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## STRUCTURAL ANALOGY WITHOUT CONCEPTUAL REDUCTION: A PHILOSOPHICAL COMPARISON OF IBN ‘ARABĪ AND NĀGĀRJUNA

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The paper explores the possibility of a philosophically rigorous dialogue between Islam and Buddhism through a comparative analysis of the ontological frameworks of Ibn ‘Arabī and Nāgārjuna. Rather than pursuing doctrinal reconciliation or metaphysical synthesis, it advances a method of structural analogy without conceptual reduction, identifying parallel philosophical strategies while preserving the internal coherence and irreducible differences of each tradition. The central claim is that both thinkers articulate sustained critiques of intrinsic existence and substantialist metaphysics, convergent in structure and soteriological intent, even though they diverge decisively in their ultimate ontological commitments.

The paper proceeds in four stages. First, it establishes a methodological framework grounded in philosophical analysis rather than theology, understanding this as a choice of register rather than a denial of either tradition’s religious character. It uses the term “tradition” to avoid imposing unshared categories such as revelation, prophecy, or divine agency, brackets doctrinal closure rather than soteriological motivation, and resists politically or irenically motivated harmonization. Second, it reconstructs Ibn ‘Arabī’s ontology within philosophical Sufism by examining the primacy of Being (*wujūd*), the conceptual status of quiddity (*māhiyya*), and the experiential significance of *fanā*’ as the realization of ontological dependency. Third, it reconstructs Nāgārjuna’s Madhyama-ka philosophy through the doctrine of the Two Truths and dependent origination, emphasizing the denial of *svabhāva* (more precisely rendered as “without metaphysical substrate”) and the non-reifying function of emptiness (*śūnyatā*). Emptiness is interpreted not as an ultimate substance, but as a critical method for dismantling essentialist assumptions in service of liberation.

The final section brings these frameworks into dialogue by focusing on three shared concerns: the denial of intrinsic existence, the relational constitution of phenomena, and the nature of ultimate insight. While Ibn ‘Arabī negates finite autonomy in order to affirm absolute Being, Nāgārjuna negates reification without affirming any ultimate metaphysical ground. The paper concludes by presenting this comparison as an example of complementarity in intertraditional philosophy – aimed not at conversion or synthesis, but at mutual understanding and philosophical enrichment –

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demonstrating how meaningful dialogue between theistic and non-theistic traditions can proceed without reduction.

**Keywords:** Being (*Wujūd*); emptiness (*Śūnyatā*); Ibn ‘Arabī; Nāgārjuna; philosophical Sufism

### **Introduction**

The attempt to establish dialogue between distinct intellectual traditions is widely regarded as a philosophically significant and ethically worthwhile endeavor. While such dialogue is rich in potential, it often encounters significant challenges arising from the deep structural and metaphysical differences that underlie each system of thought. Among these efforts, one of the most intriguing is the attempt to identify a shared ground between diverse cultural and philosophical worldviews. Such projects are best understood not as attempts at conversion or doctrinal unification, but as exercises in complementarity, aimed at mutual understanding and intellectual growth through learning across difference. The paper examines several attempts to establish a common basis between Buddhism and Islam, with particular attention to the thought of Nāgārjuna and Ibn ‘Arabī. Rather than seeking doctrinal reconciliation, the paper argues that a disciplined comparison of Nāgārjuna and Ibn ‘Arabī reveals structurally analogous critiques of intrinsic existence and substantialist metaphysics, convergent in structure and soteriological intent, even as their ultimate ontological commitments remain irreducibly different.

The paper proceeds in four stages. First, it establishes a methodological framework grounded in philosophical analysis rather than theology, understanding this as a choice of register rather than a denial of either tradition’s religious character. It uses the term “tradition” to avoid imposing unshared categories such as revelation, prophecy, or divine agency, brackets doctrinal closure rather than soteriological motivation, and resists politically or irenically motivated harmonization. Second, it reconstructs Ibn ‘Arabī’s ontology within philosophical Sufism by examining the primacy of Being (*wujūd*), the conceptual status of quiddity (*māhiyya*), and the experiential significance of *fanā’* as the realization of ontological dependency. Third, it reconstructs Nāgārjuna’s Madhyamaka philosophy through the doctrine of the Two Truths and dependent origination, emphasizing the denial of *svabhāva* (more precisely rendered as “without metaphysical substrate”) and the non-reifying function of emptiness (*śūnyatā*). Emptiness is interpreted not as an ultimate substance, but as a critical method for dismantling essentialist assumptions in service of liberation. Finally, the paper brings Ibn ‘Arabī and Nāgārjuna into philosophical dialogue through a structurally comparative analysis that identifies points of resonance while preserving the irreducible differences between their respective ontological frameworks.

Although there exist numerous works that attempt to establish common ground among theistic traditions – such as Judaism, Christianity, and Islam – the same cannot be said for efforts to bridge theistic traditions with traditions such as Buddhism, which do not share the affirmation of a supreme creator. One of the main reasons for the relative abundance of dialogue among theistic traditions lies in their shared affirmation of a supreme creator as the ultimate foundation of existence. By contrast, Buddhism does not share this metaphysical premise, which makes such dialogue significantly more complex. Given this context, it is important to note that attempts to establish meaningful exchange between Islam and Buddhism remain limited, though not entirely absent: alongside the contributions of Yusuf and Kazemi, the sustained work of Alexander Berzin on Buddhist–Islamic historical contact and contemporary dialogue deserves mention. As Imtiyaz Yusuf observes, the Muslim–Buddhist dialogue in the contemporary period is largely “non-existent or rare” [Yusuf 2009, 368]<sup>1</sup>.

### **1. Methodology**

Before proceeding, it is important to clarify the conceptual framework of the paper by specifying certain terms, concerns, and limitations. Throughout the paper, the term “tradition” will be used rather than “religion” when referring to Islam and Buddhism. While

most people, and indeed most scholars, use the term religion without hesitation when speaking of Islam or other Abrahamic traditions such as Christianity and Judaism, the same cannot be said in the case of Buddhism. Many scholars question whether Buddhism should be categorized as a religion at all, arguing instead that it constitutes a philosophy, an ethical system, or a way of life<sup>2</sup>. It should be emphasized that the present paper does not endorse the view that Buddhism is “merely” a philosophy or that it lacks a religious character. Faith, revelatory authority, and worship are unmistakably present in lived Buddhism, even if they function differently than in Abrahamic theistic frameworks. The choice to engage Buddhism philosophically here is a choice of register, not a denial of its religious dimensions. Moreover, framing Islam and Buddhism within the conventional categories of “Abrahamic” versus “non-Abrahamic” religions risks reinforcing rigid boundaries that can constrain philosophical inquiry. Such classifications may unintentionally confine each tradition to its own conceptual box, thereby discouraging comparative engagement and obscuring the deeper questions of ontology, epistemology, and ethics [Kars, Bahrani 2022, 7].

The difficulty arises from the definitional ambiguity of the term religion itself. If one defines religion primarily in terms of belief in a supreme deity or creator, then Buddhism cannot be readily included within that category. As Yusuf observes, some scholars regard Buddhism as a philosophy rather than a religion; yet, he notes that such classification ultimately depends on how one defines religion [Yusuf 2009, 368]. In his comparative work on Buddhist–Muslim dialogue, Yusuf adopts T. William Hall et al.’s broader definition of religion as a framework of ultimate meaning and moral orientation, which allows for the inclusion of Buddhism and makes dialogue between the two traditions conceptually possible. According to Hall and his colleagues, “religion is the varied, deliberate efforts of people to identify and live in terms of what they take to be of unrestricted value for them” [Hall et al. 1985, 11]. Clifford Geertz’s account of religion as a cultural system offers a similarly capacious alternative, particularly suited to traditions whose philosophical and ritual dimensions are deeply interwoven [Geertz 1973].

One concern that may arise when using the term “religion” to explain Buddhist teachings is the risk of imposing ideas that are not important or relevant to the tradition itself. To see how classifying a system of thought and belief as a “religion” may lead to the imposition of ideas that are not necessarily central to that system, it is useful to consider Émile Durkheim’s view of religion<sup>3</sup> [Durkheim 1995]. According to Durkheim, religion can be explained through naturalistic causes rooted in human needs, one of which is the need for social unity. He therefore interprets religion primarily in terms of its social function – as a means of uniting individuals into a moral community through shared beliefs and practices. If we apply Durkheim’s definition to a tradition such as Buddhism, this approach risks emphasizing only those aspects that fit his sociological framework – namely, the collective and unifying functions – while neglecting or misrepresenting other dimensions that may not align with this view. In this way, defining Buddhism as a “religion” in Durkheim’s sense could obscure its philosophical aims which are not primarily concerned with social cohesion. This is offered as one illustration among others; the broader point is not that Durkheim is uniquely problematic, but that any single sociological or theological definition risks occluding features central to a tradition not in view when the definition was framed.

A further reason for avoiding the term “religion” is that the paper approaches the dialogue between Islam and Buddhism through a philosophical rather than a theological lens. The framework of religion tends to foreground questions of faith, revelation, and worship, concepts that function differently in Buddhism than they do in theistic traditions like Islam, even though they are not absent from Buddhism<sup>4</sup>. Some Muslim scholars, both classical and contemporary, have proposed that the Buddha may be understood as a prophet or divinely inspired figure within an Islamic framework – an idea explored in different

ways by al-Bīrūnī, and more explicitly by modern scholars such as Reza Shah Kazemi and Imtiyaz Yusuf<sup>5</sup>. However, this interpretive move remains internal to the Islamic tradition; it does not reflect Buddhist self-understanding, which does not conceive of the Buddha as a messenger of a Creator God or as a figure within a prophetic lineage.

By contrast, philosophy allows for an inquiry grounded in reason, ethics, and metaphysics, without presupposing a shared theology. As Masao Abe observes, “If dialogue is constrained to theological categories, Buddhism cannot speak. Only on the level of existential and philosophical reflection can a genuine dialogue take place” [Abe 1995, 5]<sup>6</sup>. A philosophical approach therefore helps prevent the imposition of theistic categories, such as “God”, “creation”, or “revelation” onto Buddhist thought, where such notions are not fundamental. Both traditions, despite their doctrinal differences, engage deeply with questions of existence, consciousness, selfhood, and moral transformation. It is important to be clear that the philosophical lens adopted here does not bracket out the soteriological motivations of either author. Nāgārjuna writes in service of Buddhist liberation, and Ibn ‘Arabī writes in service of mystical realization of *al-Ḥaqq*; both projects are unintelligible apart from these soteriological aims. What is bracketed is not soteriology but doctrinal closure – the kind of closure that would force one tradition’s metaphysics onto the other.

This methodological caution becomes especially relevant when examining contemporary comparative works. Another example is Reza Shah Kazemi’s book *Common Ground between Islam and Buddhism* [Kazemi 2010]. While Kazemi’s integrative project is undeniably ambitious and spiritually generative, one might worry that his approach risks overstating the doctrinal concordances between Islam and Buddhism. By framing the “Common Ground” in terms that are explicitly Qur’ānic, Ghazālian, and monotheistic, the analysis occasionally reads Buddhist concepts through categories native to Islamic theology, such as *Al-Ḥaqq*, divine unity, or revealed guidance. It should be emphasized that this is not a criticism of intra-Islamic appreciation of Buddhism as such. Traditions characteristically read other traditions through their own categories, and such readings are legitimate intra-traditional theological moves when acknowledged as such; the difficulty arises when they are presented as neutral comparative frameworks. This raises the methodological concern that the account may not remain fully faithful to the internal beliefs of major Buddhist traditions, many of which explicitly bracket or reject metaphysical claims about a Creator, an absolute personal God, or a permanent soul subject to divine judgment. There is therefore a risk of “religious generalization” or “conceptual translation” whereby Buddhist ideas are retrofitted to resemble Islamic ones, rather than being allowed to speak in their own terms. Comparative scholars have often cautioned that such harmonizing tendencies, even when motivated by goodwill, can obscure real doctrinal differences that are crucial to each tradition’s self-understanding.

A philosophical approach thus enables us to explore these areas of convergence on the level of ontology and epistemology rather than theology. In this way, philosophy establishes a more balanced dialogue between the two traditions, allowing Islam and Buddhism to be seen as offering internally coherent responses to universal human questions rather than as competing belief systems with incompatible dogmas.

Another concern regarding attempts to bridge the gap between distinct religious or philosophical traditions is the underlying aim of such projects. While one cannot overlook the pragmatic benefits of initiatives that foster dialogue between different traditions, these benefits may come at a cost. It is not claimed here that the pursuit of social or political harmony is necessarily distorting; the worry is the more limited one that, when such concord becomes the controlling motivation of a comparative project, it tends to flatten doctrinal difference<sup>7</sup>. In other words, thinkers who prioritize interreligious rapprochement may unintentionally place greater emphasis on contemporary social or political gains than on accurately representing and remaining faithful to the internal beliefs of the traditions

themselves. This is why Mark C. Taylor describes such projects of bridging religious differences as “intellectually misleading and politically misguided” [Taylor 1998, 15].

To see how the pursuit of social or political harmony can occasionally risk prioritizing interreligious goodwill over a fully faithful representation of each tradition’s doctrinal integrity, we need to return to Kazemi’s comparative project. Although aims such as mutual respect and civilizational rapprochement are valuable, they may unintentionally encourage a method that reads Buddhist concepts through Islamic theological categories or treats doctrinal differences as merely superficial. The project’s commissioning context, which Kazemi acknowledges as oriented toward peace-building and mutual understanding [Kazemi 2010, ix–x], raises the possibility that its motivating aims shape the way similarities are emphasized and differences minimized. In such cases, the aspiration for concord risks overshadowing the distinctive metaphysical commitments of Buddhism or Islam, resulting in a form of conceptual over-translation that blurs each tradition’s internal structure.

This concern becomes clearer in Kazemi’s own methodological statements. He explicitly notes that his project “attempts to interpret some central principles of Buddhism in the light of Islamic spirituality” [Kazemi 2010, 1], and that he will base his comparative reflections “as much as possible on the verses of the Holy Qur’ān and the authenticated sayings of the Prophet” [Kazemi 2010, 2]. These commitments already establish an asymmetrical framework: rather than allowing Buddhist concepts to speak within their own intellectual structures, Kazemi systematically reads them through the categories of *ma’rifā*, *al-Haqq*, and the Divine Essence. This leads him to assert that “the ultimate Reality affirmed by Buddhism is nothing other than what monotheists refer to as God”, and that Dharma may be understood as the equivalent of *al-Haqq* [Kazemi 2010, 5–6]. While intended to highlight spiritual resonance, such claims risk assimilating Buddhist non-theism into Islamic metaphysics rather than attending to Buddhism’s own doctrinal beliefs.

Taken together, these methodological choices show how Kazemi’s comparison, though sophisticated and generous in spirit, leans toward harmonization by filtering Buddhist concepts through Islamic theological categories. The result is a comparison shaped less by a neutral philosophical lens and more by a constructive theological framework, one that privileges Islamic metaphysical assumptions and therefore risks obscuring the very doctrinal differences it seeks to respect.

In summary, this paper adopts a philosophical rather than a theological methodology. A philosophical lens enables inquiry through categories of ontology, epistemology, and moral psychology – domains where both Islam and Buddhism articulate their insights – without presupposing shared doctrines of revelation, prophecy, or divine agency. This approach avoids the asymmetry that arises when Buddhist concepts are filtered through Islamic theological categories, and it prevents the kind of conceptual over-translation that risks obscuring Buddhism’s non-theistic foundations.

What distinguishes this project, therefore, is its commitment to doctrinal fidelity and conceptual neutrality. Rather than prioritizing social or political aims such as interreligious harmony or civilizational rapprochement, the paper seeks to understand each tradition in terms of its own conceptual vocabulary and internal beliefs. This means resisting harmonizing moves and allowing both Islam and Buddhism to speak on their own terms.

It is worth specifying the intended readership of this comparative project. The paper is addressed, in the first place, to scholars of comparative philosophy and comparative philosophy of religion who work at the level of structural and conceptual analysis rather than confessional theology; and, in the second place, to practitioners and scholars within either tradition who are open to philosophical engagement with the other tradition without requiring that engagement to conform to their own theological grammar. Unlike Kazemi’s project, the present study does not address itself to a single faith community. The point is precisely that the comparative philosophical register opens a space that is not the

property of any single faith community, even as it remains attentive to the soteriological commitments that animate each tradition.

This methodological stance aims to establish a dialogue grounded not in theological assimilation but in philosophical clarity, preserving the integrity of both traditions while exploring the meaningful points of convergence that emerge from their respective accounts of existence, consciousness, and moral transformation. Before turning to the next section, however, it is important to note the scope of the paper given the vastness of both traditions, the analysis will focus specifically on Mahāyāna Buddhism, particularly Nāgārjuna, and on the Islamic tradition associated with Ibn ‘Arabī’s school. Specifying this scope is essential for avoiding both excessive generalization and extreme particularism in comparative analysis. Moreover, because Ibn ‘Arabī’s writings are highly complex and often challenging even for native Arabic readers, the paper will rely on the commentarial tradition that systematized and clarified his thought, particularly the works of his later interpreters such as Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī<sup>8</sup>.

## **2. Ibn ‘Arabī’s Ontology: Being, Quiddity, and *Fanā***

Let us begin with the concept of the Oneness of Being (*Waḥdat al-Wujūd*) in Islam. Before proceeding, it is important to clarify that, in discussing Ibn ‘Arabī’s school, the paper adopts Mohammed Rustom’s characterization of it as “philosophical Sufism” [Rustom 2016, 400]. Rustom uses this term to emphasize that the central concern of Ibn ‘Arabī’s tradition is Being (*wujūd*) and that many of Ibn ‘Arabī’s doctrines are grounded in, and continuous with, the broader tradition of Islamic philosophy. Approaching Ibn ‘Arabī’s school in this way allows us to treat *Waḥdat al-Wujūd* not merely as a mystical or theological doctrine, but as a philosophical account of existence. Within the Ibn ‘Arabī tradition of philosophical Sufism, the doctrine of the Oneness of Being (*Waḥdat al-Wujūd*) presents a metaphysical outlook in which *wujūd* (Being) is understood as the fundamental and absolute Reality (*al-Ḥaqq*) a term that signifies both ultimate Reality and ultimate Truth. Although this Reality can be referred to as “God”, the term “Being” is often preferable in a philosophical discussion, as it sidesteps the conventional theological associations of “God” while still designating the universal ontological ground from which all things derive [Ali 2022, 31]<sup>9</sup>.

Since the doctrine of the Oneness of Being (*Waḥdat al-Wujūd*) is grounded in the notion of Being (*wujūd*), it is necessary to clarify how this concept is understood within philosophical Sufism. Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī, one of the most authoritative commentators of the Ibn ‘Arabī school, offers a foundational description of Being that highlights its absolute, non-conditioned nature. He writes:

Know that Being qua Being is neither external existence nor mental, since each one is a type of existence. Being itself is not conditioned nor is restricted by either absoluteness or restriction. It is neither a universal nor a particular, nor categorized by generality or particularity. It is one, but not with a oneness superadded to its Essence, nor a multiplicity [...]

Being, on the other hand, is different from all realities, because the existence of opposites and the realization of their like is utterly separate from it [...]

There is nothing intermediate between Being and non-being, just as there is absolutely nothing intermediate between an existent thing and a non-existent thing [Ali 2020, 25–29].

Al-Qayṣarī highlights that Being is entirely unconditional, it cannot be classified as either external existence or mental existence, since both of those categories refer to modes or determinations of being rather than Being itself. In this sense, Being is a reality that is fundamentally unknowable and indefinable. Since the Essence of Being surpasses all relational qualities, it cannot be captured by conceptual definition; any attempt to define it would necessarily impose limits on what, by its very nature, is beyond delimitation. For this reason, Being has no individuation, attachment, or name. Categories such as universality and particularity do not pertain to Being as such; they arise only when Being

becomes manifest in contingent forms. Once Being becomes manifest, it may appear as external or mental, universal or particular, one or many, depending on the plane of disclosure. Yet these determinations belong to the manifestations alone, not to Being in its absoluteness.

Additionally, Being itself is not contingent upon its manifestations, even though the Divine Names depend on manifested forms as the sites through which they are disclosed. Attributes such as knowledge, mercy, or power cannot be perceived except through the contingent beings in which they are reflected. Still, these manifestations do not add anything to Being, nor do they alter its essential unity; they merely reveal differentiated modes through which the Real becomes knowable to creatures. For this reason, the multiplicity of the cosmos is grounded in the self-disclosure of a Reality that, in itself, remains utterly beyond conceptualization and immune to all forms of ontological qualification.

One more clarification should be considered with respect to Being. A central feature of the metaphysical framework developed in philosophical Sufism is the sharp distinction between Being (*wujūd*) and quiddity (*māhiyya*). This distinction functions as the foundation for the doctrine of the Oneness of Being, and it allows the school to articulate a rigorous account of why only Being is real while all essences are conceptual and derivative.

In this framework, quiddity refers to the “whatness” or defining characteristics of a thing, the limits, contours, and conceptual features by which the mind identifies it as this rather than that. When the intellect apprehends an entity, it distinguishes between its existence and its essence; the latter is constructed by abstracting the defining features of the thing from its actual existence. Yet, as Qaysarī and other commentators emphasize, quiddity is fundamentally negative in nature, it designates what a thing is not, the boundaries that restrict its mode of being. For this reason, quiddity is not ontologically real. It is a mental construct that depends entirely on the operation of the intellect. Being, not quiddity, is the true ground of reality.

By contrast, Being (*wujūd*) is not a concept formed by the mind. A being that exists only in thought has no reality apart from the intellect that conceives it and is therefore contingent. Being itself cannot be subject to such dependence, for it is the very condition of the mind’s operations. As Qaysarī writes, “Being is a unitary reality in which there is no multiplicity...” though it appears multiple in accordance with the forms of its manifestation [Ali 2020, 35]. Multiplicity thus arises not within Being itself, but through the individuation or particularization of the Essence as it becomes manifest in various loci. It resembles a single beam of light that produces many colors when refracted; the distinctions are apparent, but each color is simply the light manifesting differently.

Because Being manifests through quiddities, the latter serve as the “shapes” or “outlines” through which Being becomes perceptible. But these outlines have no independent ontological status. They are conceptual frameworks imposed by the intellect to differentiate the modes of Being’s appearance. In themselves, quiddities are neither real nor self-subsisting. They do not exist independently; they merely specify the form in which Being is disclosed. Thus, the Ibn ‘Arabī school insists, quiddities are conceptual; only Being is real.

This distinction is decisive for understanding the metaphysical vision of the Ibn ‘Arabī tradition. By affirming the ontological primacy of Being and the conceptual nature of quiddities, the school avoids both essentialism and reification. Reality is ultimately one, and what appears as multiplicity reflects not many independent essences but diverse manifestations of a single, all-encompassing Reality.

Before moving to the Buddhist side, one more doctrine should be considered because it will help us appreciate the similarities between Islamic and Buddhist ontological views. In Ibn ‘Arabī’s school, the doctrine of *fanā*’ or *’adam*—often associated with the notions of annihilation, non-existence, lack and absence—emerges naturally from the metaphysical

account of Being and non-being that underlies his entire system. Ibn ‘Arabī and his commentators consistently affirm that everything other than Being (*al-Ḥaqq*) is grounded in non-being and that created things “possess no true existence” insofar as their existence is borrowed, relational, and entirely dependent upon the Being for its actuality. As Ibn ‘Arabī states “There is no existence but the existence of the Real” [transl.: Abrahamov 2015, 65]. From this perspective, *fanā*’ does not signify the literal disappearance of the human being but rather the realization of one’s own ontological dependency, the recognition that what one takes to be an independent self is in fact nothing more than a locus through which Being becomes manifest. The human “I” is effaced only in the sense that the illusion of self-subsistent existence falls away; the underlying truth remains unchanged: only Being is real, while all else subsists through it.

This understanding of *fanā*’ is reinforced by Ibn ‘Arabī’s broader ontology. The possible things (*al-mumkināt*) are described as being rooted in non-being, and their appearance in existence is momentary, fragile, and entirely derivative. Ibn ‘Arabī says that “the possible being deserves non-being by its very essence”, thereby emphasizing that contingent entities possess no reality apart from their relation to the Real [Ibn ‘Arabī 2016, 1026]. In other words, beings whose existence depends on another possess only “borrowed existence (*wujūd i’tibārī*)” and cannot be considered truly real. Their continual oscillation between manifestation and effacement, what Ibn ‘Arabī describes as creation’s perpetual movement from being to non-being, indicates that no created entity possesses any autonomous reality. To undergo *fanā*’, then, is to perceive this ontological condition with clarity, to recognize that the self has no independent existence and that whatever reality it seems it is nothing other than the self-disclosure of the Real.

This account of *fanā*’ follows directly from the distinction between Being (*wujūd*) and quiddity (*māhiyya*) discussed earlier. Quiddities in the Ibn ‘Arabī tradition are conceptual delimitations that the intellect imposes in order to differentiate one thing from another. Thus, *fanā*’ represents the experiential realization of the school’s ontological commitments. Just as quiddities lack independent existence and derive whatever presence they have from Being, the human self is revealed in *fanā*’ to be without intrinsic reality. The annihilation of the self is not the destruction of a substance but the unveiling of a truth, that multiplicity, including the multiplicity of selves, is merely the differentiated appearance of a single, uncompounded Reality. In this sense, *fanā*’ is not an additional doctrine but the inward realization of Ibn ‘Arabī’s metaphysics; it is the lived awareness that only Being is real, and that everything else, including the “I”, is a contingent disclosure of that one Reality.

### **3. Nāgārjuna’s Ontology: The Two Truths and Dependent Origination**

Having discussed Ibn ‘Arabī’s metaphysical account of Being, non-being, and *fanā*’, we now shift to the Buddhist tradition. The following section introduces Nāgārjuna’s doctrine of the Two Truths, a central framework within Madhyamaka philosophy that underpins his analysis of emptiness (*śūnyatā*) and dependent origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*).

Before proceeding, it is necessary to underline that Nāgārjuna’s analysis cannot be severed from its soteriological aim. The denial of *svabhāva* and the analysis of dependent origination are in service of liberation, not metaphysical neutrality; this is the meaning of the Buddha’s well-known refusal to engage the *avyākṛta* (undeclared) questions, a refusal that is itself soteriologically motivated. Nāgārjuna also wrote constructively on ethics, most notably in the *Ratnāvalī*, which demonstrates that Madhyamaka is not merely a deconstructive enterprise. The use of the term “ontology” in what follows should be understood in a critical or negative sense – that is, as a structured set of commitments about how one may speak of existence, dependence, and intrinsic nature – not as the construction of a positive metaphysics<sup>10</sup>.

Nāgārjuna's doctrine of the Two Truths (*satya-dvaya*) is best understood not as a religious teaching but as a philosophical framework designed to clarify the structure of reality and the limits of conceptual thought. Nāgārjuna explicitly states that "the teaching of the Buddha is based on two truths: the truth of worldly convention and an ultimate truth" [MMK 24:8]<sup>11</sup>. This distinction does not posit two separate realms of being; rather, it articulates two ways in which the same reality can be apprehended. Conventional truth (*saṃvṛti-satya*) refers to the everyday world of language, concepts, and practical distinctions through which phenomena are ordinarily understood and navigated. Ultimate truth (*paramārtha-satya*), by contrast, designates the insight that these same phenomena lack intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*, more precisely "without metaphysical substrate") and arise only through dependence. As Nāgārjuna famously puts it, "Whatever is dependently co-arisen, that is explained to be emptiness" [MMK 24:18].

Philosophically framed, the Two Truths function as an epistemological and ontological distinction that operates in service of, rather than apart from, Nāgārjuna's soteriological aim. Ontologically, they express the claim that what appears as stable and determinate at the conventional level is, upon analysis, relational and contingent. Nāgārjuna insists that without reliance on convention, the ultimate cannot be expressed: "Without a foundation in the conventional truth, the significance of the ultimate cannot be taught. Without understanding the significance of the ultimate, liberation is not achieved" [MMK 24:10]. This last verse is decisive: the entire framework is oriented toward liberation, and the ontological and epistemological registers of the Two Truths are inseparable from this soteriological purpose. Epistemologically, the Two Truths mark the difference between conceptual cognition, which necessarily operates through distinctions and linguistic constructions, and non-reifying insight, which recognizes the emptiness (*śūnyatā*) of those constructions. Such non-reifying insight is not a propositional belief or a conceptual cognition arising in the ordinary flux of mentation; it is a transformative recognition that is liberative in character. Conventional truth enables communication and practical engagement, while ultimate truth reveals the contingent conditions under which such discourse functions. The two are therefore mutually dependent rather than opposed.

Nāgārjuna is also explicit that emptiness itself must not be reified. To treat emptiness as an ultimate substance or metaphysical principle would be to fall into the very error his analysis seeks to expose. He warns that "For whomever emptiness is a view, that one will accomplish nothing" [MMK 13:8]. Emptiness is not an entity but a critical designation indicating the absence of intrinsic existence in all phenomena. It functions philosophically as a method for dismantling essentialist assumptions, not as a replacement essence. As Nāgārjuna emphasizes, emptiness is itself empty: "By a misperception of emptiness, a person of a little intelligence is destroyed. Like a snake incorrectly seized, or like a spell incorrectly cast" [MMK 24:11]. It should also be noted that the denial of *svabhāva* is not the denial that phenomena have determinate characteristics. "Nature" or *dharmā* (with a small *d*) may be understood as that which distinguishes one phenomenon from another, with or without postulating an underlying metaphysical substrate. Nāgārjuna's analysis denies the substrate, not the differentiation; this distinction is what blocks the common misreading of Madhyamaka as nihilism.

Nāgārjuna's doctrine of the Two Truths finds its philosophical grounding in the principle of dependent origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*), which explains how phenomena arise without possessing intrinsic nature. Conventional truth operates within the network of causal relations, linguistic designations, and practical distinctions that constitute everyday experience. Ultimate truth, by contrast, consists in recognizing that these same phenomena arise only through dependence on causes and conditions and therefore lack self-subsisting essence. As Nāgārjuna famously states, "Whenever is dependently co-arisen, that is explained to be emptiness. That, being a dependent designation, is itself the

middle way” [MMK 24:18]. Dependent origination thus functions as the ontological explanation for why the Two Truths are necessary: because things arise dependently, they can be spoken of and engaged with conventionally, yet precisely because they arise dependently, they are empty of intrinsic existence at the ultimate level. In this sense, dependent origination is not an additional doctrine alongside the Two Truths but the structural principle that unifies them, showing how relationality underlies both ordinary cognition and philosophical analysis.

Understood in this way, the Two Truths articulate a relational ontology that resists both metaphysical absolutism and nihilism. They allow Nāgārjuna to affirm the reality of the world as it is experienced, since dependent arising operates at the conventional level, while simultaneously denying that this reality is grounded in self-subsisting essences. Because phenomena arise dependently, they are neither absolutely real nor utterly unreal. This philosophical structure will prove crucial for the subsequent comparison with Ibn ‘Arabī, particularly in relation to the shared denial of intrinsic existence and the articulation of reality as fundamentally dependent and relational.

#### **4. Bridging the Gap: A Philosophical Comparison without Conceptual Reduction**

Having examined Ibn ‘Arabī’s ontology of Being, quiddity, and *fanā*, and Nāgārjuna’s analysis of the Two Truths and dependent origination, we are now in a position to bring these two philosophical frameworks into dialogue. This comparison does not seek doctrinal equivalence or metaphysical identity. Rather than translating one framework into the terms of the other, it proceeds by structural analogy, allowing each thinker to remain grounded in his own conceptual vocabulary and philosophical method. While Ibn ‘Arabī affirms the absolute primacy of Being (*wujūd*) and Nāgārjuna advances a radically anti-essentialist account grounded in emptiness (*śūnyatā*), both reject self-subsisting essences and explain the apparent multiplicity of reality in relational and dependent terms. The comparison therefore preserves decisive differences – affirmation of absolute Being on the one hand, refusal of any ultimate metaphysical ground on the other – while highlighting a shared critique of substantialism. By avoiding both harmonization and isolation, this approach shows how each thinker offers a distinct yet structurally comparable response to the problem of existence without reifying appearances or denying lived experience. As will become clear, the convergence between the two thinkers is not only structural but also *convergent in soteriological intent*: both write in service of a transformative recognition that dismantles the illusion of self-subsisting existence, even though the soteriological terminus of each project differs decisively – Buddhist liberation for Nāgārjuna, mystical realization of *al-Ḥaqq* for Ibn ‘Arabī.

In what follows, the comparison will concentrate on three interrelated aspects: (1) the denial of intrinsic existence, (2) the relational constitution of phenomena, and (3) the status of ultimate reality or ultimate insight. By holding similarity and difference together without collapsing one into the other, this approach demonstrates that Ibn ‘Arabī and Nāgārjuna should not be read as proponents of a single metaphysical vision, but as philosophers who, from within radically different traditions, arrive at comparable critiques of essence and autonomy. The result is not a synthesis, but a philosophically disciplined dialogue, one that preserves the integrity of both traditions while allowing each to sharpen and clarify the other.

##### **4.1. The Denial of Intrinsic Existence: *Svabhāva* and *Māhiyya***

A central point of convergence between Nāgārjuna and Ibn ‘Arabī lies in their shared rejection of intrinsic existence, though this rejection is articulated within distinct conceptual frameworks. In Nāgārjuna’s Madhyamaka philosophy, the critique of *svabhāva* (intrinsic nature) functions as the cornerstone of his ontological analysis. To possess *svabhāva* would mean to exist independently, self-sufficiently, and without reliance on causes or conditions. Nāgārjuna denies that any phenomenon satisfies these criteria, arguing that all things arise dependently and therefore lack intrinsic nature. As he famously

states, “Whatever is dependently co-arisen, that is explained to be emptiness” [MMK 24:18]. The denial of *svabhāva* thus entails that no entity possesses an essence that grounds its existence from within itself.

A structurally analogous move appears in Ibn ‘Arabī’s distinction between Being (*wujūd*) and quiddity (*māhiyya*). Within the Ibn ‘Arabī tradition, quiddities are not ontologically real constituents of things but conceptual delimitations imposed by the intellect in order to differentiate one manifestation from another. Quiddity signifies the “whatness” of a thing, its defining limits, yet these limits are understood as negative and conceptual rather than real. What truly exists is Being alone; quiddities have no independent reality apart from the Being that discloses itself through them. In this sense, Ibn ‘Arabī’s denial of ontological reality to quiddities parallels Nāgārjuna’s denial of *svabhāva*: both reject the notion that finite entities possess self-subsisting essences.

Despite this structural similarity, an important difference must be maintained. Nāgārjuna’s critique of *svabhāva* does not culminate in the affirmation of any underlying reality; emptiness itself is not an essence but the absence of essence. Ibn ‘Arabī, by contrast, denies intrinsic reality to quiddities precisely in order to affirm the absolute reality of Being (*al-Ḥaqq*). This contrast can be parsed only in light of the soteriological objectives of each author: Ibn ‘Arabī defends the absolute character of *Allāh*, “one without partners”, while Nāgārjuna directs the reader’s attention to the Buddhist insight that there is no self and that all phenomena are without metaphysical substrate. Thus, while both thinkers dismantle essentialism, they do so in divergent metaphysical directions – Nāgārjuna toward a non-affirming ontology, and Ibn ‘Arabī toward an affirming ontology of absolute Being.

#### 4.2. Relational Ontology: Dependent Origination and Manifestation (*Tajallī*)

A second point of comparison emerges in the relational structure of reality articulated by both thinkers. For Nāgārjuna, dependent origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*) provides the ontological explanation for the absence of intrinsic existence. Phenomena arise only through dependence on causes, conditions, parts, and conceptual designation; nothing exists in isolation or from its own side. This relationality is not an accidental feature of reality but its fundamental structure. Because things arise dependently, they can appear, function, and be meaningfully engaged at the conventional level, even though they lack intrinsic nature at the ultimate level.

Ibn ‘Arabī likewise articulates an ontology in which all multiplicity is relational and derivative. Finite entities exist only as loci of manifestation (*mazāhir*) through which Being discloses itself. This process of self-disclosure, often described as *tajallī* (manifestation), explains how a single, uncompounded Reality appears as a multiplicity of forms without itself becoming multiple. Created things do not possess existence in themselves; rather, they exist through their relation to Being. As Ibn ‘Arabī states, “There is no existence but the existence of the Real”. The cosmos is thus a network of relations grounded in a Reality that remains ontologically prior to its manifestations.

It is important to note an asymmetry in the structure of relationality between the two accounts. In Madhyamaka, relationality is *horizontal* and constitutive: phenomena are what they are only in dependence on other phenomena. In Ibn ‘Arabī’s framework, the dominant axis of relation is *vertical* – each manifestation is related primarily to Being, with horizontal relations among manifestations being derivative of, and grounded in, that vertical relation. This is not to say that horizontal relationality is absent in Ibn ‘Arabī; the doctrines of *tajallī*, the immutable entities (*a’yān thābita*), and the cosmological hierarchies elaborated by Qayṣarī and others do allow for relations among manifestations, as Chittick and Chodkiewicz have shown [Chittick 1989; Chodkiewicz 1993]. But the structural emphasis differs, and this difference must be tracked. The structural analogy between the two thinkers therefore holds at the level of rejecting atomistic substantialism, not at the level of identifying a single relational architecture.

Here again, the similarity is structural rather than doctrinal. Nāgārjuna explains relationality without appealing to any underlying substance or ground, whereas Ibn ‘Arabī explains relationality through the self-disclosure of absolute Being. In Nāgārjuna’s account, relationality undermines any claim to metaphysical grounding; in Ibn ‘Arabī’s account, relationality presupposes an ultimate ground that is not itself relational. Nevertheless, both accounts reject atomistic ontologies and affirm that finite phenomena are intelligible only relationally, even though the structure of that relationality differs.

### **4.3. Ultimate Insight without Reification: Emptiness and *Fanā***

A third and particularly illuminating point of comparison concerns the experiential and epistemic implications of these ontologies. In Nāgārjuna’s philosophy, ultimate insight consists in the non-reifying realization of emptiness. To realize emptiness correctly is not to apprehend a hidden reality behind appearances, but to cease projecting intrinsic existence onto phenomena. This is an important distinction: the position attributed to Nāgārjuna here is the *rang stong* (“self-emptiness”) view, not the *gzhan stong* (“other-emptiness”) view associated with Dolpopa, which would hold that there is a hidden ultimate reality behind appearances. Nāgārjuna is explicit that emptiness itself must not be reified; to treat it as a metaphysical view is a philosophical error [MMK 13:8]. Ultimate insight thus involves a transformation in how phenomena are understood, not the discovery of a new ontological object. This transformation is not merely conceptual or mental; if it were, it would not be liberative. The moment of insight (*vipaśyanā*) is a transformative non-reifying recognition, and the use of the term “experiential” here is intentional: it marks that the soteriological dimension of Madhyamaka has not been bracketed and ought not to be.

A comparable transformation appears in Ibn ‘Arabī’s doctrine of *fanā*. *Fanā* does not signify the annihilation of the human being as a substance, but the dissolution of the illusion of independent existence. To undergo *fanā* is to realize that the self possesses no intrinsic reality and exists only as a locus of manifestation for Being. This realization corresponds to the ontological insight that quiddities – including the quiddity of the self – are conceptual and derivative. *Fanā* is therefore the experiential realization of Ibn ‘Arabī’s metaphysics, just as the realization of emptiness is the experiential corollary of Nāgārjuna’s analysis.

Yet the difference remains decisive. Nāgārjuna’s ultimate insight does not culminate in union with or awareness of an absolute Reality; it culminates in the cessation of reification. Ibn ‘Arabī’s *fanā*, by contrast, culminates in awareness of the Real as the only true Being. In one case, ultimate insight negates all metaphysical affirmations; in the other, it negates all finite affirmations in order to affirm the Absolute. What unites these accounts is not their metaphysical endpoint, but their shared insistence that liberation or realization requires abandoning the belief in self-subsisting existence.

### **Conclusion**

The paper set out to explore the possibility of a philosophically rigorous dialogue between Islam and Buddhism by examining the ontological frameworks of Ibn ‘Arabī and Nāgārjuna. Rather than seeking doctrinal reconciliation or metaphysical synthesis, the study argued that a disciplined comparative approach can reveal structurally analogous critiques of intrinsic existence and substantialist ontology, even where ultimate metaphysical commitments diverge. By situating the comparison at the level of ontology and epistemology rather than theology, while remaining attentive to the soteriological commitments of both authors, the paper aimed to respect the internal logic of each tradition while opening a space for meaningful philosophical engagement.

The paper first established a methodological framework grounded in philosophical analysis rather than theology, adopting the term “tradition” in order to avoid imposing unshared categories such as revelation or divine agency and to resist politically motivated

harmonization, while making clear that this is a choice of register rather than a denial of either tradition's religious character. It then reconstructed Ibn 'Arabī's ontology within philosophical Sufism, arguing that his distinction between Being and quiddity entails a rejection of intrinsic existence for finite entities while affirming absolute Being, with *fanā*' interpreted as the experiential realization of this metaphysical structure. Then, the paper examined Nāgārjuna's Madhyamaka philosophy through the doctrine of the Two Truths and dependent origination, showing how the denial of *svabhāva* and the non-reification of emptiness articulate a relational ontology that avoids both substantialism and nihilism.

The final section brought these two frameworks into dialogue through structural analogy rather than conceptual reduction. Focusing on the denial of intrinsic existence, the relational constitution of phenomena, and the nature of ultimate insight, the analysis demonstrated how Ibn 'Arabī and Nāgārjuna arrive at parallel critiques of substantialism while maintaining decisive differences. Where Ibn 'Arabī affirms absolute Being as the ground of all manifestation, Nāgārjuna refuses any ultimate metaphysical ground whatsoever. The comparison also tracked an asymmetry in the structure of relationality – horizontal and constitutive in Madhyamaka, primarily vertical in Ibn 'Arabī – as a difference within the structural analogy rather than a refutation of it. The comparison thus preserved difference while showing how each thinker offers a distinct response to the shared philosophical problem of how to think reality without reifying appearances or denying lived experience.

Taken together, the findings of the study suggest that meaningful philosophical dialogue between theistic and non-theistic traditions is possible without assimilation or reduction. Future research could extend this approach by engaging later Madhyamaka thinkers alongside post-Ibn 'Arabī commentators, by distinguishing more sharply between ontological, semantic, and soteriological registers of comparison, or by connecting these traditions to contemporary debates on dependence, grounding, and the limits of conceptual thought.

This project may be understood as an example of complementarity in intertraditional dialogue. Its aim is neither conversion nor synthesis, but mutual understanding and philosophical enrichment. By allowing each tradition to speak from within its own conceptual resources, such dialogue enables Islam and Buddhism to illuminate one another while preserving their irreducible differences, demonstrating how comparative philosophy can foster intellectual growth without erasing distinction.

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<sup>1</sup> Among contemporary efforts at Buddhist–Islamic dialogue, the sustained work of Alexander Berzin should also be noted, particularly his historical studies of Buddhist–Muslim contact in Central Asia and his ongoing project at the Berzin Archives, which represent one of the most extensive engagements with this comparative terrain [Berzin n.d.]. A precedent for high-level theistic–Buddhist exchange may also be found in the Chinese Christian texts (the so-called Jesus Sūtras) of the Tang dynasty, in which Christian convictions were articulated in Buddhist conceptual idiom without reduction.

<sup>2</sup> Several scholars, including Edward Conze, David J. Kalupahana, Jay L. Garfield, and Richard Gombrich, have argued that Buddhism is better understood as a philosophical or ethical system rather than a religion in the theistic sense [Conze 1962; Kalupahana 1992; Garfield 1995; Gombrich 2009]. This characterization is, however, contested. Donald Lopez, Bernard Faure, and others have argued that the framing of Buddhism as “only” philosophy reproduces an Orientalist gesture; faith (*śraddhā*), the revelatory authority of *buddhavacana*, and devotional and ritual worship are unmistakably present in lived Buddhism. The methodological choice to engage Nāgārjuna and Ibn 'Arabī philosophically in this paper is therefore not a denial of Buddhism's religious character, but a decision about register: the texts examined here are themselves doing philosophical

work, and are read at that register, while remaining embedded in living religious traditions. See also Alan Wallace “Is Buddhism Really Non-Theistic?” and José Cabezón’s work on Buddhist theology, which complicate simple non-theistic characterizations [Wallace 2000; Cabezón 1994].

<sup>3</sup> For more on the challenges involved in doing comparative philosophy of religion, see: [Burley 2025]. Although Burley discusses these issues specifically in the context of comparative philosophy of religion, similar challenges can arise in any project that adopts a comparative approach.

<sup>4</sup> It should be noted that there exists a rich tradition of Buddhist philosophical theology in the negative mode, exemplified by the refutations of *Īśvara* in Śāntarakṣita’s *Tattvasamgraha*, as well as more recent literature – Alan Wallace’s “Is Buddhism Really Non-Theistic?” and the volume *Buddhist Theology* (2000) edited by Roger Jackson and John Makransky – that complicates simple non-theistic characterizations of Buddhism [Wallace 2000].

<sup>5</sup> For a comprehensive list of both classical and contemporary Muslim scholars who have argued – on philological, historical, or theological grounds – that the Buddha may be understood as a prophet within an Islamic framework, see: [Ramli et al. 2018].

<sup>6</sup> For discussions of why philosophical analysis offers a more neutral and productive framework for cross-tradition dialogue than theological or strictly “religious” categories, see: [Smart 1999; Panikkar 1988; MacIntyre 1988]. These scholars argue that philosophy enables traditions to meet on shared conceptual ground without presupposing the truth of any particular theological system. Similar points are made by Abe, Cabezón, and Makransky, who show that dialogue with Buddhism in particular must take place philosophically rather than theologically [Abe 1995; Cabezón 1994; Makransky 1997].

<sup>7</sup> It should be acknowledged that the constructive ethical and political dimensions of Madhyamaka are well attested in Nāgārjuna’s *Ratnāvalī*, which demonstrates that his project is not merely deconstructive but offers substantive guidance on conduct and governance. The point in the main text is therefore narrower: that *when* social or political concord becomes the controlling motivation of a comparative project, it tends to flatten doctrinal difference. The contemporary projects of secular ethics advanced by H. H. the Dalai Lama and the late Hans Küng, however well-intentioned, illustrate this risk.

<sup>8</sup> The choice to engage Ibn ‘Arabī through the Qayṣarī tradition (mediated here by M. H. Ali’s translation) is not a substitute for engaging Ibn ‘Arabī himself; it reflects the methodological judgment that the Qayṣarī commentary represents the school’s own systematizing reading. On this point see: [Chittick 1989; Rustom 2016].

<sup>9</sup> This characterization of *wahdat al-wujūd* as panentheistic rather than pantheistic follows the contemporary scholarly consensus represented by Chittick, Chodkiewicz, Izutsu, and Ali [Chittick 1989; Chodkiewicz 1993; Izutsu 1983; Ali 2022]. The distinction Ibn ‘Arabī draws between the Essence (*dhāt*) and its self-disclosures (*tajalliyāt*), and between Being qua Being and Being as manifest, blocks the simple identification of created things with the Real. Ibn ‘Arabī also articulates principles of differentiation – the immutable entities (*a’yān thābita*) and the Perfect Human (*al-insān al-kāmil*) – that play a structural role bearing comparison, though not identity, with the role of the Logos in Christian theology.

<sup>10</sup> The reading of Nāgārjuna offered here is closer in spirit to a Prāsaṅgika reading, particularly that of Candrakīrti, than to other Madhyamaka receptions. The paper does not engage the rich Indian and Tibetan reception history of Madhyamaka in detail. The position attributed to Nāgārjuna here is also distinct from the *gzhan stong* (“other-emptiness”) view associated with Dolpopa, which holds that there is a hidden ultimate reality behind appearances; the present reading is closer to the *rang stong* (“self-emptiness”) position.

<sup>11</sup> Hereafter cited as MMK. References to Nāgārjuna’s *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* follow the standard chapter-verse format [e.g., MMK 13:8], using Jay L. Garfield’s English translation [Garfield 1995].

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**Структурна аналогія без концептуальної редукції:  
філософське порівняння Ібн Арабі та Нагарджуни**

Пропонована стаття досліджує можливість філософськи строгого діалогу між ісламом і буддизмом через порівняльний аналіз онтологічних структур Ібн Арабі та Нагарджуни. Замість того щоб прагнути доктринального примирення чи метафізичного синтезу, вона пропонує метод структурної аналогії без концептуальної редукції, розпізнаючи паралельні філософські стратегії, зберігаючи при цьому внутрішню узгодженість та відмінності кожної традиції, які неможливо редукувати. Центральне твердження полягає в тому, що обидва мислителі формулюють аргументовану критику внутрішньо притаманного буття та субстанціалістської метафізики, що збігається за структурою та сотеріологічним наміром, навіть якщо вони рішуче розходяться у своїх вихідних онтологічних переконаннях.

Робота складається з чотирьох етапів. По-перше, вона встановлює методологічну основу, що ґрунтується на філософському аналізі, а не на теології, розуміючи це як вибір ракурсу, а не як заперечення особливостей релігійної доктрини будь-якої з традицій. Вона використовує термін “традиція”, щоб уникнути нав’язування категорій, яких один з мислителів не поділяє, як-от одкровення, пророцтво чи божественне посередництво. Вона виносить за дужки доктринальну обмеженість, а не сотеріологічну мотивацію та протистоїть намаганням узгодити погляди мислителів з політичних або миролюбних міркувань. По-друге, вона реконструює онтологію Ібн Арабі в рамках філософського суфізму, досліджуючи первинність буття (*вуджуд*), концептуальний статус сутності (*магійя*) та емпіричне значення *фана* як реалізації онтологічної залежності. По-третє, вона реконструює філософію Махд’ямаки Нагарджуни через доктрину двох істин та залежного походження, підкреслюючи заперечення *свабхави* (точніше кажучи, “брак метафізичного субстрату”) та нереїфікувальну функцію порожнечі (*шуньята*). Порожнеча інтерпретується не як фундаментальна субстанція, а як критичний метод руйнування есенціалістських припущень на службі визволення.

Останній розділ зводить ці структури до діалогу, зосереджуючись на трьох спільних проблемах: запереченні внутрішнього буття, реляційному характері явищ та природі кінцевого розуміння. Тоді як Ібн Арабі заперечує скінченну автономію, щоб ствердити абсолютне буття, Нагарджуна заперечує реїфікацію, не стверджуючи жодної кінцевої метафізичної основи. Стаття завершується представленням цього порівняння як прикладу взаємодоповнюваності в міжтрадиційній філософії – спрямованої не на навернення чи синтез, а на взаєморозуміння та філософське збагачення, – демонструючи, як змістовний діалог між теїстичними та нетеїстичними традиціями може відбуватися без редукції.

**Ключові слова:** буття (*вуджуд*); Ібн Арабі; Нагарджуна; порожнеча (*шуньята*); філософський суфізм

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