



Happiness in Ibn al-Arabi's School of Thought and Theravada Buddhism: A Comparative Study¹

Ali Jafari¹, Reza Kazemirad²

¹ Department of Islamic knowledge, School of Medicine, Arak University of Medical Sciences, Arak, Iran (**Corresponding author**). Ali.jafari@arakmu.ac.ir

² Faculty member of Ahlul Bayt International University, Qom, Iran.
r.kazemirad1365@gmail.com

Abstract

"Happiness" serves as the ultimate aspiration across various religions. In this comparative study, we delve into the concept of happiness in Ibn al-Arabi's school of thought and Theravada Buddhism. The purpose of this research is to create a dialogue between Buddhism and Islam by comparing how they define "happiness" and how they help the discussion on spirituality. This research thoroughly reviewed relevant scholarly works, primary texts, and secondary sources related to happiness in both traditions. Then, it analyzes how each tradition addresses happiness, ethical conduct, and the path to well-being. Describing the moral system of Ibn al-Arabi and Theravada Buddhism, the research analyzed the concept of happiness and the ways to achieve it on the basis of both schools. This review indicated that Buddha emphasizes freeing one's self from greed, hatred, and ignorance. Ibn al-Arabi, however, argues that self-purification is not the ultimate goal, but it is the prelude to getting close to Allah and reaching the state of *baqa* (self-subsistence).

Keywords

Happiness, Ibn al-Arabi, Theravada Buddhism, *Fanā* (annihilation), Nirvana.

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Introduction

"Happiness" is the ultimate aspiration across various religions (Larrimore, 2010, p. 570). It is more important than health, wealth, long life, having good friends and companions, success, children and grandchildren, and so on. What does happiness mean? How can we achieve it? These are the main questions that we need to clarify to find true happiness.

Happiness is a complicated thing to possess. It is not easy because we do not always have a good idea of what true happiness really is. Different schools of ethics have different views on it. Different schools of the world, by referring to their thoughts and goals, determine the ultimate goal, which, if they are achieved, is called happiness. The way people look at the creation and the universe is the basis of the interpretation of happiness. By studying and comparing the concept of happiness in different schools, we can begin to understand the various items of happiness, and we can try to find true happiness as well.

In this paper, we emphasize the teachings of the two schools of Ibn Arabi and Theravada Buddhism. Theravada is the branch of Buddhism now preserved in Sri Lanka, and also generally in South Asia, the Theravada school predominates (Gombrich, 2006, p. 2). This school regards itself as the trustee and the custodian of the authentic early teachings that date back to the Buddha himself (Keown, 1996, p. 11).

"Mohyedin Arabi Andalusi Ta'i", commonly known as Ibn Arabi, one of the most influential Sufis in the Muslim world, is the father of Islamic Gnosticism and many Islamic Gnostics. According to his history, he was born in 1164 in Murcia, in South-Eastern Spain, and he traveled in Islamic countries and died in 1240 in Damascus, where he was buried (Addas, 1993, p. 288). The influence of his terminology is most accessible to spot in Sufi literature. In a way, Ibn Arabi's doctrine has been elaborated by Sufi scholars such as Qunavi, Jandi, Qaysari, Jami, and later Sufi writers (Addas, 1993, p. 290).

First, we will describe the concept of happiness and the ways to achieve it in Ibn al-Arabi's school of thought and Theravada Buddhism. Then, we will analyze the concept of happiness based on both schools.

This issue has been discussed separately in Islam and Buddhism, and one can find articles about happiness in Islam or happiness in Buddhism, but comparing happiness in Islam and Buddhism, especially from the point

of view of Ibn Arabi and Theravada Buddhism, is a novel thing that we have discussed it in this article.

There are separate books and articles about happiness in the school of Ibn Arabi and Theravada Buddhism, but the comparison of the two is a new work. There is an article titled "An Introduction to the Comparative Study of Islamic Mysticism and Buddhist Zen" (Sakhaie, 2002, p. 120) in which the author explores the similarities and differences between Buddhist Zen and Islamic mysticism.

Happiness from Ibn al-Arabi's perspective

Let us begin our journey by outlining happiness in the Islamic moral system. In Ibn Arabi's view, the main goal of human life is to attain happiness and perfection (Ibn 'Arabi, 1911, p. 272). To understand the concept of happiness in Islam, a few key points must be addressed.

Man's relationship with God

The first principle in the Islamic moral system is the existence of God. God created everything. So, in Ibn al-Arabi's school of thought, understanding "happiness" without knowing man's relationship with God is impossible.

In Ibn Arabi's point of view, which is based on the ethical system of the Quran, human is a needy existence. According to the Quran, man is created "by God's hands" (Q. 38:75). And God's goal in creating the universe is to recognize Him. This critical point is implicit in the Quranic statement:

"I created jinn and mankind only to worship/serve Me" (Q. 51:56).

So, based on the Islamic worldview and ethical system of the Quran, the instance of happiness is to be close to Allah. The intention that can make the activity to be an ethical activity is the one that performs to satisfy Allah and his pleasure.

From the perspective of Ibn Arabi, happiness is the recognition of the soul and, consequently, the knowledge of God. The Quran has, indeed, assigned a very high place to man without entering into a detailed discussion. The mystics have found numerous allusions in the Quran to prove man's lofty rank (Schimmel, 1973, p. 188). One of their favorite verses in this aspect is:

"And we shall show you our signs on the horizons and yourselves—do you not see?" (Q. 41:53)

Also, the hadith that says:

من عرف نفسه فقد عرف ربه "Man arafa nafsahu faqad arafarabbahu," "who knows himself knows his Lord," you can see the high position of man and its relationship with God.

One of the anthropological foundations of Ibn Arabi about human nature is the creation of human beings in God's form (Ibn 'Arabi, 1911, p. 461). It is According to the hadith of the Prophet that says:

«Allah created Adam in His form.» ('ala suratih). (al-Kulayni, 1990, p. 134)

True happiness is not achieved except by the perception of the unity of existence. According to this theory, everything gains its existence (wujud) by God and perceives its existence by Him (Schimmel, 1973, p. 267). From the perspective of Ibn al-Arabi, all beings are God's manifestation (Ibn 'Arabi, 1911), and creation is a mirror for His *tajalliyydt*, His manifestations (Schimmel, 1973, p. 268).

Ibn Arabi's Mysticism: Insan al-Kamil

Ibn Arabi, a renowned Islamic 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 as one who achieves the state of "insan al-kamil," the realized human being 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, p. 175)

Fana as the highest stage of perfection and Happiness

The ultimate goal of eternal happiness is divine paradise. The fact that life pertains only to the spirit is actual when the spirit is envisaged in relationship to the body. If, in one respect, we accept that life derives from the spirit, it brings up the question of death, which occurs when the spirit leaves the body. According to this idea, life demands a prescription. However, the spirit is once again attached to the body in '*barzakh*' (the intermediary stage of existence between death and resurrection) and the 'next world' (*al-âkhira*), though in both of which, the body is manifest in

an 'imaginal' rather than corporeal mode (Chittick, 1993, p. 3).

So, we have to differentiate between worldly happiness and eternal happiness. It should be noted that happiness, in Islam, is not just in this world, But the world is an introduction to eternal happiness. Moreover, happiness in the hereafter has a degree; the lowest is entry to Paradise, and the best degree of happiness is reaching divine glory. Paradise is like a prison for genuine mystics. The true Paradise, from the perspective of Ibn Arabi, is to be close to God and become annihilated and take on God's attributes. He/she becomes annihilated in God's attributes and qualities. Then, finally, he is immersed in the existence (*wujud*) of God. (Schimmel, 1973, p. 143).

Fanā (annihilation)

It is essential to know that *Fana* is an ethical concept in Islamic mysticism. In this state, man becomes annihilated and takes on God's attributes. In the first stage, man should qualify himself with the qualities of God. The next stage is annihilation in vision when the primordial light of God surrounds the soul. The third and final stage, then, is "annihilation from one's vision of annihilation," in which one is immersed in the *wujud*, the "existence" of God or, instead, the "finding" of God.

A man should recover the state he had on the Day of the Primordial Covenant when he became an existentialist, endowed with individual existence by God, which, however, involved separation from God by the veil of creativeness. The state the Sufis would call *jam'*, "unification, collectedness." The Sufi experiences the return to the moment when God was there, and there was nothing else. *Fana* is "certainly a human experience . . . but man is not the subject of this experience. The subject is rather the metaphysical Reality itself" (Schimmel, 1973, p. 143).

The best interpretation of *fana* and the following stage, *baqa*, has been given by the Japanese scholar Toshihiko Izutsu, who explains *fana* as "the total nullification of the ego consciousness when there remains only the absolute Unity of Reality in its purity as an absolute Awareness prior to its bifurcation into subject and object" (Izutsu, 1971, p. ggf)

In Ibn Arabi's mysticism, man may reach the state of *baqa*, "persistence" or "subsistence" in God. Man is resuscitated out of nothingness, completely transformed into an absolute Self. The multiplicity becomes visible again, but in a changed form: as determinations of the one Reality.

It should be noted that *Fana* is not to be confused with *Ittihad*, "union," which presupposes the existence of two independent beings and has, therefore, been regarded as heretics. Similarly, *hulul*, "indwelling," which means the incarnation of the divine in man, has been regarded as heretics. When the divine light fully appears in the mystic's consciousness, all things disappear instead of remaining visible. Such is the experience of *Fana* (Schimmel, 1973, p. 144).

Becoming a Perfect Individual or saint requires purifying oneself of all otherness and reaching the state of fauna. In this state, the individual becomes a mirror image of God, and it is here that perfection is obtained (Zwanzing, 2008, p. 56).

How to reach happiness

After defining perfection, it is essential to know the way to happiness and understand how human beings can achieve happiness. Islam emphasizes the primordial nature of human beings (*fitra*). To make sense of this, it is relevant that every attribute of God is found in the innate disposition (*fitra*) of the human being. The path to happiness involves bringing these attributes out from hiddenness to manifestation. 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. The only way to reach happiness is to follow the authority of the prophets (Chittick, 1998, p. 23). Following the prophet's guidance is the most straightforward answer, especially following the prophet Muhammad, whose message comprises everything given to all previous prophets (Chittick, 2005, p. 31).

The general Islamic understanding of the human situation is that correct knowledge of the world and the human soul demands that people freely and actively undertake the journey back to their Creator (Chittick, 2005, p. 101). In the mysticism of Ibn Arabi, this mystical journey plays a key role, and that is one of the main ways to achieve perfection. Ibn Arabi holds human beings as wayfarers (Ibn 'Arabi, 1948, p. 124) on a spiritual journey. This journey aims to annihilate one's human name or characteristics in order to be exposed to divine epiphanies because Allah will manifest Himself only to those who are annihilated from their names and characteristics (Ibn 'Arabi, 1948, p. 388).

Reaching human perfection is a journey that may be passed through by

awareness of God and obtaining spiritual stations of cognitions and experiences. As humankind is a divine copy of the Presence of Allah and His attributes, the journey to reach perfection is an internal and subjective voyage which it can be in the course of shari'ah. Ibn Arabi has defined this spiritual journey as follows:

“In its meaning, the spiritual journey is to move from one rank of worshipping to another, and in its form, it is to move from one lawful act to another in the course of proximity to God by means of doing and undoing... and as a technical term, it is to move from one station to another, from one name to another, from one manifestation to another, from oneself to another. The traveler is a wayfarer of bodily austerity and spiritual asceticism who refines his morals...” (Ibn ‘Arabi, 1948, p. 380)

A microcosmic picture of the way of the soul from God and back to God is the Prophet's hijra from Mecca to Medina. It is the model of mystical poverty and the journey of perfection by struggling with the Nafs (Schimmel, 1973, p. 222).

Practical methods proposed by Islamic mystics, especially in Ibn Arabi mysticism, are as follows:

1. Seclusion (uzla): This means that the wayfarer must be as influential as other people in society. However, he must also pay attention to God only with inner attention and behavioral reflections so that his heart has no room for anything else. Seclusion means staying away from those whose supreme destination is not God (Ibn ‘Arabi, 2008, pp. 34-35).

2. Vigilance (Muraqaba) 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 deeds against God's will. It goes upgraded by degree. Sometimes vigilance means paying attention to one's silence, sometimes to his Nafs, and sometimes to higher levels of truth than the names and attributes of all Divinity. (Al-Qushayrī 2007, 189)

3. 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 due to the fact that he does not have a voice. (Nasr, 2003, 104).

4. Hunger: Over-eating weakens the soul and kills the heart. The hungry seeker illuminates his heart. (M. Ibn 'Arabi 2008, 35-36). It is recommended to the extent that it is not harmful to the body and does not change the mental state (Nasr, 2003, p. 105).

Happiness, according to Theravada Buddhism

Happiness is a universal goal, so the definitions of happiness are many and varied. According to Buddha's point of view, there is a simple definition of happiness: Happiness is in conflict with suffering or mind-state. Happiness is achieved through mental training, which involves erasing harmful emotions such as hatred and eradicating ignorance (Ricard, 2014, p. 17). In this definition, *true happiness* can be broadly defined as a mind-state.

Nibbana (Nirvaṇa)

Happiness itself came to be described by the Buddha as:

“Knowing this as it really is, the wise realize Nibbana (Nirvaṇa) the highest Happiness.” (Buddharakkhita, 1985, p. 56)

Various passages in the Pali Canon record the experience of happiness in the attainment of Nibbana.

Nibbana is the culmination of the Buddhist quest for perfection and happiness. Nibbana is described as the highest happiness, the supreme state of bliss. Those who have attained Nibbana live in utter bliss, free from hatred and mental illness amongst those who are hateful and mentally ill (Silva, 1996, p. 5).

Nirvana represents its ultimate state of soteriological release and liberation from rebirth in saṃsāra (Meister, 2009, p. 25). Nibbana is a state of moral perfection. For one who has attained Nibbana, all unwholesome motivational roots such as greed, hatred, and delusion have been entirely eradicated with no possibility of their ever becoming active again. Therefore, Nibbana is called the destruction of greed, hatred, and delusion (ragakkhaya, dosakkhaya, mohakkhaya) (Silva, 1996, p. 6).

How to reach happiness

As we mentioned before, true happiness can be defined as a mind state.

The starting point for attaining this mind state is what Buddhist teachings call *samvega*.

Samvega has four essential elements:

1. The first element is that we see the ultimate futility of a life that centers only on the satisfying of sensual desires.
2. The second element is that we see how complacent we are about finding true happiness and not being satisfied with indulging that complacency.
3. The third element is the development of a feeling of urgency. We must feel an urgent need to break out of this futility.
4. The fourth element is to accept that *Samsara's* existence, which revolves around the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth, is ultimately self-defeating (Bhikkhu & DeGraff, 2015, p. 5).

The first noble truth is that there is suffering. *Dukkha* should be understood, and it has been understood. Suffering is a common bond we share. Everybody everywhere suffers. If you understand this well, you cannot very well kill somebody if you realize they suffer the way you do in war. You have to think that they are evil, and that is good to get rid of evil (Sumedho, 1992, p. 13).

The destiny that is the refuge of suffering is the unhappy destiny; or the destiny produced by *kamma* that is corrupted by much hate is an unhappy destiny (Visuddhimagga, 2011, p. 505).

Notice that the first noble truth is not a dismal metaphysical statement saying that everything is suffering. The other point is that admission into Buddhist meditation is not from a position of "I am suffering" but instead "there is suffering" because we are not trying to identify with the problem but acknowledge that there is one. For example, our problem is not that "I am an angry person," but the problem is that "I get angry so easily, how can I get rid of it" (Sumedho, 1992, p. 15).

The sensory world is a sensitive experience. It means you are constantly being exposed to pleasure and pain and the dualism of *samsara*. That is the result of birth. Suffering is something we usually want to get rid of. We tend to emphasize the beauties and pleasures of youth while the ugly side of life – old age, sickness, death, boredom, despair, and depression, are pushed aside. This is a perfectly natural thing to do. If anything unpleasant arises, we say, "Run away!" if anyone gets in our way, we say, "Kill him!"

the ignorant mind thinks of extermination: 'Here is a mosquito; kill it!' it is all because of this fundamental ignorance that tells us to annihilate what is in our way because our instinctual nature is to kill. However, the reflective mind shows me that even though these creatures are annoying me, they have a right to exist. So, we respect the lives of other creatures, even the lives of insects and creatures we do not like. The same applies to unpleasant mind states. When you are experiencing anger, rather than saying: 'oh, here I go angry again,' we reflect: 'There is anger' (Sumedho, 1992, p. 17).

The Buddha's teaching here is to try to understand dukkha, to really look at, stand under, and accept your suffering. Try to understand it when you are feeling physical pain or despair. You should be able to look at suffering and understand it. Sometimes what we are looking at is not that suffering which comes from out there, but what we create in our own minds around it. This is an awakening in a person, an awakening to the truth of suffering. And it is a Noble Truth because it is no longer blaming the suffering that we are experiencing on others. The Buddhist approach is quite different from other religions, because the emphasis is on the way out of suffering through wisdom, freedom from all delusion, rather than the attainment of some blissful state or union with the Ultimate (Sumedho, 1992, p. 19).

The truth of the cause of suffering (samudaya)

The Second Noble Truth is: 'There is the origin of suffering, which is attachment to desire. Desire should be let go of.' When combined with the remaining conditions, this second truth is the reason suffering arises. So, it is called dukkha-samudaya (the origin of suffering). (Visuddhimagga, 2011, p. 506)

The Second Noble Truth states that suffering has an origin and that the origin of suffering is attachment to the three kinds of desire: desire for a sense of pleasure (kama tanha), desire to become (bhava tanha) and desire to get rid of (bhava tanha) (Sumedho, 1992, p. 27).

What is desire? According to Pali, desire is wanting to sense pleasures through the body or other senses and always seeking things to excite or please the senses.

The First Noble Truth was undeniable. People knew that they were suffering, and instead of showing a way out, their old religions gave those

surrogates in the form of dogma, prayers, rituals, and the like. At its simplest, Buddhism walked into the village square and said, "Here are eight things that will open the way to peace instead of pain." The Eightfold Path asks for each person to change how the mind works, plucking out what is wrong, inefficient, and superstitious, then exchanging those outworn habits for increasing clarity (Chopra, 2008, p. 268).

Some of these steps sound natural. We all want to believe that our actions and words are virtuous, and we do not want to go wrong in our efforts and intentions. Other parts of the path need special guidance. What is the right mindfulness? The right concentration? These aspects have their roots in the meditation practices of Yoga, which Buddha also reformed and brought within reach of ordinary people (Chopra, 2008, p. 268).

Eightfold path

In this part, we briefly refer to the Eightfold Path.

Right Speech: The rule of this right path to achieve happiness is that speech has positive and negative effects on human beings. Speaking harshly or lying has negative energy. Moreover, when a person speaks in that way, he does not feel happy. On the other hand, when we tell the truth, we feel better. This is the happiness of the right speech.

Right action: In the right action, you help people ease their suffering through your good deeds, words, and so forth. You respect people. On the other hand, when your actions hurt or demean others, they cause them suffering. This is the happiness of the right action.

Right Livelihood: The rule of Right Livelihood in happiness is that any job should create peace in society, respect others' lives, and not cause suffering. The aim is the welfare of all despite a lack of economic benefits.

Right effort: The happiness of Right Effort is that when you play a sport, you do not really care about the outcome; you must complete your duties as part of the team.

Right Mindfulness: Right mindfulness is associated with the right view and shakes off wrong mindfulness. Its function is not to forget. It manifests as abandoning wrong mindfulness.

Right Concentration: When his mind is thus guarded by supreme mindfulness, the unification of the mind, which is associated with the right view, abolishes wrong concentration, which is called right concentration. It

has the characteristic of non-distraction. Its function is to concentrate, and it manifests as the abandonment of wrong concentration.

This is the method used to describe the path leading to the cessation of suffering (Visuddhimagga, 2011, p. 524).

The meditator must apply himself to meditation without a break until the supreme goal of his endeavor is realized: his bodily disturbances cease, his mental disturbances cease, his bodily afflictions cease, his mental affliction ceases, his bodily distresses cease, his mental distresses cease, and he experiences physical and mental happiness. Whatever view such a one has, that becomes for him Right View, whatever intention he has, that becomes for him Right intention; whatever efforts he puts forth, that becomes for him Right effort; whatever mindfulness he has, that becomes for him Right mindfulness; and whatever concentration he has, that becomes for him Right Concentration (Mahāthera, 1983, p. 125).

There are three keywords in Buddha's teachings in the early Sutras. The first and the most well-known of the Buddha's teachings is the Four Noble Truths. These points point to the human condition in Samsara. The second critical teaching is known as the formula of dependent origination (*paticcasamuppada*). This states how a human being comes to be born in samsara. Its main point is that human beings dependently originated, and it can be called a formula of existential mechanics. The third critical teaching is about individual identity. Here, the Buddha seeks answers to the questions of 'What am I?' and 'What is my real self?' in Buddha's viewpoint, individuality should be understood as a combination of the physical and mental continuum of human beings (Hamilton, 1996, p. XVIII).

The Buddha believes that human beings should be understood in terms of five khandas, and their essential quality is that none of these constitute a permanent and unchanging self. Denying the existence of any permanent 'self' or 'I' (anātman, P. anatta), Buddha analyzed what we perceive to be a self as a collection of five khandhas. When these five khandhas, there is a person; when they are disbanded, there is no longer any person (Iun, 2006, p. 46).

Zen Buddhism approaches the concept of happiness and its attainment through various methods and practices. It emphasizes perceiving the true nature of reality, unmodified by mental constructs, which leads to authentic happiness (Shakya, 2019, p. 171). This authentic happiness is achieved by

purging the mind of afflictive emotions and eradicating ignorance through mental training (Matthieu, 2014, p. 17). The Zen arts, such as calligraphy, ink painting, tea ceremony, and flower arrangement, are considered meditation in action and provide physical testimonies of holistic experiences. These art forms express and teach the power of a liberated mind, offering a gateway to joyfulness and peace (Dalai, 2014, p. 7). Zen art principles can be applied in everyday life as a tool for liberation, enabling encounters with others based on respect and openness. Zen Buddhism emphasizes the cultivation of concern for others and turning adversity to advantage through Mind Training, which can help end suffering and cultivate happiness. Overall, Zen Buddhism offers a path to happiness through the transformation of the mind and the integration of mindfulness into daily life (Dalai, 2014, p. 8).

Conclusion

The common point between these two schools is that they consider pure moral life a condition of happiness.

Because of two different anthropological approaches, we can see a clear difference between these two mystical schools. Believing in God on one side and focusing on human beings on the other side makes these differences.

Ibn Arabi regards man as a combination of soul and body, and his anthropology is based on the existence of the soul; in his viewpoint, the body is only the locus of the soul, which the soul governs. In Theravada Buddhism, the man is a combination of five khandas. Buddha did not accept the soul and believed that what we experience to be a person is not a thing but a process. Although the Buddha did not accept the soul, he did not deny the existence of successive events in man that make the whole life of a human being.

In Ibn Arabi's view, God is the origin of the universe, and the will of God causes the emergence and appearance of man. In Theravada Buddhism, the root cause of the new man's coming into being is primarily the thirst for self.

In the school of Ibn Arabi, death destroys the human body but the spirit of eternal life. With man's death, the soul does not disappear; it enters another world and continues its life in the glory of God. Buddha believes in rebirth after death. Moreover, there is no end to the stream of becoming as

long as *karma* persists.

From the point of view of Ibn al-Arabi, mankind has been created with purity. All humans at birth are the same in this law, and man's happiness is to maintain the same basic primordial nature. However, from the Buddha's point of view, man is created based on someone else's past actions, so nature is not pure. Therefore, humans are not the same at birth, and they have to try to reach Nirvana and exit the Samsara cycle.

The highest happiness, according to Theravada Buddhism, is Nirvana, which represents its ultimate state of soteriological release and liberation from rebirths in *samsāra*. So the problem of Buddha, in fact, is *samsara*; those who are released from this suffering can reach the highest happiness. At the same time, happiness, according to Ibn Arabi, is *Fanā* (annihilation) and the finding of God. So, self-purification is not the ultimate goal, but it is the prelude to getting close to Allah and reaching the state of *baqa* (self-subsistence).

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