut Ibn 'Arabī, serta menganalisis simbol dan maknanya berdasarkan teori semiotika Charles S. Pierce. Analisis dilakukan secara deskriptif-eksplanatif berbasis analisis isi. Awalnya, semiotic hanya digunakan pada ranah empirik. Menjadi menarik ketika semiotik diterapkan pada ranah metafisik; sebuah upaya untuk berpikir logis, filosofis, reflektif, dan kontekstual dalam melihat tasawuf di Indonesia. Artikel ini menunjukkan bahwa langkah dan cara mencapai insān rabbānī; seperti taḥabbub, muṣāḥabah, dan ikhlās, hingga mencapai waḥdah al-wujūd dan musyāḥadah. Simbol insān rabbānī digambarkan melalui konsep waḥdah al-wujūd dalam proses triadik; bahwa manusia merupakan manifestasi Tuhan, wujud insān rabbānī termanifestasi dalam Rasūl, Nabī, Walī, dan Warasiah al-Anbiyā', yang berperan sebagai khalifah Allah. Dengan adab dan otoritas Tuhan, insān rabbānī membimbing manusia menuju pada kesadaran diri Ilahi.

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Abstract

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Humans were created with a perfect soul, mind, and intellect. But he often forgets the purpose of his creation. As a mirror of the Divine, humans can achieve Divine self-awareness; as the Prophet Muhammad said, 'Whoever knows himself will know his Lord.' According to Ibn 'Arabī, humans who know their God are called *insān kāmīl*, and *insān kāmīl* recognized by God is called *insān rabbānī*. This article examines the steps and ways towards *insān rabbānī* according to Ibn 'Arabī, and analyses the symbols and their meanings based on Charles S. Pierce's semiotic theory. The analysis is descriptive-explanatory based on content analysis. Initially, semiotics was only used in the empirical realm. It becomes interesting when semiotics is applied to the metaphysical realm, an attempt to think logically, philosophically, reflectively, and contextually in looking at Sufism in Indonesia. This article shows the steps and ways to reach *insān rabbānī*, such as *taubah*, *murāqabah*, and *ikhlas*, to reach *waḥdah al-wujūd* and *musyāhadah*. The symbol of *insān rabbānī* is depicted through the concept of *waḥdah al-wujūd* in a triadic process; that humans are the manifestation of God, the form of *insān rabbānī* is manifested in Rasūl, Prophet, Walī, and Warasāh al-Anbiyā', who act as caliphs of Allāh. With God's adab and authority, *insān rabbānī* guides humans towards Divine self-awareness.

Introduction

Humans are created in perfection, endowed with soul, intellect, and mind since birth.¹ However, humans often forget their purpose in life, which leads to an imbalance between their abilities and desires. In fact, humans reflect the attributes of Allah (*Ilāhiyyāt*), which are manifestations of Him. Many people doubt this as something irrational. However, with spiritual guidance, individuals can achieve self-awareness and recognize both themselves and their Creator.² The path of Sufism in Islam aims to reveal the true essence of human identity and provide solutions to fundamental questions, opening the way toward the realization of the True Self.³ However, the majority of individuals focus more on physical actions

¹ Muhamad Akip, "Sumber Daya Manusia yang Berkualitas dalam Al-Qur'an," *El-Ghiorh Jurnal Studi Keislaman* Vol 17, no. No. 02 (2019): 2.

² Mawardy Labay El-Sulthani, *Zubud Di Zaman Modern* (Jakarta: Al-Mawardi Prima, 2003), 19.

³ Martin Lings, *Sufi Poems: A Medieval Anthology* (Cambridge, UK: Islamic Texts Society, 2004). 88.

and faith in God, while only a few delve deeper to understand and achieve the true essence of self-identity.⁴ Sufism seeks to uncover the truth (*ḥaqīqah*), which forms the foundation of *syarīʿah*.⁵ It is also known as *tarīqah*, the divine spiritual path established to provide solutions to profound questions and guide humans toward the truth (*ḥaqīqah*) found through *maʿrifah*.⁶ As stated in the Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad, “Whoever knows themselves will know their Lord,” which indicates that self-knowledge is the key to understanding God.⁷ In Sufism, this Hadith serves as a guide for undertaking the spiritual journey⁸ and ultimately leads to a deeper understanding of God, who resides at the true core of humanity.⁹

Ibn ‘Arabi’s attention to the study of humanity began with his concern about the state and condition of humans during that period. Ibn ‘Arabī described the condition of humans at that time as follows: “...*after selling their souls, as the rulers do, to gain power, they created a situation where control over the environment turned into a strangulation of the environment and society, which not only led to moral and economic destruction but also to acts of suicide.*”¹⁰ Especially in this modern era, more and more people are experiencing amnesia, a disease of forgetting who their true selves are what the purpose of their life is, and many are abandoning religious principles, spiritual values, traditions, and the like.¹¹ In other words, forgetting one’s true self is the

⁴ Muhammad Muhibuddin, *Pesan-Pesan Ulama’ Klasik Dunia Tentang Menyelami Hakikat Cinta Sejati Para Sufi* (Yogyakarta: Araska, 2020), 28.

⁵ Mashadi, “Peran Imam Ghazali dalam Dunia Tasawuf,” *Journal of Islamic Thought and Philosophy*, 2022.

⁶ Mashadi, “Peran Imam Ghazali dalam Dunia Tasawuf. 134

⁷ Mubaedi Sulaeman, “Pemikiran Tasawuf Falsafi Awal: Rabi’ah Al-‘Adawiyyah, Al-Bustamī, Dan Al-Hallaj,” *Refleksi: Jurnal Filsafat Dan Pemikiran Islam* 20, no. 1 (2020): 2.

⁸ Kautsar Azhari Noer, *Ensiklopedi Tematis Dunia Islam, Pemikiran dan Peradaban: Tasawuf-Falsafi* (Jakarta: Ichtiar Baru Van Hoeve, 2002). Hal. 160.

⁹ Abdullah Mahmud, “Filsafat Mistik Ibnu ‘Arabi Tentang Kesatuan Wujud,” *Subuf* 24, no. 2 (2012): 85–98.

¹⁰ Dawam Rahardjo, *Insan Al-Kamil: Konsepsi Manusia Menurut Islam* (Jakarta: Pustaka Grafiti, 1987).

¹¹ Soffi Siti Mariam, “Relasi Muraqabah dengan Self Control dalam Al-Qur’an Perspektif Tafsir Al-Munir, Al-Misbah dan Kementerian Agama RI: Kajian Tafsir Maudhu’i” (UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, 2023), 12.

same as forgetting their Lord.

Modern people tend to fall into a lifestyle that is more hedonistic, materialistic, and individualistic.¹² If humans lose their characteristics of the hereafter and exclusively prioritize the temporal world, they will metamorphose into creatures that live by desires and base instincts (*insān ḥayawān*),¹³ similarly, contemporary humans tend to fall into the realm of empirical phenomena, often taking various actions in this world merely to fulfill their desires.¹⁴ Based on this phenomenon, humans of today have actually deviated far from the divine attributes embedded within them, making it increasingly difficult to attain perfect happiness. Perfect happiness is achieved through perfect *‘ubudiyyah* (servitude), with the guidance of a *walī mursyid*, enabling humans to become *insān rabbānī* (a God-conscious human).¹⁵

Ibn ‘Arabī believed that the fundamental solution to the problems afflicting humanity is through reflecting upon and reviving the essential nature of the self, as well as revitalizing eternal wisdom (spiritual perspective, *tasawuf*-philosophy, *wahdatul wujūd*) as a foundation.¹⁶ Ibn ‘Arabī rearticulated and presented eternal wisdom as an alternative in the dialogue about humanity. Therefore, the intellectual appeal of Ibn ‘Arabī’s thought does not lie in the “novelty” of his ideas, but in how he reconstructs the perception of humans as “symbols” of the Divine image and makes it a living philosophy to address the moral crisis and dilemmas arising from ethical deviations.

Then, what about Ibn ‘Arabī’s concept of *Insān rabbānī*? Allah says: “It is not for a person whom Allah has given the Book, wisdom, and

¹² M. Arif Khoiruddin, “Peran Tasawuf Dalam Kehidupan Masyarakat Modern,” *Tribakti: Jurnal Pemikiran Keislaman* 27 no (2016): 114.

¹³ El-Sulthani, *Zuhud Di Zaman Modern*, 19.

¹⁴ Khoiruddin, “Peran Tasawuf dalam Kehidupan Masyarakat Modern,” 115.

¹⁵ According to Imam Al Ghazali, Wali Mursyid is a beloved of Allah, directly guided by Him, who is given the task of guiding his disciples to reach Allah. (see Minhajul ‘Abidin)

¹⁶ Syahrir Mawi dan Nandi Rahman, *Filsafat Mistis Ibnu Arabi*, Cet. II (Jakarta: Gaya Media Pratama, 1995).

prophethood, to then say to people, ‘Be my worshipers rather than Allah’s.’ But [he should say], ‘Be *rabbānī* because you teach the Book and because you study it.’” (QS. Al-Imran: 79). Clearly, Ibn ‘Arabi’s concept of *insān rabbānī* differs from that of many other figures who have discussed the concept of extraordinary humans. According to them, *insān rabbānī* is born when someone has attained or achieved something. However, according to Ibn ‘Arabi, a person can become *insān rabbānī* when they are able to eliminate everything within themselves, leaving only their Lord.¹⁷ In *Fuṣuṣ al-Ḥikam*, Ibn ‘Arabi argues that *insān rabbānī* is the *ahl Allāh* (people of God), meaning a human who belongs to His nation and His family. In this way, humans can express God’s attributes and perfection in accordance with His will while carrying out their duties on earth.¹⁸

Moreover, in Ibn ‘Arabi’s view, humans are considered the motivating principle behind the existence of the universe, as there is no other entity that fully manifests the Divine attributes, thanks to the qualities they possess that are necessary to reflect the essence of the Divine.¹⁹ Therefore, it is important to revisit the concept of *insān rabbānī* in Ibn ‘Arabi’s teachings in the present time, as humans are beings who constantly change²⁰ and become part of the Divine symbol, holding an important position in this universe. Furthermore, in studying *insān rabbānī* according to Ibn ‘Arabi, researchers use Charles S. Pierce’s semiotic analysis.²¹

The discipline of semiotics, derived from the Greek word “semion,” meaning sign, observes that signs have the ability to represent broader

¹⁷ Siti Aisyah, “Pemikiran Islam Tradisional dan Dunia Modern (Kritik Sayyid Husein Nasr Terhadap Peradaban Modern),” *Tafhim Al-Ilmi: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pemikiran Islam* 8. No. 1 (2016).

¹⁸ Toshihiko Izutsu, *Sufisme: Samudra Makrifat Ibn ‘Arabi* (Bandung: Mizan, 2016), 239.

¹⁹ Rahimjon Abdugafurov, “Soteriology in ‘Abd Al-Karim Al-Jili’s Islamic Humanism,” *Journal of Islamic and Muslim Studies* 4, no. 2 (2019): 114.

²⁰ Siti Khasinah, “Hakikat Manusia Menurut Pandangan Islam Dan Barat,” *Didaktika: Media Pendidikan Dan Pengajaran* 13, no. 02 (2013).

²¹ According to Charles Sanders Peirce, semiotics is the study of signification and everything related to the sign itself. Peirce categorised semiotic analysis on three things, namely, Representamen (ground), Object, and Interpretant.

entities and function as conveyors of information through their form.²² In Peirce's view, signs and meanings are understood as a cognitive process called semiosis, which involves three stages: the absorption of representational aspects through the senses, the cognitive experience of interpreting the object, and the interpretative process of perceiving the object according to one's desires.²³ This study uses Peirce's semiotic analysis to explore the meaning of humans as the "image" of God, as well as to identify and analyze the signs used by Ibn 'Arabī to convey the understanding of *insān rabbānī*. This provides an important contribution to understanding Ibn 'Arabī's thought in communicating the divine potential in humans, and implicitly allows for the realization of the true meaning of humanity in daily life.

First, the research begins by examining Ibn 'Arabī's works that implicitly contain the concept of *insān rabbānī*. Second, the analysis is conducted according to Peirce's semiotic theory, applying the triadic concept that includes three main points: Object (X), Representament (Y), and Interpretant (Y=X/X=Y). In this context, God functions as the object, humans as the representamen, and the interpretant indicates that humans reflect the attributes of God. This study employs a literature review, using primary data from *Futuḥāt Al-Makkiyyah*²⁴ and *Fuṣūṣ Al-Hikam*²⁵, as well as secondary sources on Peirce's semiotics. Through this approach, the research is expected to provide a deeper understanding of how spiritual aspects can be developed and interpreted through the lens of semiotic Sufism. By using semiotic theory within the domain of Sufism, it can provide rational-empirical reasoning for *baṭīniyah* (inner) experiences. This study is also expected to contribute to the development of new theories in Islamic thought and semiotics, and encourage critical

xi ²² Hoed Benny, *Semiotik & Dinamika Sosial Budaya* (Depok: Komunitas Bambu, 2011).

²³ Hoed Benny, *Semiotik & Dinamika Sosial Budaya*.

²⁴ Muḥyi al-Dīn Ibn 'Arabī, *Al-Futuḥāt Al-Makkiyyah*, ed. Aḥmad Syams al-Dīn (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, n.d.).

²⁵ Muḥyi al-Dīn Ibn 'Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ Al-Hikam*, n.d.

thinking about the relationship between symbols and religion.

Biography of Ibn ‘Arabi

Ibn ‘Arabi was born in Murcia, Spain, on the night of Monday, 17 Ramadan 560 H/1165 CE.²⁶ He was a descendant of Ḥatim Al-Ṭā’ī, a poet from the Bani Ṭayy tribe, known for his generosity and bravery. The Bani Ṭayy, a tribe originally from Yemen, migrated northward to Arabia and then to Andalusia during the Islamic conquest.²⁷ Ibn ‘Arabi’s father was a government official who assisted the ruler of Murcia, Muhammad bin Sa’d bin Mardanisy. Ibn ‘Arabi came from a distinguished family, with his father being of Arab descent and his mother from a Berber family. He also had connections with rulers, including an uncle in Tlemcen, Algeria. When the Almohads took control of Murcia in 567 H/1173 CE, his family moved to Seville, where Ibn ‘Arabi received a traditional religious education. He studied under spiritual teachers, including Yasamin from Marchena and Fatimah from Cordoba. His father returned to his position as a government official, while Ibn ‘Arabi briefly served as the secretary to the governor.²⁸

Ibn ‘Arabi’s father’s position as a bodyguard to the sultan provided him with extensive access to influential figures, such as the famous philosopher and judge Ibn Rushd from Cordoba. Although not from an aristocratic family, his family was relatively fortunate. His father was also known as a prominent Sufi, a scholar of Islamic jurisprudence, and a hadith expert. From the age of seven, Ibn ‘Arabi grew up in an environment rich with important ideas of the time, including knowledge, religion, and philosophy. Seville, during Ibn ‘Arabi’s youth, was on par

²⁶ Ayman Shihadeh, *Sufism and Theology*, *Sufism and Theology* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780748631346>; William Chittick, *Ibn ‘Arabi: Heir to the Prophet* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2007); Alexander D Knysh, *Ibn ‘Arabi in the Later Islamic Tradition: The Making of a Polemical Image in Medieval Islam* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1999).

²⁷ Muhyiddin Ibnu ‘Arabi, *Al Futuḥat Al Makīyyah* (Beirut: Dar Al-Kutub, 2018). 5.

²⁸ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Three Muslim Sages* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964).

with and could be compared to Baghdad during the Abbasid era as a cosmopolitan city filled with scholars.²⁹

An important event in Ibn ‘Arabī’s life occurred during his adolescence, around the age of 12, when he suddenly experienced a spiritual ecstasy while on his way to play. In this experience, the Prophet Muhammad appeared to him and said, “O Ibn ‘Arabī, was this the purpose for which you were created?” After this, Ibn ‘Arabī immediately returned home and secluded himself (*‘uzlah*) to focus on worshiping Allah SWT. This event signifies two things: his extraordinary spiritual capacity from a young age and a transformative spiritual experience resembling a rebirth through Divine intervention. It reflects Ibn ‘Arabī’s openness to spiritual matters from an early age. After deciding to dedicate himself to a spiritual life, Ibn ‘Arabī made great efforts to encourage his father to embrace the spiritual-Sufistic path and brought him to one of his teachers in Cordoba.

Ibn ‘Arabī did not follow formal education like Al-Ghazālī, but he studied under many expert teachers in various fields. In the field of the Qur’ān and *Qirā’ah*, he learned from teachers such as Abu Bakar bin Akhlaf al-Lukhamī, Syuraih bin Muḥammad al-Ra’inī, and Al-Qādī Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad bin Sa’īd Darbūn. In the field of Ḥadīṣ, he studied with figures like ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq al-Isybilī, Abū Syuja’ Zahid bin Rustam al-Asfahānī, and Abū Ṭāhir al-Salafī al-Asbihānī. In the field of *Uṣūl al-Fiqh* and *Tauḥīd*, his teachers included Muḥammad Abū al-Walīd bin Sabil, Abū Sa’īd Abd Allāh al-Ṣafā, and Abd al-Wahhāb bin ‘Alī bin Sakīnah. In general religious sciences, he learned from many scholars, including Abū Ṭāhir Aḥmad bin Muḥammad, Abū al-Qasīm Khalaf Bashakwal, and Muhammad bin Abi Bakar al-Tusi.³⁰

Ibn ‘Arabī was a prolific writer, with around 700 works that include treatises and collections of poetry, as noted by Osman Yahya and quoted

²⁹ Jurji Zaidān, *Tārīkh Al-Tamaddun Al-Islāmī* (Cairo: Dār al-Hilāl, 1958).

³⁰ Yūsuf ibn Isma’īl Al-Nabhānī, *Jāmi’ Karāmāt Al-Anbiyā’*, I (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub ‘Ilmiyyah, 2014).

by William C. Chittick. Of these, more than 400 are collections of poetry.³¹

Ibn ‘Arabi himself once said:

“What I have written was never written with a single purpose, as other writers do. The lights of Divine inspiration often radiate to me and nearly envelop me, so that I can only express them from my mind and write on paper what has been shown to me. If my writings appear as a composition, it happens unintentionally. Just as my work has been written by God’s command, which was conveyed to me in *musyābadah*, *kasyf*, or through a dream. My heart is attached to the door of the Divine Presence, waiting consciously for what will come when that door opens. My heart is poor and in need, empty of all knowledge. When something begins to appear to the heart from behind the veil, the heart immediately obeys and records it within the limits that have been set.”

Of all his many works, none of Ibn ‘Arabi’s writings stem from reason; all of his works originate from his heart, that is, from Divine knowledge through the vision of his heart (*fuād*).³² Among his numerous works, two are the most famous and are regarded as his masterpieces: the *Futuhāt al-Makkiyyah* and the *Fuṣuṣ al-Ḥikam*. These two books were the result of his experiences of ‘*ubudiyyah* (servitude) during *musyābadah* (spiritual witnessing) and *ḥulūl* (the presence of Divine influence). In these states, he wrote what was revealed to him by Allāh and Prophet Muhammad.

Ibnu ‘Arabi’s Thoughts on God, the Universe, and Humanity

God

Ibn ‘Arabi provides a profound perspective on God that differs from the common views in religion. According to him, Allah is not a figure imagined by humans based on desires or the concepts of reward and punishment in the afterlife. Allah exists beyond human understanding and perception, transcending all forms and images. In his view, only the Sufis are capable of knowing Allah through the peak of knowledge and deep

³¹ William C. Chittick, *The Sufi Path Of Knowledge* (New York: State University Of New York Press, 1989). 6.

³² ‘Arabi, *Al Futuhat Al Makkiyyah*. 5.

spiritual experience.³³ Ibn ‘Arabī explains that the Absolute Existence or Allah manifests Himself in three different levels of *tajallī* (self-manifestation).³⁴ The first level is the *Martabah Aḥadiyyah* (Essence), where Allah is the Absolute Essence, without name or attributes. At this level, Allah cannot be understood or imagined by the human intellect, but can only be witnessed through deep spiritual experience. In this state, Allah is not bound by concepts that can be grasped by human understanding.

Second, the *Martabah Waḥidiyyah*, where Allah manifests through His attributes and names, known as *Nūr Muḥammad*. At this level, Allah bestows Himself through His perfect attributes and names (*al-asmā al-ḥusnā*). Ibn ‘Arabī identifies these attributes and names with the essence of Allah (*‘ain al-ẓāṭ*), but in this context, these attributes and names also represent the essence of the universe (*a’yān al-sābitah*), which he refers to as *ta’ayyun al-awwal* (the first reality), a potential existence encompassing all possibilities. Third, the *Martabah Tajallī Syubḥūdī* or *Faiḍ Muqaddas*, also known as *ta’ayyun al-sānī* (the second reality). At this level, Allah manifests through His attributes and names in empirical or actual reality. This process occurs through the divine command of Allah: “*Kun*” (Be!), as stated in *Sūrah Yāsīn*: 82. Here, all the beings in the universe are manifestations of Allah’s names and attributes.

From this understanding, it can be concluded that all existence, both the universe and everything within it, is a manifestation of God. Although the universe is His creation, in reality, the universe and God are two aspects of the same essence. The universe, in its outward appearance, is called the creation (*makhlūq*), while in its inner essence or reality, it is called God (*Al-Ḥaqq*). Therefore, the universe has two inseparable aspects: *Al-Ḥaqq* (God), the One, the Eternal, the Hidden, and the First, and *Al-Khalq*

³³ C. A. Qadir, *Filsafat Dan Ilmu Pengetahuan Dalam Islam* (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 1991). 109.

³⁴ ‘Arabī, *Al Futuḥat Al Makkiyyah*. 4: 171-177.

(Creation), the Many, the New, the Outward, and the Last.³⁵

Universe

Ibn ‘Arabi divides the cosmos into four interconnected layers, namely: ‘*Ālam Jabarūt*, which is the realm of the Divine Word and spiritual power; ‘*Ālam Misāl*, where existential realities occur as a layer reached by the saints through their devotion and prayers; ‘*Ālam Malakūt*, the realm of the angels; and ‘*Ālam Nāsūt*, which is the realm of human existence.³⁶ Although there are these four realms, they all originate from *Ḥaqīqah Muḥammadiyah*, the Divine intellect, which serves as the first vessel for the manifestation (*tajallī*) of Allah at the level of *Aḥadiyyah*. This concept is similar to the First Intellect according to philosophers such as Ibn Sīnā, or the Universal Intellect according to Plato, which was later adapted by Ibn ‘Arabi and referred to as *Ta’ayyun al-Kullīyyah*.³⁷

Ibn ‘Arabi developed the understanding of *Ḥaqīqah Muḥammadiyah* into two aspects: first, the primordial Light (*Nūr*) that existed before the creation of the universe, and second, Prophet Muhammad as the *Insān Kāmil* (Perfect Human) who perfectly reflects this Muhammadan Light. This view shares similarities with the thoughts of Neoplatonic philosophers, as well as Jewish and Christian philosophers.³⁸ In Ibn ‘Arabi’s view, he describes the universe as an unpolished mirror, which, in order to reflect the image of God perfectly, requires a more perfect mirror, namely, human beings. As the *Insān Kāmil* (Perfect Human), a person can embody all the attributes and names of Allah, making them a mirror capable of reflecting Allah’s *tajallī* (manifestation) perfectly and comprehensively.³⁹

³⁵ ‘Arabi, *Al Futuḥat Al Makīyyah*, 4: 177.

³⁶ Annemarie Schimmel, *Dimensi Mistik Dalam Islam* (Jakarta: Pustaka Firdaus, 2000). 278

³⁷ Syaikh Ibrahim Gazur i-Illahi, *Mengungkap Misteri Sufi Besar Mansur Al-Hallaj: Ana ‘l-Haqq* (Jakarta: Raja Grafindo Persada, 2000). 214.

³⁸ Syaikh Ibrahim Gazur i-Illahi, *Mengungkap Misteri Sufi Besar Mansur Al-Hallaj: Ana ‘l-Haqq*. 216.

³⁹ Syaikh al-Akbar Ibn ‘Arabi, *Fushush Al Hikam* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub Islamiyyah, AL-A’RAF– Vol. XXI, No. 2 December 2024

In his works, Ibn ‘Arabī states that the perfect human is more important than the entire universe. This is because the human who achieves perfection (*Insān Kāmil*) not only reflects the cosmos but also expresses all the names and attributes of Allah. When this perfect human pronounces the word “Allāh,” the entire universe, aside from Allah, joins in *tashbīḥ* (glorification) and *ẓikr* (remembrance) to Him. Thus, the perfect human becomes the primary channel to contain and express the Divine attributes, making their reward never-ending.

Humanity

Ibn ‘Arabī asserts that humans have the potential to become the place of Allah’s *tajallī* (manifestation), but this can only be realized by those who have attained perfect knowledge and understanding, namely the *Insān Kāmil*. The *Insān Kāmil* is a human in whom the *Ḥaqīqah Muḥammadiyah* or *Nūr Muḥammad* resides, which is the most perfect divine manifestation. This differs from the *Insān rabbānī*, who is also an *Insān Kāmil*, but is recognized by Allah and has the ability to communicate directly with Him.⁴⁰ The *Nūr Muḥammad* is the most perfect divine *tajallī* and was created before the creation of the universe. It has two main roles or functions: (1) with the universe as the foundation of creation or *logos*, and (2) with humans as the *insān ḥaqīqī*, the true and perfect human (*insān kāmīl*).⁴¹ Thus, *Ḥaqīqah Muḥammadiyah* is the origin and the essence that simultaneously manifests in the universe, as well as in humans. In other words, the universe as the macrocosm and humans as the microcosm both originate from *Ḥaqīqah Muḥammadiyah*.⁴²

According to Ibnu ‘Arabī, humans play a central role in connecting

2018). 7.

⁴⁰ ‘Arabī, *Al Futubat Al Makīyah*. 17-18.

⁴¹ Ahmad Daudy, *Allah Dan Manusia Dalam Konsepsi Syekh Nuruddin Ar-Raniry* (Jakarta: CV Rajawali, 1983). 186.

⁴² Ibn ‘Arabī used not less than 22 terms to describe *Ḥaqīqah Muḥammadiyah*, 18 of which have been mentioned by Afifi in A. E. Afifi, *Filsafat Mistis Ibnu ‘Arabī* (Jakarta: Gaya Media Pratama, 1995). 99-100.

God’s Names with the reality of the universe. Humans have the ability to reveal and manifest the Names of Allah that have yet to be realized in the world. Without humans, the universe cannot fully display its essence. Ibn ‘Arabī describes humans as a polished mirror that reflects the image of God. Through humans, God is able to observe His creatures, for it is only humans who can reflect the Divine perfection and serve as His vicegerents on Earth.⁴³ Ibnu ‘Arabī’s thought on humanity also touches on the broader concept of the *Insān Kāmil*, the perfect human who embodies both the Divine essence and the universe. He regards Adam as the perfect example of *Insān Kāmil*, created in the image of both God and the cosmos. Adam is not only a physical figure but also contains a spiritual dimension that unites both realms. In this context, humanity is seen as an entity that brings together the two worlds—the outer and the inner—and as a being with the potential to attain true perfection in its relationship with God.⁴⁴

The Characteristics of *Insān Rabbānī* from Ibn ‘Arabi’s Perspective

Before discussing the characteristics of a *insān rabbānī*, Ibn ‘Arabī explains the concept of *muqarrabūn*, which refers to those who strive to draw closer to God. They are divided into three subgroups: first, those who understand God’s names through the “unveiling of the veil” (*mukāsyafah*) and “direct vision” (*musyāhadah*); second, those who acknowledge the greatness of God’s names and strive to approach Him by purifying their hearts from desires other than God; third, those who seek to acquire and imitate the attributes of God (*iktisāb*) to adorn themselves.⁴⁵ Al-Ghazali, in his book *al-Maqṣad al-Asnā*, also explains the concept of *qurb* (closeness) to God, which is related to the level of perfection (*kamāl*). Humans, as beings situated between angels and animals, possess traits

⁴³ Ibn ‘Arabī, *Fushush Al Hikam*. 50; 55, 75;120, 120;199.

⁴⁴ ‘Arabī, *Fushush Al Hikam*. 55

⁴⁵ Ibnu ‘Arabi, “Ishthilah Ash-Shufiyah,” in *Rasa’il Ibnu ‘Arabi* (Hyderabad: Mathba’at Jam’iyah Da’irat al-Ma’arif al-Utsmaniyah, 1948), 43.

from both. However, with the desire to achieve perfection, humans can overcome their desires and anger, thus reaching a state of equality with angels.⁴⁶

The Traits of an Insān Rabbānī

In the concept of *insān rabbānī*, humans are viewed as a microcosm that reflects the macrocosm. Ibn ‘Arabī sees humans as the meeting point between God and the universe, where the *rabbānī* individual absorbs divine attributes. This characteristic shows that union with God (*waḥdah al-wujūd*) does not lead to madness, but rather to a deeper understanding of the self. By uniting with God, the individual can live a life that reflects the Divine, thus fulfilling their role as a *khalīfah* (steward) on Earth in an optimal way.⁴⁷ In this regard, the *insān rabbānī* not only absorbs the characteristics of God but also plays an active role in expressing them through daily actions.

The heart of an *insān rabbānī*, described as *‘Arif*, serves as a vessel for the manifestation of God. According to Ibn ‘Arabī, the heart can transform according to the form of His manifestation, creating the perfection of image (*kamāl al-ṣūrah*). Furthermore, he emphasizes that knowledge of God is deeper through the heart than through the intellect, as the heart is capable of receiving and understanding various forms of God’s manifestation. Thus, only an individual who can perceive the manifestations of God’s Names in every aspect of existence can be considered a true *insān rabbānī*. In this view, an *insān rabbānī* is not merely a receiver but also an implementer of divine values in real life, making them a bridge between God and His creation.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Abū Ḥamid Al-Ghazālī, *Al-Maqṣad Al-Asnā Fī Syarḥ Ma‘Anī Asmā’ Allāh Al-Ḥusnā*, ed. Fadlou Shehadi (Beirut: Dār al-Masyriq, 1971). 45.

⁴⁷ Abdul Wahhab Azzam, *Filsafat Dan Puisi Iqbal* (Bandung: Pustaka, 1985).

⁴⁸ Ibn ‘Arabī, *Al-Futūḥat Al-Makkiyyah*. 297.

The Figure of an Insān Rabbānī

According to Ibn ‘Arabi, Prophet Muhammad is the ideal example of an *insān rabbānī*, having reached the highest level of ego and self-intensity. He is regarded as the most perfect being in understanding Allah, with knowledge that can only be attained through direct manifestation and witnessing.⁴⁹ In the Qur’ān, it is explained that the Prophet’s vision never turned away from what he saw, emphasizing the depth of his spiritual experience. Prophet Muhammad embodies the essence of Adam and Eve, making him the physical manifestation of the Qur’ān, where anyone who obeys the Prophet is, in fact, obeying Allah. His uniqueness and personal maturity make him the perfect role model, capable of inspiring humanity to take responsibility in facing the various challenges of life.⁵⁰

The Role of an Insān Rabbānī

According to Ibn ‘Arabi, the role of an *insān rabbānī* is to serve as a link between humans and Allah, with its most essential function being *Khalīfah Allāh fī al-‘Arḍ* (the vicegerent of God on Earth). As beings created in the Divine image, an *insān rabbānī* has the ability to be a complementary creator, channeling divine attributes within themselves.⁵¹ The task of being a *khalīfah* is very demanding, as it involves transforming the state from darkness to light and contributing to the perfection of creation according to His will. In *Futubāt al-Makīyyah*, Ibn ‘Arabi emphasizes that a *khalīfah* must reflect the essence they represent and possess knowledge of the Divine Names that are necessary for the universe.⁵²

However, not all humans are *khalīfah* of Allah; only those who reach the level of perfection, or *insān rabbānī*, are recognized as *khalīfah*. This type of *khalīfah* is more specific than prophethood, and not all prophets

⁴⁹ Ibn ‘Arabi. 3:208.

⁵⁰ Asif Iqbal Khan, *Agama, Filsafat, dan Seni dalam Pemikiran Iqbal* (Yogyakarta: Fajar Pustaka Baru, 2002). 83.

⁵¹ Reynold A. Nicholson, *Personalitas dalam Sufisme* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Sufi, 2002). 43-45

⁵² Ibn ‘Arabi, *Al Futubāt Al Makīyyah*. 290.

are khalīfah. Ibn ‘Arabī emphasizes that true khalīfah is only possessed by those appointed by Allah, while those who hold power without prophethood are not khalīfah but rather worldly kings. In this context, Ibn ‘Arabī distinguishes between general prophethood and that which is related to legislation, which is crucial in understanding the existence and meaning of *insān rabbānī* in modern life.⁵³

Steps to Becoming an Insān Rabbānī

Allah manifests His essence to the heart of the *insān rabbānī*, who is His vicegerent, and the reflection of His divine light flows into the universe through an outpouring (*faid*).⁵⁴ In this world, the *insān rabbānī* seeks help from the manifestation of Allah’s mercy through His Names and Attributes.⁵⁵ He becomes a *barzakh* between two worlds, connecting the outward (*ẓāhir*) and the inward (*bāṭin*),⁵⁶ and describes the world as the “great human”,⁵⁷ where the world functions as the body and the *insān rabbānī* as the soul. Humans are the essence of the divine realm, encompassing the realities of God’s Names and Attributes, and possessing a Divine form that reflects the unity of His totality.⁵⁸ As stated in the Ḥadīṣ, “Indeed, Allah created Adam in His image”,⁵⁹ This highlights the importance of understanding the steps to becoming an *insān rabbānī*, as outlined in the works of Ibn ‘Arabī.

⁵³ Ibn ‘Arabī, “Uqlat Al-Mustawfīz,” in *Kleinere Schriften Des Ibn Al-‘Arabi* (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1914), 45–46., 97.

⁵⁴ Ibn ‘Arabī, *Fushush Al-Hikam*. 4.

⁵⁵ Ibn ‘Arabī. 5.

⁵⁶ <https://quran.nu.or.id/ar-rahman>

⁵⁷ Zainun Nasihah, “Visi Kesadaran Kosmik dalam Kosmologi Sufi Ibn ‘Arabī,” 2020. 22.

⁵⁸ Ibn ‘Arabī, *Fushush Al-Hikam*. 4

⁵⁹ Hadith reported by Ad-Daruquthni. Ibnu Hajar said, “its sanad and the narrators are *tsiqah*”

Repentance (*Taubah*)

To become an *insān rabbānī*, the first step is repentance (*taubah*), which aims to return to purity and understand the Divine Reality.⁶⁰ Ibn ‘Arabi emphasizes that repentance is the foundation of worship and the key to love for Allah, as well as the barrier that separates the servant from Him.⁶¹ The process of repentance (*taubah*) must begin with an awareness of one’s mistakes and includes repentance from all forms of sin. Ibn ‘Arabi argues that repentance is the foundation for every spiritual ascent (*maqām*); without repentance, the *maqām* will be fragile. Through consistent repentance, one can achieve purity and self-awareness, leading to *musyāhadah* (witnessing) with Allah. Ibn ‘Arabi emphasizes the importance of *istiqāmah* (steadfastness) in repentance and self-introspection, guarding oneself from violating Allah’s decrees. If successful, one should be grateful; if not, they should feel remorse, seek forgiveness (*istighfār*), and be thankful for the opportunity to repent.⁶²

Striving (*Mujāhadah*)

Linguistically, *mujāhadah* comes from the word “**جَاهَدَ**,” which means effort or exertion. In a specific sense, *mujāhadah* is defined as the earnest effort of a servant in combating their desires (*hawā’ al-nafī*) in order to attain the pleasure of Allah.⁶³ Al-Ghazālī states that *mujāhadah* is the struggle against one’s desires to subdue them and follow Allah’s guidance.⁶⁴ In Ibn ‘Arabi’s perspective, *mujāhadah* is the effort to manifest the Divine in the human self, dissolving humanity’s lower aspects and preserving the original nature (*fiṭrah*) in the Divine form.⁶⁵ *Mujāhadah* is an important step in becoming an *insān rabbānī*, as it helps control desires and behavior. There are three groups *al-Malāmiyyah* in *mujāhadah* who do not know the ultimate

⁶⁰ Ibnu ‘Athoillah Al-Iskandari, *Al-Hikam* (Jakarta: Rene Turos, 2019).

⁶¹ Ibn ‘Arabi, *Al Futubat Al Makīyyah*. 3: 208.

⁶² Ibn ‘Arabi, *Al Futubat Al Makīyyah*. 3: 211.

⁶³ Ibn ‘Arabi, “Ishthilah Ash-Shufiyyah.” 299.

⁶⁴ Al-Ghazali, *Ihya’ Ulumuddin* (Kediri: Ats-Tsuroyya, 2018). 255.

⁶⁵ Ibn ‘Arabi, *Al Futubat Al Makīyyah*. 3: 217.

goal; *al-'Ulama' bi Allāh*, who understand Allah and the purpose of *mujāhadah*; and *al-Adba'*, who follow religious advice.⁶⁶ Ibn 'Arabī categorizes *mujāhidīn* into four types based on the Qur'ān, including the *mujāhidīn* without boundaries, *mujāhidīn* with boundaries, *mujāhidīn* in the Divine, and *mujāhid fī Allāh*, who strive out of piety. Through this process, a *sālik* can attain a theocentric state, where all actions are centered on Allah.⁶⁷

Khalwah

Ibn 'Arabī conveys a poem that depicts the depth of the *khalwah* experience: “خلوت بمن أهوى فلم يك غيرنا” his highlights the unique solitude with Allah, emphasizing a profound connection where the individual becomes completely immersed in the Divine presence.⁶⁸ He explains that Allah has established the command of *khalwah*, based on the Ḥadīṣ: “Whoever remembers Me within themselves, I will remember them within Myself.” *Khalwat* is a high spiritual station, a place where Allah is brought to life within the human being, such that only the presence of *Al-Ḥaqq* remains, with no influence from anything else. In this process, the individual experiences the Divine, eliminating all that is not divine. From this *khalwat*, one gains the pearl of wisdom in the form of *tajallī' Al-Ḥaqq*, which radiates light and enables *musyāhadah*, allowing the individual to realize that they are the image of *Al-Ḥaqq*. Those who attain perfect *musyāhadah* in the Divine perspective are called *Ahl Allāh*, understanding the profound secrets of both the macrocosm and microcosm, as stated in the Ḥadīṣ: “Allah created Adam in His image.”⁶⁹

Uṣṣlah

Uṣṣlah is a spiritual process of isolating oneself to maximize

⁶⁶ Ibn 'Arabī, *Al Futuhat Al Makkiyyah*. 3: 221.

⁶⁷ Ibn 'Arabī, *Al Futuhat Al Makkiyyah*. 3: 222.

⁶⁸ Ibn 'Arabī, *Al Futuhat Al Makkiyyah*. 3: 223.

⁶⁹ Ibn 'Arabī, *Al Futuhat Al Makkiyyah*. 3: 225.

closeness to Allah.⁷⁰ According to Ibn ‘Arabī, this step is mandatory for a *salik*, where knowing oneself leads to knowing Allah, ultimately guiding one toward *musyābadah* with Allah and experiencing the Divine Names (*asma’ al-ḥusnā*) within oneself.⁷¹ *Asma’ al-ḥusnā* are divided into two categories: those that can be understood by the intellect and those that are accepted through faith.⁷² Ibn ‘Arabī states that the person of *uṣṭalāh* isolates themselves from everything except Allah, including the Names and Attributes that do not belong to Him, in order to become an *insān rabbānī*. He divides *uṣṭalāh* into two types: *uṣṭalāh ḍabiriyyah*, which involves physical separation, and *uṣṭalāh ma’naviyyah*, which occurs inwardly even though one remains physically present with others. The *uṣṭalāh* of the *‘ulama’ bi Allāh* is *uṣṭalāh ma’navī*, as they function as *khalīfah* of Allah, guiding people toward him.⁷³

Taqwā

Another important step in achieving *insān rabbānī* is *taqwā*. Ibn ‘Arabī begins his discussion of *taqwā* with a poem that emphasizes how Allah illuminates the sight and purifies the hearts of His servants to guide them to the path of faith.⁷⁴ He explains that, to avoid Allah’s anger, one must be *taqwā*, which means fulfilling His commands and avoiding His prohibitions.⁷⁵ *Taqwā* has two aspects: first, a fear of Allah’s anger, and second, a love that causes one to fear losing Him. *Taqwā* is an obligation for every servant, and its spiritual station is *taqwā Allāh*, where a servant must adhere to His commands. Ibn ‘Arabī advises that one should always feel under Allah’s watch and relinquish personal attributes so that only the Divine attributes govern their being. Thus, a truly *taqwā* person is one who is controlled by the Divine will, with their actions reflecting the ethics of

⁷⁰ Ibnu ‘Athoillah Al-Iskandari, *Al-Hikam*. 34.

⁷¹ Ibn ‘Arabī, *Al-Futūḥat Al-Makīyyah*. 3: 229.

⁷² Ibn ‘Arabī, *Al-Futūḥat Al-Makīyyah*. 3: 229.

⁷³ Ibn ‘Arabī, *Al-Futūḥat Al-Makīyyah*. 3: 230.

⁷⁴ Ibn ‘Arabī, *Al-Futūḥat Al-Makīyyah*. 3: 236.

⁷⁵ Ibn ‘Arabī, *Al-Futūḥat Al-Makīyyah*. 3: 237.

Allah.⁷⁶

Wara'

Wara' in Arabic means piety or distancing oneself from sinful actions. According to Ibn 'Arabī, *wara'* is the act of avoiding forbidden and doubtful actions (*ḥarām* and *syubḥaṭ*).⁷⁷ It is based on the Ḥadīṣ of the Prophet Muhammad, which advises leaving what is uncertain for what is clear. Ibn 'Arabī emphasizes that doubt can lead to harm if its truth is not understood, making it crucial to avoid such uncertainties and focus on Allah. To become an *insān rabbānī*, one must maintain both physical and spiritual conduct in alignment with the Divine gaze, thus staying away from what is unlawful and doubtful. He stresses that the injunction against what is *ḥarām* is a command to avoid, as it can obstruct one's connection with Allah, and in essence, there is no barrier between us and Him.⁷⁸

Zuhd

Zuhd manifests through unity with *al-Mulk*, where a seeker (*al-Ṭālib*) understands this reality. According to Ibn 'Arabī, *al-Ṭālib* is a student who is always aware of the Divine, so their heart remains in a state of *zuhd*. He differentiates between two types of *zuhd*: the *ṣāhid* who uses Divine knowledge and the one who does not, merely understanding *zuhd* as a form of poverty towards material things.⁷⁹ *Zuhd* means turning away from anything other than the Divine manifestation (*tajallī Ilahī*) and leaving everything unrelated to Allah. The *insān rabbānī* internalizes the Divine attributes and practices *zuhd* from things that distance them from the Divine. Ibn 'Arabī also quotes Abu Yazid al-Bisṭāmī, who states that *zuhd* should become an inherent part of the self through three phases: *zuhd* from the world, the hereafter, and everything other than Allah. The peak

⁷⁶ Ibn 'Arabī, *Al Futuḥat Al Makīyyah*. 3: 238.

⁷⁷ Ibn 'Arabī, *Al Futuḥat Al Makīyyah*. 3: 263.

⁷⁸ Ibn 'Arabī, *Al Futuḥat Al Makīyyah*. 3: 263.

⁷⁹ Ibn 'Arabī, *Al Futuḥat Al Makīyyah*. 3: 267.

of *ẓuhd* is self-awareness, where one desires nothing but the will of Allah, thereby manifesting as an *insān rabbānī* without any veil obstructing their connection with Allah.⁸⁰

Al-Sahr

The step “*Fī Ma’rifah Maqām al-Sahr*” begins with a poem that describes this spiritual station as equivalent to the station of *qayyūmiyyah*, where an individual remains in a constant state of alertness. Ibn ‘Arabi explains that *qayyūm* refers to the state of a servant who remains vigilant through the Divine Name *al-Qayyūm*, whereas *sahr* is the effort to embody this attribute. For those who have not yet attained *ma’rifah*, it is important to strive to maintain a state of vigilance, as *sahr* is a Divine characteristic that must be possessed. To achieve *ḥaqīqah* and *ma’rifah*, one must practice pillars such as *sabr*, *jū’* (hunger), *ṣaum* (silence), and *uṣṭāḥ* (self-isolation). Ibn ‘Arabi reminds that the station of *sahr* should become a permanent quality within the servant, referring to the Qur’anic verse that emphasizes Allah’s attribute of eternal vigilance. By keeping the heart always awake, the servant will be able to see the face of the Divine, just as they maintain the body for life.⁸¹

Al-Jū’

Jū’ is a practice of the *ahlū Allāh* (People of Allah), often referred to as the “white death,” and they use it as a path to four types of death: first, the “green death” (*akḥḍar*), which kills the feelings of attributes and honor, as experienced by Umar ibn Khattab; second, the “black death” (*aswad*), which removes the veils of darkness; third, the “red death” (*aḥmar*), which kills the passionate desires of anger; and fourth, the “yellow death” (*aṣfar*), which eliminates the trait of arrogance. Ibn ‘Arabi explains that *jū’* is a step in the spiritual path for a *ṣālik* (seeker) to achieve the highest nature (*ṭabī’ah al-anlā’*), so that every action reflects the divine nature and leads them

⁸⁰ Ibn ‘Arabi, *Al Futuḥat Al Makīyyah*. 3: 272.

⁸¹ Ibn ‘Arabi, *Al Futuḥat Al Makīyyah*. 3: 273.

toward becoming an *insān rabbānī*. Thus, *jūʿ* becomes a sacred ritual that weakens the carnal desires, allowing the seeker to be dominated by the divine desires.⁸²

Murāqabah

Ibn ʿArabī begins his discussion of *murāqabah* with a poem emphasizing the importance of being a person engaged in *murāqabah*, which is an essential step in the spiritual path to connect with the Knowledge of God. He quotes the Qurʾānic verse, “Indeed, Allah is Ever Watchful over everything” (*QS. Al-Aḥzāb: 52*), which affirms that *murāqabah* means always feeling watched by Allah. This awareness causes the servant to fear doing anything outside His will and increases the desire to draw closer to Him. *Murāqabah* encompasses Allah’s oversight in all realms—both within the human being, such as the heart and body, and beyond. Ibn ʿArabī emphasizes that Allah’s surveillance covers everything, including the attainment of the station of *muqarrabūn*, where the servant must always feel that Allah is observing all of their actions. This awareness strengthens worship, as the consciousness that good deeds are never beyond God’s watchfulness should bring greater joy than when being seen by humans alone. *Murāqabah* thus becomes a foundational step for the *ṣālik* (seeker) to reach the peak of *iḥsān* and *maʿrifah*, for by feeling seen by Allah, the servant can recognize their true self, ultimately revealing *ḥaqiqah* (the truth).⁸³

ʿUbūdiyyah

ʿUbūdiyyah comes from the root word *ʿabada*, which means slave, representing someone who is completely under the authority of their Lord. Humans are created to be servants of Allah, not servants of their desires or Satan, as stated in *QS. Al-Zāriyāt (51:56)*. Through *ʿubūdiyyah*, the servant

⁸² Ibn ʿArabī, *Al Futuḥat Al Makkiyyah*. 3: 282-283

⁸³ Ibn ʿArabī, *Al Futuḥat Al Makkiyyah*. 3: 313-315

can draw closer to their Lord, as explained by Abu Yazid al-Bisṭāmī, who stated that sincere worship is the key to closeness to Allah. Ibn ‘Arabī emphasizes the importance of sincerity in *‘ubūdīyyah*; a sincere servant does not seek praise from people but is content with the attention of Allah alone. He warns that the desire to be recognized by others is a sign of insincerity. Initially, the experts of the spiritual path avoid the attention of creatures to achieve *fanaʿ* (annihilation) and protect their hearts. However, after reaching *maʿrifah* (gnosis), they may be shown their deeds by Allah, but they are not bound by human recognition, as all matters are surrendered to him.⁸⁴

Istiḳāmah

An important step to become an *insān rabbānī* is to take is *istiḳāmah*, which signifies sincerity and deep love for staying connected with Allah. Ibn ‘Arabī explains that the station of *istiḳāmah* is hidden within the souls of the pious and is reflected in their actions. *Istiḳāmah* means to remain steadfast, consistent, and upright, as explained in *QS. Hūd* (11:56). He emphasizes the importance of maintaining worship in all conditions, like the soul always being on the straight path. Ibn ‘Arabī states that prioritizing the continuity of *wird* (spiritual practices) is better than seeking miracles, aligning with the Hadith which says that *istiḳāmah* is better than a thousand miracles. Obedience and contentment with Allah’s decrees are the greatest gifts, combining both inner and outer *‘ubūdīyyah* (servitude). *Istiḳāmah* serves as the foundation for righteous deeds that attract divine blessings, where the more consistent the actions, the more blessings are received. The purity of the soul will determine the light of faith and *maʿrifah* (gnosis). In a *ḥadīṣ qudsī*, Allah affirms that the servant who draws near to Him with voluntary worship will be loved by Him, and He will become their hearing, sight, and helper.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Ibn ‘Arabi, *Al Futubat Al Makiyyah*. 3: 322-324.

⁸⁵ Ibn ‘Arabi, *Al Futubat Al Makiyyah*. 3: 326-329.

Ikhlaṣ

Every human action is driven by needs, but often they are unaware that it is God who drives them. *Ikhlaṣ* is crucial in every action, as explained by Ibn ‘Arabī in his poetry. *Ikhlaṣ* means purity, and it is an essential step for the seeker to ensure that their actions are not mixed with anything other than Allah. To achieve *ikhlaṣ*, one must empty the mind and heart of egoism and strive to follow Allah’s guidance. Sincere deeds are those performed solely for His pleasure, while actions that are not sincere are rejected. The opposite of *ikhlaṣ* is *syirk*, which cannot coexist with *ikhlaṣ*. Ibn ‘Arabī emphasizes that worship performed with *ikhlaṣ* should be solely for Allah, without expecting praise or reward, and it must be done with complete love for Him, as stated in QS. al-An’am, verse 162.⁸⁶

Zikr

Remembering Allah is a duty for those who believe in Him, as dzikir can soothe the heart and demonstrate the servant’s desire to draw near to Him.⁸⁷ In language, dzikir means ‘to remember,’ which involves invoking the Lord through sacred recitations or mentioning His names. According to Ibn ‘Arabī, *zīkr* is a means of connecting oneself with Allah until the self dissolves into Him. He states that *zīkr* should make a person merge into each of His names, such that only Allah remains. In QS. al-Baqarah, verse 152, Allah says, “If you remember Me, I will remember you,” emphasizing that remembering Him means dissolving into His essence. Ibn ‘Arabī categorizes *zīkr* into six types, ranging from reflecting on blessings to dissolving in Him. In practice, *zīkr* can be done by focusing the heart to achieve concentration or using the power of imagination. Perfect *zīkr* involves all the potential of the self, creating a deeper connection with Allah.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Ibn ‘Arabī, *Al Futuḥat Al Makkiyyah*. 3: 329-336.

⁸⁷ Ibnu ‘Arabī, *Rasa’il Ibnu ‘Arabī*, 2 Jilid da (Hyderabad: Mathba’at Jam’iyah Da’irat al-Ma’arif al-Utsmaniyah, 1948). 45.

⁸⁸ Ibn ‘Arabī, *Al Futuḥat Al Makkiyyah*. 3: 344-345.

Maḥabbah

As humans who believe in the oneness of God’s reality, the path of religion is something that every believer must walk, giving rise to various paths and levels of devotion to the Almighty. Humans, weak and powerless in the face of life’s challenges, should humble themselves and submit to God.⁸⁹ In devotion, the concept of *maḥabbah* becomes crucial, as love for God allows us to know Him more deeply. *Maḥabbah*, which means love, transforms into *‘iyyq* when the inclination of the heart grows stronger.⁹⁰ *Maqām*, as the level of a servant in the presence of their Lord, becomes higher as the servant grows closer to God.⁹¹ Ibnu ‘Arabi explains that love can transcend reason, so that those intoxicated by love are freed from the burdens of religious law. In his view, love is the essence of religion, and this world is a unity with God, making love the origin of all things. The servant’s love for God is reflected in daily life, where God is present in every action. This view aligns with the teachings of Imam al-Ghazali, who emphasizes the relationship between humans and God through the divine attributes that should be exemplified in moral life.⁹²

Riyāḍah

Riyāḍah, meaning training or self-discipline, is a spiritual practice aimed at purifying the soul by overcoming bodily desires. It involves cleansing the soul from anything other than Allah and adorning it with *zīkr*, worship, good deeds, and noble character. The key to the success of *riyāḍah* is total submission to Allah and accepting all that He gives with sincerity and devotion.⁹³ Ibnu ‘Arabi defines *riyāḍah* as the cultivation of morals, a process of purifying the soul from improper traits. In addition to *riyāḍah*, the term *mujāḥadah* is also used by Sufi scholars, with *mujāḥadah*

⁸⁹ Fahrudin Faiz, *Menghilang, Menemukan Diri Sejati* (Jakarta: Noura Books, 2022). 49.

⁹⁰ Mujetaba Mustafa, “Konsep Maḥabbah dalam Al-Qur’an (Kajian Tafsir Maudhu’i),” *Al-Asas*, 2020, 41–53.

⁹¹ Asnawiyah, “Maqam dan Ahwal: Makna dan Hakikatnya dalam Pendakian Menuju Tuhan,” *Substansia*, 2014, 79–86.

⁹² Ibn ‘Arabi, *Al Futubāt Al Makkiyah*. 3: 480-490.

⁹³ Ahmad Sayuti, *Pervik-Pervik Kesufian* (Jakarta: Pustaka Amani, 2002). 36.

being considered a part of the *maqāmāt* (spiritual stations). *Riyadhah* is divided into two types: *riyadhah adab*, which involves purging human traits in order to adopt divine qualities, and *riyadhah ṭalab*, which emphasizes the piety of the disciple in seeking knowledge through the practice of dhikr and spiritual exercises.⁹⁴ To maintain the purity of one's character, a person must control their desires and merge with the divine elements, so that the purified soul can foster spiritual growth and satisfaction in facing life's trials.⁹⁵

Taḥallī

After purifying oneself from negative traits, the next stage is *taḥallī*, which involves filling oneself with noble qualities and adopting a respectful attitude.⁹⁶ In Q.S. Al-Naḥl: 90, Allah commands justice and doing good deeds. Ibnu 'Arabi also explains *taḥallī* as adorning oneself with divine qualities, which allows the heart to receive the radiance of *Nūr Allāh*. This process involves sincere intention and actions that seek the pleasure of Allah, as well as aligning one's behavior with virtuous traits. *Taḥallī* is the filling of the empty soul with good habits, so that the emptiness does not lead to frustration; every bad habit left behind must be immediately replaced with a good one, thereby shaping a noble character.⁹⁷

Takḥallī

Takḥallī is a crucial step for a Sufi to free oneself from negative thoughts and behaviors, including the attachment to worldly pleasures. In Ibnu 'Arabi's view, *takḥallī* is similar to *khalwāb*—seeking solitude to avoid distractions and to eliminate harmful desires, leaving only the presence of

⁹⁴ Ibnu 'Arabi, *Al Futuḥat Al Makkiyyah*. 4: 166.

⁹⁵ Ibnu 'Arabi, *Al Futuḥat Al Makkiyyah*. 3: 167-168.

⁹⁶ Tim Penulis UIN Syarif Hidayatullah, *Ensiklopedi Tasawwuf*, ed. Azyumardi Azra (Bandung: Angkasa, 2012).

⁹⁷ Ibnu 'Arabi, *Al Futuḥat Al Makkiyyah*. 4: 168-169.

al-Haqq. He emphasizes the importance of renouncing everything other than Allah, both internally and externally, until one is fully certain of His existence. *Takhallī* also involves repentance and cleansing the soul from blameworthy traits, so that it can be filled with noble qualities, leading to true happiness. The ultimate goal of Sufism is to cultivate a direct connection with God, achieved through the purity of the soul and the disciplined management of one’s mental behavior, allowing the recognition of the divine identity within oneself.⁹⁸

Wahdah Al-Wujūd

Ibn Arabi did not directly use the term *wahdah al-wujūd* (the unity of existence) in his works, although his ideas about the relationship between God and the universe are often associated with this concept. This term was first introduced by Ibn Taimiyyah after studying Ibn Arabi’s thought and finding its alignment with this view.⁹⁹ *Wahdah al-Wujūd*, often associated with the thought of Ibn Arabi, refers to the concept of the unity of existence, where only Allah possesses true existence. Ibn Arabi emphasizes that everything in the universe does not have independent existence and can only exist because of Allah’s existence. He differentiates between the necessary existence of God and the possible existence of creatures, explaining that creatures only have existence as a loan from God’s existence. In his works, Ibn Arabi also uses the term *al-Haqq*, meaning “the Truth,” to describe the absolute reality.¹⁰⁰

Ibn ‘Arabi’s philosophy encompasses the concept of *Tajallī*, or the manifestation of God, which occurs in two forms: *tajallī ghaib* (potential) and *tajallī syuhūdī* (actual). The process of creation begins with *al-fayḍ al-aqdas*, which is the manifestation of God’s potential, followed by *al-fayḍ al-*

⁹⁸ Ibn ‘Arabi, *Al Futuhat Al Makkiyyah*. 4: 169-170.

⁹⁹ Ibrāhīm Madkūr, “Wahdah Al-Wujūd Bayna Ibnī ‘Arabi Wa Spinoza,” in *Al-Kitāb Al-Tidhkārī Muḥy Al-Dīn Ibnu ‘Arabi Fi Al-Dhikrā Al-Miāwiyah Al-Thāminah Li Milādihi* (Kairo: Dār al-Kātib al-‘Arabi, 1969), 269; See also: Hamdan Maghribi, *Tasawwuf Salafi: Rekonstruksi Tasawwuf Ibn Taimiyyah* (Malang: Madani, 2024).

¹⁰⁰ Ibn Arabi, *Al Futuhat Al Makkiyyah*. 4: 170.

muqaddas, the actual appearance in the world. He also introduces the concept of *al-A'yan al-Sābitah*, referring to the latent essences of all things in God's knowledge, before their physical existence emerges. This shows that all creatures have an essence originating from God's existence, even though, in physical reality, they appear separate.¹⁰¹

Musyāḥadah

The teaching of *musyāḥadah* by Ibn 'Arabī is an essential dimension in Islamic spirituality, related to the highest level in religion, which is *iḥsān*.¹⁰² *Musyāḥadah* needs to be developed within the soul of Muslims, especially in the face of the current crisis of identity, civilization, and spirituality, as the *syahādah* (testimony of faith) is the determining factor of a person's Islam.¹⁰³ *Musyāḥadah*, according to Ibn 'Arabī's teachings, means mutual witnessing and is the highest stage in Sufi spirituality, known as the *maqām ma'rifah* (station of gnosis). This process begins with the recognition of one's true self, leading to awareness of God's existence as the ultimate reality. To reach the state of *fana'*, where awareness of everything besides Allah disappears, a Sufi must pass through six levels of *fana'*, each eliminating sin, actions of the servant, the attributes of creation, personal identity, the entire universe, and finally, everything except Allah. Upon reaching the sixth stage of *fana'*, the Sufi realizes that only the eternal and absolute existence remains. Ibn 'Arabī summarizes *mushahadah* in his poetry, emphasizing that this experience represents the true spiritual state, where the servant witnesses the essence of God's existence.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ Ibn 'Arabī, *Al Futuḥat Al Makkiyyah*. 4: 170.

¹⁰² Ali A. Allawī, *Krisis Peradaban Islam: Antara Kebangkitan dan Keruntuban Total* (Bandung: Mizan, 2015). 36-37.

¹⁰³ Suteja Ibnu Pakar, *Tokoh-Tokoh Tasawwuf dan Ajarannya*, (Yogyakarta: Deepublish, 2013). 78.

¹⁰⁴ Ibn 'Arabī, *Al Futuḥat Al Makkiyyah*. 4: 185-186.

Ṣabr

Etimologically, *ṣabr* comes from the Arabic word “صبر,” which means to endure, remain steadfast, and be patient.¹⁰⁵ In linguistic terms, it refers to restraining and preventing oneself from anything disliked in order to seek the pleasure of Allah.¹⁰⁶ In Ibn ‘Arabi’s perspective, *ṣabr* is an essential step to becoming a *insān rabbānī* (a divine servant), closely related to his understanding of God, humanity, and the cosmos. He argues that the universe is non-existent in itself and only acquires existence through the omnipotence of Allah (*Al-Haqq*) as the Absolute Determiner. Without Allah’s support, entities with the potential to exist remain non-existent. Therefore, *ṣabr* is likened to a light that emanates from Allah, necessary for humans to continue receiving existence and overcoming spiritual challenges on their journey toward the ultimate truth.¹⁰⁷

The Symbol of *Insān Rabbānī* in Ibn ‘Arabi’s through Charles S. Peirce’s Theory

Humans are beings who constantly seek meaning in various aspects of themselves and their surroundings.¹⁰⁸ This search for meaning continues incessantly, often in the form of physical movements that then become patterns of reaction to the environment. In this context, Peirce refers to it as the “pragmatic-physical” process.¹⁰⁹ This research focuses on the search for meaning in the symbol of *insān rabbānī* using Peirce’s semiotics. In Ibn ‘Arabi’s perspective, the relationship between humans and God is very close, with no distance between the creature and the Creator. Humans, created in the image of God, are the ultimate purpose of creation. This similarity in image becomes a riddle, explained through questions about who shares the likeness of God. To share this likeness,

¹⁰⁵ Mahmud Yunus, *Kamus Arab-Indonesia* (Jakarta: Yayasan Penyelenggara Penerjemah/Penafsir Al-Qur’an, 1973). Hal. 211.

¹⁰⁶ Muhammad ibn Shalih Al-Munajjid, *Silsilah Amalan Hati* (Bandung: Irsyad Baitus Salam, 2006). 347.

¹⁰⁷ Ibn ‘Arabi, *Al Futuhat Al Makiyyah*. 4: 364.

¹⁰⁸ Marcel Danesi and Paul Perron, *Analyzing Cultures: An Introduction and Handbook* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999). 39-40.

¹⁰⁹ Benny, *Semiotik & Dinamika Sosial Budaya*. 3.

humans must demonstrate obedience to His laws. At this level, there is no dualism between the body and soul, unlike the dualism presented in the Judeo-Christian tradition. This approach leads to a Sufi understanding of *ma'rifah* (gnosticism), which emphasizes direct experience in knowing God.¹¹⁰

Gnosticism introduces several key ideas for interpreting the theme of *Imago Dei*. Here, the researcher outlines these ideas based on Schwanz's analysis:¹¹¹ *First*, the concept of *Imago Dei* applies to God's creatures, which are distinct from the Absolute God. God's creatures, known as *Anthropos*, *Sophia*, or *Logos*, are classified as God's image. *Second*, the concept of image reveals both similarities and differences with the Absolute God. The relationship between the two is explained by Al-Farabi's theory of emanation. *Third*, the theory of revelation and soteriology (i.e., "doctrine of salvation") is related to the concept of image. Revelation is understood as the knowledge that the innermost part of humanity, the human soul, has a divine origin, and with this knowledge, humanity attains salvation. *Fourth*, the soul and body are clearly distinguished. The body belongs to the physical realm and is seen as a prison for the soul. The physical world is created from earth, fire, water, and air. The soul originates from God, but the soul is not created in the literal sense; it emanates from God. *Fifth*, the term *image* is sometimes applied to the inner part of humans. Thus, at the same time, the term holds both the meaning of form and copy.

From the explanation above, Ibn 'Arabī states that God manifests His Self (*tajallī*) in the person of Adam through His Names and Attributes.¹¹² This concept of manifestation can be analyzed using Charles S. Pierce's semiotic theory, which explores the symbolic meaning of God in *insān rabbānī*. This theory not only unveils new insights but also traces

¹¹⁰ Afīfī, *Filsafat Mistis Ibnu 'Arabi*. 50.

¹¹¹ Peter Schwanz, *Imago Dei Als Ibnu 'Arabi* (Halle: VEB Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1970). 12.

¹¹² Abd Halim Rofi'e, "Wahdat Al-Wujud dalam Pemikiran Ibnu Arabi," *ULUL ALBAB Jurnal Studi Islam* 13, no. 2 (September 24, 2013): 131–41, <https://doi.org/10.18860/ua.v0i0.2406>. Hal. 23

the process of meaning creation through the triadic and trichotomous model, treating reality as a sign and a text.¹¹³ The process of semiosis allows the emergence of new interpretants and representamen, leading to limitless interpretations.¹¹⁴ In its process, Charles S. Peirce’s semiotic theory undergoes two stages, namely:¹¹⁵

Triadic (Triangle Meaning Semiotics)

Representament (Y)

According to Charles S. Peirce, a *representamen* is an important concept in the analysis of signs, where meaning emerges from the interpretation of a message conveyed through a sign, which is often visual or physical in nature.¹¹⁶ This sign serves as the starting point in the process of semiosis, where the *representamen* functions as a link between reality and human cognition.¹¹⁷ Ibn ‘Arabi emphasizes that the concept of *insān rabbānī* lies in the union (*jam’iyah*), totality (*majmu’*), and the acknowledgment of God (*i’tirāf*) that God bestows upon humanity.¹¹⁸ From this, Ibn ‘Arabi explains that the sign representing *insān rabbānī* is the entirety of the physical form, soul, attributes, and actions of a human being. Therefore, the *representamen* in the triadic model is the very existence of the human being. This is further supported by Ibn ‘Arabi’s statement that “man is a Divine sign,”¹¹⁹ in Peirce’s semiotic theory, humans are the source of all signs.¹²⁰

Object (X)

¹¹³ Benny, *Semiotik & Dinamika Sosial Budaya*. 6.

¹¹⁴ Charles Sanders Peirce, *Pierce on Sign: Writing On Semiotic*, ed. James Hoopes (Chapel Hill and London: The University Of North Carolina Press, 1991). 72.

¹¹⁵ Charles Sanders Peirce, *Pierce on Sign: Writing On Semiotic*. 71.

¹¹⁶ Jr E. San Juan, “Charles Sanders Peirce’s Theory Of Signs, Meaning, And Literary Interpretation,” *St Jhon’s University Humanities Review* 2, no. 2 (2004): 46. 47.

¹¹⁷ Peirce, *Pierce on Sign: Writing On Semiotic*. 74.

¹¹⁸ Ibn ‘Arabi, *Fushush Al Hikam*. 61.

¹¹⁹ Syekh Ibnu ‘Arabi, *Al-Futubat Al-Makkiyah* (Darul Futuhat, 2016). 122.

¹²⁰ Benny, *Semiotik & Dinamika Sosial Budaya*.9.

Charles S. Peirce's semiotic theory defines a sign as "something that represents something else," meaning that a sign begins with the *representamen*, which represents what is in the human mind (the object), and is cognitively related in the process of meaning-making that connects reality with human cognition.¹²¹ Thus, the object refers to the entity that serves as the reference of the sign, whether it can be perceived by the senses or is mental or imaginary in nature. Humans, as the *representamen*, represent God (the object), as expressed by Ibn 'Arabi, who states that God created *insān rabbānī* as a summary of all His names and the reality of the universe, making Adam His representative.¹²² This concept is related to the metaphysics of *wahdat al-wujud*, which explains the relationship between the object, God, and the interpretation of the Hadith *Imago Dei*.

Ibn 'Arabi's concept of "reality" is often equated with "meaning" and is closely connected to his epistemology, where he defines God's knowledge as the reality that connects existence and non-existence, with God being the most real reality.¹²³ He also refers to humanity as an undivided whole reality, emphasizing that every human being is a symbol of God, creating a parallelism between human knowledge and Divine knowledge.¹²⁴ Thus, Peirce's semiotic object of *insān rabbānī* as God is clearly evident, as Ibn 'Arabi emphasizes "humanity as a symbol of God."¹²⁵ The concept of this symbol is important in understanding signs as a symbolic system that relies on social conventions and cultural context, where meaning can encompass various representamen, both physical and cognitive. As such, human interpretation of an object can be seen as a form of reality.¹²⁶

¹²¹ E. San Juan, "Charles Sanders Peirce's Theory Of Signs, Meaning, And Literary Interpretation."

¹²² Ibnu 'Arabi, *Insha' Ad-Dawa'ir*, dalam H.S. (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1914).

¹²³ Ibnu 'Arabi. 10.

¹²⁴ Ibnu 'Arabi, *Al Futubat Al Makiyyah*. 4: 345-346.

¹²⁵ Ibnu 'Arabi, *Al-Futubat Al-Makkiyah*.

¹²⁶ Benny, *Semiotik & Dinamika Sosial Budaya*. 40.

Interpretant ($X=Y/Y=X$)

The next process is the *interpretant*, which is the stage of interpretation or meaning-making of the sign. The interpretive stage is more open-ended than the object.¹²⁷ According to Peirce, the *interpretant* is the combination of the object and the *representamen*.¹²⁸ In the context of interpreting the symbol of *insān rabbānī*, the interpretation process involves the object (God) being combined with the *representamen* (human), resulting in the equation *Man = God*. In this context, the *interpretant* indicates that God is identified with humanity, where humans, as the *representamen*, function as a sign representing God as the object. The outcome of Peirce’s semiotic theory shows that the meaning formed is the identification of God with humanity. According to Ibn ‘Arabī, through the concept of *Waḥdah al-Wujūd*, when humanity unites with God, the reality of human consciousness becomes the reality of *al-Ḥaqq* (the ‘Truth’).¹²⁹ Ibn ‘Arabi refers to *Insān Kāmil* as the reality of *al-ḥaqq*, which leads to *musyāḥadah* (direct witness) and is recognized as belonging to the divine realm, known as *Insān Rabbānī* (the human nation of God).¹³⁰

Ibn ‘Arabi’s view suggests that where God is identified with humans as a single entity, it reflects the similarity between human knowledge and divine knowledge, which is referred to as parallelism.¹³¹ Although there is a fundamental difference—divine knowledge is universal and does not rely on the senses, while human knowledge is limited to sensory experience—both share a similarity in understanding reality.¹³² Ibn ‘Arabī introduces the concept of *mitsl*, which refers to the mental image formed after perceiving an object, explaining how human knowledge can connect itself with the non-existent. He argues that humans, created in the image of God, reflect eternal reality, and human knowledge of the universe and

¹²⁷ Benny, *Semiotik & Dinamika Sosial Budaya*.

¹²⁸ Pierce, *Pierce on Sign: Writing On Semiotic*.

¹²⁹ Ibn ‘Arabi, *Al-Futūḥat Al-Makkiyah*.

¹³⁰ Ibn ‘Arabi, *Al-Futūḥat Al-Makkiyah*.

¹³¹ Ibn ‘Arabi, *Al-Futūḥat Al-Makkiyah*.

¹³² Ibn ‘Arabi, *Inṣā’ Ad-Dawā’ir*. 14.

God is a unity, making humans a mediator between the two.¹³³ Thus, human knowledge of itself, the universe, and God is interconnected, creating a profound relationship between the three.¹³⁴

In this section, we have seen how Ibn ‘Arabi’s epistemology uses the *Ḥadīṣ* of *Imago Dei*. From this, we can create a schema of the relationship between God, humans, and the universe as follows:

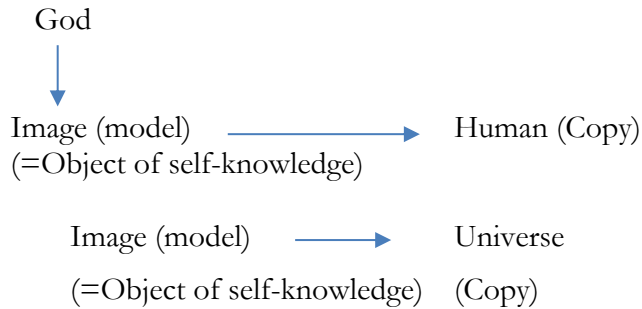


Diagram of the Relationship Between God, Humans, and the Universe

In a certain view, God is all that is created, as well as the reality that is a manifestation of the Self, where the subject and object of its manifestation are one. In a hadith qudsi, Allah says, “I am the foot used to walk, the hand used to strike, the tongue used to speak.”¹³⁵ this shows the unity between God and humanity. For *insān rabbānī*, reality is always recognized.¹³⁶ and those who recognize in this world will recognize in the Hereafter. Therefore, Allah says, “For those who have a heart...”¹³⁷ Referring to those who understand the formal transformation of reality, in this case, human identity is Divine identity, and there is no existence determined except for His own identity.¹³⁸ In accordance with Peirce’s semiotic theory, the Triadic process of *insān rabbānī* can be depicted as

¹³³ Al-Farabi, *Syarb Al-Farabi Li-Kitab Aristhuthalis Fi Al-Ibarah*, diedit oleh S. Marrow (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub Ilmiyah, 1960). 28.

¹³⁴ Ibn ‘Arabi, *Fushush Al Hikam*.

¹³⁵ Ibn ‘Arabi, *Fushush Al Hikam*.

¹³⁶ Ibn ‘Arabi, *Fushush Al Hikam*.

¹³⁷ Q.S. Al-Rum: 30.

¹³⁸ Ibn ‘Arabi, *Al Futubat Al Makiyyah*.

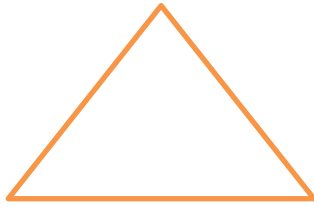
follows:

Representamen (Y)

Y: Human

X: God

Y=X: Human=God (The humanity of God)



Object (X)

Interpretan (Y=X)

Triadic *Insān rabbānī*

Trichotomy

Trichotomy is the central point of Peirce’s semiotics, consisting of 3 levels and 9 subtypes of signs.¹³⁹ If depicted, it would look like the following table:

		<i>First</i>	<i>Second</i>	<i>Third</i>
Y	<i>Representament</i>	<i>Qualisign</i>	<i>Sinsign</i>	<i>Legisign</i>
X	<i>Object</i>	<i>Icon</i>	<i>Indeks</i>	<i>Symbol</i>
Y=X/X=Y	<i>Interpretant</i>	<i>Rheme</i>	<i>Decent</i>	<i>Argument</i>

Table 1. Trichotomy of *Insān rabbānī*

The first trichotomy is the sign, which is the representament. The sign (representament) is divided into qualisign, sinsign, and legisign.¹⁴⁰ *Qualisign* (*firstness*) is a representamen that originates from a character or quality and is still potential in nature.¹⁴¹ Humans become the representamen of the Divine, with God’s names and attributes manifested in human qualities. Ibn ‘Arabi says: “Adam has a (real) form, which can be sensed, shaped, created, and determined in actuality, because God’s names, such as ‘The Living’, ‘The Almighty’, and so on, unite (*tajtami*) in

¹³⁹ Pierce, *Pierce on Sign: Writing On Semiotic*.

¹⁴⁰ Marcel Danesi, *Pesan, Tanda, dan Makna: Buku Teks Dasar Mengenai Semiotika dan Teori Komunikasi* (Yogyakarta: Jalasutra, 2010).

¹⁴¹ Marcel Danesi, *Pesan, Tanda, dan Makna: Buku Teks Dasar Mengenai Semiotika dan Teori Komunikasi*.

the qualities of Adam.”¹⁴² Ibn ‘Arabi’s statement refers to the hadith “Adam was created in His image,” which indicates a similarity between the attributes of God and Adam, where God is the Living, the Almighty, and possesses other qualities that are also found in Adam.¹⁴³ Similarly, al-Ghazali shares the view with Ibn ‘Arabi that when a human unites with their Lord,¹⁴⁴ then the entire soul and body become a manifestation of God.

Sin sign (secondness) is a representation that arises from an event or factual occurrence that is happening in the present.¹⁴⁵ As previously explained, humans as symbols of God are characterized by Ibn ‘Arabi as a fusion of God’s Names and the reality of the universe. In *Fushush al-Hikam*, Ibn ‘Arabi writes: “For this reason, he (the Prophet) spoke concerning the creation of Adam, who became the example (barnamaj) uniting the image (nu’ut) of the Divine Presence (*hadrah Ilahiyah*), which includes the Essence (*Dzat*), Attributes (*Shifat*), and Actions (*a’al*), ‘God created Adam in His image.’ And his image is none other than the Divine Presence.”¹⁴⁶ From the excerpt above, it is clear that the image in which Adam was created is the Divine Presence, which is depicted through the Essence, Attributes, and Actions. In *Futuhāt al-Makiyyah*, the identification of the Image of God and the Names of God is expressed as follows: “All of God’s Names are attributed to him (human = Adam) without exception. Thus, Adam appears in the image of God’s Name, because this Name encompasses all of God’s Names.”¹⁴⁷ The origin of this identification seems to trace back to the views of Ruzbihan Baqli and al-Ghazali, who held that humans are manifestations of God, as expressed in the *Imago Dei* hadith, which is always interpreted as the similarity

¹⁴² Ibnu ‘Arabi, *Syajarat Al-Kaun*, ed. Muhammad ‘Ali Shabih wa Awladihi (Kairo: Maktabah wa Mathba’ah, 1968).

¹⁴³ Ibn ‘Arabi *Syajarat Al-Kaun*.

¹⁴⁴ Al-Ghazali, *Ihya ‘Ulumuddin*.

¹⁴⁵ Pierce, *Pierce on Sign: Writing On Semiotic*.

¹⁴⁶ Ibn ‘Arabi, *Fushush Al-Hikam*. 199.

¹⁴⁷ Ibn Arabi, *Al Futubat Al Makiyyah*.

between God and humans.

Legisign (*thirdness*) is a representation that originates from a rule or can be a mutual agreement.¹⁴⁸ Humans become the representamen of God. All the qualities and actions of humans are, in fact, signs of God’s attributes and actions.¹⁴⁹ It is also included a rule from the Qur’an and Hadith, as follows: “Then, when I have perfected him and breathed into him My spirit, then fall down in prostration to him.”¹⁵⁰ The Prophet Muhammad also said: “I am his hearing with which he hears, I am his sight with which he sees, I am his hand with which he strikes, I am his foot with which he walks.”

However, in the Qur’an, it is stated that humans have been given authority over all the creatures in the heavens and the earth,¹⁵¹ God created Adam as His vicegerent on earth and taught him all the names of things on earth, and the angels were commanded to prostrate before Adam.¹⁵² These verses of the Qur’an are often cited by the Sufis to explain the Hadith about the knowledge of God through the knowledge of oneself. Thus, humans, as *legisign* and *representamen* of God, create a moral responsibility to reflect divine attributes and values in daily actions. By understanding this role, individuals and communities can become more conscious in acting according to God’s teachings, thereby strengthening the spiritual and social bonds among them.

The second trichotomy in the domain of signs (object) is based on the correlation between the representament and the object.¹⁵³ The object is divided into icon, index, and symbol.¹⁵⁴ *Icon* (*firstness*) is a correlation between the representamen and the object based on the similarity of identity.¹⁵⁵ God has portrayed Himself to Adam, and from Adam, God

¹⁴⁸ Pierce, *Pierce on Sign: Writing On Semiotic*.

¹⁴⁹ Peter Schwanz, *Imago Dei Als Ibnu ‘Arabi*.

¹⁵⁰ Q.S. Al-Hijr: 29.

¹⁵¹ Ibn ‘Arabi, *Al Futubat Al Makiyyah*.

¹⁵² Ibn ‘Arabi.

¹⁵³ Pierce, *Pierce on Sign: Writing On Semiotic*.

¹⁵⁴ Pierce, *Pierce on Sign: Writing On Semiotic*.

¹⁵⁵ Pierce, *Pierce on Sign: Writing On Semiotic*.

reflects His essence. Therefore, it is very possible that there is a resemblance between the form of man and God. As it is, humans are a combination (*majmu'*) of soul and body: "Man is the entire composite (*jumlah murakkabah*) of the visible physical body and the hidden spiritual soul (*ruhani*)."¹⁵⁶ Ibnu 'Arabi explains the relationship between the two with various metaphors, such as the house and its inhabitant, the outward form and its design, the fruit and the tree, and the rider and the horse.¹⁵⁷ Although between the two, the soul is undoubtedly the more noble part of the human being,¹⁵⁸ the body and soul occupy a special high rank among all existents (creatures).¹⁵⁹ Ibnu 'Arabi in *Fushush al-Hikam* says: "We have created man in the best of forms,"¹⁶⁰ that is: "God created man in the best form and shaped him as a perfect form, making his form a mirror of His own Self, so that the greater form of the world could be reflected in it."¹⁶¹ A mirror, by nature, reflects the form in front of it, which implies a resemblance between God and humans.¹⁶²

Index (secondness) is the correlation between the representament and the object based on cause and effect.¹⁶³ God as the object, represented by the representament, which is humanity. In this part, Ibn 'Arabī often emphasizes that humans are God's representatives on Earth and possess the best constitution, citing the Quran and the Imago Dei hadith. The theme of Imago Dei is once used as a quotation from one of the revealed books, in the section "about God's Actions, Whose Works are His Essence and His Attributes Fitting for Him." In this section, it is first stated that the intellect is closest to its Creator and that the intellect is the act of the Creator, while it is the agent related to what is below it.

¹⁵⁶ Ibnu 'Arabi, *Syajarat Al-Kaun*.

¹⁵⁷ Ibnu 'Arabi, *Syajarat Al-Kaun*.

¹⁵⁸ Ibnu 'Arabi, *Syajarat Al-Kaun*.

¹⁵⁹ Ikhwān al-Ṣafā, *Al-Risālah Al-Jāmi'ah*, ed. Muṣṭafā Ghālīb (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1974).

¹⁶⁰ Q.S. Al-Tīn: 4.

¹⁶¹ Ibnu 'Arabi, *Al Futubat Al Makiyyah*.

¹⁶² Ibnu 'Arabi, *Fushush Al Hikam*.

¹⁶³ Pierce, *Pierce on Sign: Writing On Semiotic*.

Then Ibn ‘Arabi continues: “Because the doer gives his image (*shurah*) and likeness (*mitsal*) to his action, which is specific to him, and he supports it (the action) through power, and for this purpose, this power is created based on the actions that existed before him.”¹⁶⁴ thus, the Intellect becomes the place (*maudhui*) for the command (*amr*) of God and the vehicle (*makan*) for His power.”¹⁶⁵ In several revealed books, the words appear: “God created Adam in His image and likeness.”¹⁶⁶ and also in the Qur’an, Allah says: “And to Him belongs the highest parable (*al-matsal al-’la*) in the heavens and the earth.”¹⁶⁷ Thus, the wise say that in the effect (*al-ma’lul*), the trace (*atsar*) of the cause can be found. Therefore, the perfect actions and craftsmanship can reflect the wisdom of their Creator. They are connected to Him because He is described (*maushuf*) through them.¹⁶⁸

Symbol (third) is a sign where the relationship between the representamen and its object is established based on conventions, rules, or agreements that have been mutually agreed upon.¹⁶⁹ To establish the connection between humans and God, Allah has sent down His revelations and His messengers.¹⁷⁰ In this regard, it refers to the holy scriptures and the messengers. Ibnu ‘Arabi believed that God has given symbols to His servants (*Insān Rabbānī*), such as the Prophets, Messengers, Saints, and His knowledgeable servants (*‘Arif*).¹⁷¹

The third trichotomy can be viewed from the essence of its interpretation, which can manifest as rheme, decent, and argument.¹⁷² *Rheme (firstness)* is an interpretant that exists as a potential or an event that may or may not occur, and the meaning of the representament is still open

¹⁶⁴ Read by *li ghayatiha* on his book, and isn’t *laba biha*.

¹⁶⁵ Ibn ‘Arabi, *Al Futubat Al Makiyyah*.

¹⁶⁶ Ibn ‘Arabi, *Fushush Al Hikam*.

¹⁶⁷ Q.S. Al-Nahl: 60, Al-Rum: 30.

¹⁶⁸ Ikhwa’n al-Ṣafā, *Al-Risālah Al-Jāmi‘Ab*. 206.

¹⁶⁹ Pierce, *Pierce on Sign: Writing On Semiotic*.

¹⁷⁰ Ikhwa’n al-Ṣafā, *Al-Risālah Al-Jāmi‘Ab*.

¹⁷¹ Ibnu ‘Arabi, “At-Tadbirat Al-Ilahiyah Fi Ishlah Al-Mamlakah Al-Insaniyah,” in Sayyid Hossein Nasr, *The Garden of Truth* (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1914), 145.

¹⁷² Pierce, *Pierce on Sign: Writing On Semiotic*.

for development; its meaning is of a possibility.¹⁷³ The interpretant of Pierce's triadic in Ibnu 'Arabi's perspective is Human = God. This meaning originates from the concept of the Hadith Imago Dei, which is an implication of the vision of the event of wahdatul wujud. In his works, Ibnu 'Arabi explains a different version from the previous one. He argues that the similarity between humans and God is an expression of the ecstatic (*syathhiyat*) experience of Prophet Muhammad, as expressed in the Hadith, "I saw God in the most beautiful form."¹⁷⁴

Ibnu 'Arabi's starting point lies in the affirmation of two things simultaneously: the transcendence and immanence of God. The first point is expressed as the "absolute unity" (*tauhid*), the "essence of separation" (*'ayn-i tafriqa*), and the "Mount Qaf of Separation" (*Qaf-i Tafriq*),¹⁷⁵ and this is related to ma'rifat. The second point refers to the theophany of God (*tajalli*), which is expressed as the "station of blending" (*maqam-i iltibas*), and the "core of unity" (*'ayn-i jam*),¹⁷⁶ and this is related to love (*mahabbah*, *'isyq*).¹⁷⁷ At this level, God reveals His Essence through His actions and attributes, and manifests Himself to the lover in the form of a worldly beloved. The Beloved becomes a mirror of Divinity and is ultimately identified as the "Personal God." (*ana al-Haqq*).¹⁷⁸

Decent (secondness) is an interpretant that shows that humans possess attributes of God, relating to the soul as a part of Him. Ibn 'Arabi in *Futubat Makkiyah* interprets the Quranic verse, "The soul is of the affair (*amr*) of God" (Q.S. 17:85), emphasizing that the soul is an affair of God beyond human comprehension. Allah says, "When I fashioned him and blew into him My spirit" (Q.S. 15:29, 38:27), which caused the angels to bow down to Adam. This is connected with His statement, "Allah will make you His vicegerent on the earth" (QS. 38:26) and the Hadith, "God

¹⁷³ Pierce, *Pierce on Sign: Writing On Semiotic*.

¹⁷⁴ Ibn 'Arabi, *Al Futubat Al Makkiyah*.

¹⁷⁵ Ibn 'Arabi, *Al Futubat Al Makkiyah*.

¹⁷⁶ Ibn 'Arabi, *Al Futubat Al Makkiyah*.

¹⁷⁷ Ibn 'Arabi, *Al Futubat Al Makkiyah*.

¹⁷⁸ Ibn 'Arabi, *Al Futubat Al Makkiyah*.

created Adam in His image.” This resemblance is manifested through the practice of the Sunnah, where Allah says, “A servant draws near to Me through deeds, until I love him, and I become his hearing, his sight, and his tongue.”¹⁷⁹

Argument is an interpretant that applies universally and is rational in nature.¹⁸⁰ In the first part, it is stated that humans are created according to the Names of God and in accordance with the universe. Therefore, humans have this dual nature. Their inner aspect is God, and their outward aspect is creation. However, in reality, humans are created to worship until they reach the perfection recognized by God.¹⁸¹ Therefore, every human has the potential to reach that level. Ibn ‘Arabi says: “As long as a person lives, they have the hope of attaining the state of ‘Divine Perfection’ for which they were created. Anyone who attempts to destroy this, is trying to divert them from achieving the Divine Perfection for which they were created.”¹⁸²

The *insān rabbānī* continuously transforms the shape of his heart in accordance with the changing forms of God’s self-manifestation. Only through this continuous transformation can he achieve the totality of God’s manifestation. So how should we understand this divine manifestation? In *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyah*, the *insān rabbānī* is described as the heart in relation to the body and the universe. Ibn ‘Arabi says: “Through the *insān rabbānī*, the perfection of the image (*kamāl al-ṣūrah*) emerges. He is the heart of the body of the universe. The universe is an expression that reveals everything, except for God. He (the heart) is the house frequently visited by God (*al-bayt al-ma’mūr*), for He resides within it. In a hadith, God says, ‘The heavens and the earth cannot contain Me, but the heart of My righteous servant can contain Me.’ The position of the *insān rabbānī* as the heart lies between God and the universe. He calls it the

¹⁷⁹ Ibn ‘Arabi, *Fushush Al Hikam*.

¹⁸⁰ Pierce, *Pierce on Sign: Writing On Semiotic*.

¹⁸¹ Ibn ‘Arabi, *Fushush Al Hikam*. 167.

¹⁸² Ibn ‘Arabi, *Fuṣṣ al-Ḥikam*. 296.

heart (*qalb*) because of its continuous change (*taqlīb*) in every form. ‘Every day He is busy with His affairs’ (Qur’an 55:29), in His transformation (*taṣrīf*) and in His ability to change. Because of this, he has divine vastness (*si’ah Ilahiyah*).”¹⁸³ Ibn ‘Arabī repeatedly emphasizes that God continuously changes forms, manifesting Himself in various ways. Ibn ‘Arabī cites a hadith, saying, “God changes His form in His self-manifestation.”¹⁸⁴ Ibn ‘Arabī briefly expresses that God’s self-manifestation is never repeated.¹⁸⁵ and the rabbinic human is the locus for the manifestation of His Self.

Conclusion

This research shows that; *first*, the steps to becoming *insān rabbānī* according to Ibn ‘Arabī’s works are as follows: repentance (*taubah*), spiritual struggle (*mujābahah*), seclusion (*khalwah*), withdrawal (*‘uzlah*), piety (*taqwā*), abstinence (*wara’*), asceticism (*zuhd*), night worship (*al-saḥr*), fasting (*al-jū’*), contemplation (*murāqabah*), servitude (*‘ubudiyyah*), consistency (*istiqāmah*), sincerity (*ikhlās*), remembrance (*ẓikr*), love (*maḥabbah*), spiritual exercise (*riyāḍah*), adornment (*taḥallī*), purging (*takḥallī*), unity of existence (*waḥdah al-wujūd*), witnessing (*musyābahah*), and patience (*ṣabr*). *Second*, Charles S. Peirce’s semiotic theory analysis explains the symbol of *insān rabbānī* through the concept of God’s “manifestation” (*tajallī*) in the triadic and trichotomic process, depicting the similarity between human and divine attributes and the role of *insān rabbānī* as His representative (*khalīfah Allāh*). *Third*, the existence and meaning of *insān rabbānī* according to Ibn ‘Arabī, in the perspective of Charles S. Peirce’s semiotic theory, is manifested through the figures of the Messenger, Prophet, Saint, and *Warasah al-Anbiyā’* as God’s vicegerent, reflecting manners (*adab*) and acquiring direct authority from God.

Insān rabbānī is merely His instrument, and in fulfilling His will, it

¹⁸³ Ibn ‘Arabī, *Al-Futūḥat Al-Makīyyah*. 295.

¹⁸⁴ Ibn ‘Arabī, *Fushūsh Al-Hikam*. 120.

¹⁸⁵ Ibn ‘Arabī, *Fushūsh Al-Hikam*. 124.

becomes a discipline that includes obedience, politeness, and ethics in various aspects of life, from greeting to worship. *Adab* disciplines the body and actualizes inner authority and divine character in everyday life, reflecting truth, beauty, love, and goodness. Without *adab*, humans cannot tread the path toward the Garden of Truth. In the context of Charles S. Peirce's semiotics, signs consist of representament, object, and interpretant, which can be analyzed to understand spiritual teachings in Sufism as a system of signs. This semiotic theory allows for a deep interpretation of Divine concepts, making it reflective and contextual in the development of Sufism culture in Indonesia.

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