

# Insan Kamil and Homo Deus: A Pinnacle of Human Existence in the Digital Era

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## Abstract

*The human civilization in the current digital era is marked by advancements in artificial intelligence (AI) and reflective thought on human existence. This article aims to examine and to compare the pinnacle of human existence in the digital era from the perspectives of Muhammad Iqbal and digital anthropology. The issues discussed are the concepts of Insan Kamil in Iqbal and Homo Deus in digital anthropology, as well as the similarities and differences. The method used is library research with philosophical approach. The data obtained is analyzed qualitatively and comparatively. The results of this article include: the pinnacle of human existence, in Iqbal's perspective, is understood as Insan Kamil, which is the best representation of divine vicegerent. Meanwhile, in digital anthropology, it can be understood as Homo Deus, which is human surpassing traditional biological limitations and approaching divine characteristics. Both perspectives share similarities in motivation to enhance well-being of humanity, recognizing evolution of human life, understanding the unlimited potential of each individual, and emphasizing the importance of obedience to laws and ethics. Whereas the differences emerge in applicability, religious aspects, achievement foundations, views on God, and the stance on digital technology use. Practically, this discussion raises indecision among practitioners due to the development and utilization of technology clearly separating these concepts. The recommendation for further research is alternative theories that bridge these intersecting ideas.*

**Keywords:** *Digital Anthropology, Homo Deus, Insan Kamil, Muhammad Iqbal.*

## Abstrak

*Peradaban manusia di era digital saat ini diwarnai dengan adanya kemajuan teknologi dalam bidang kecerdasan buatan (AI) dan pemikiran reflektif tentang eksistensi manusia. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji dan membandingkan puncak eksistensial manusia di era digital dalam perspektif Muhammad Iqbal dan antropologi digital. Persoalan yang dibahas meliputi: bagaimana konsep Insan Kamil dalam perspektif Iqbal dan Homo Deus dalam antropologi digital, serta persamaan dan perbedaannya di era digital. Metode yang digunakan adalah library research dengan pendekatan filosofis. Data yang diperoleh dianalisis secara kualitatif dan komparatif. Hasil temuan dan analisis dari artikel ini, meliputi: puncak kesempurnaan eksistensial manusia dalam perspektif Iqbal, dipahami sebagai Insan Kamil yang merupakan sebaik-baiknya representasi khalifah Tuban. Sedangkan dalam perspektif antropologi digital, dipahami sebagai Homo Deus, yakni manusia yang melampaui batasan-batasan biologis tradisional dan mendekati karakteristik keilabian. Antara perspektif Iqbal dan antropologi digital memiliki kesamaan dalam hal motivasi untuk meningkatkan kemaslabatan umat manusia, mengakui kehidupan yang evolutif, memahami setiap individu memiliki potensi tak terbatas, dan menegaskan pentingnya ketaatan pada hukum dan etika dalam proses pencapaian. Sementara perbedaan di antara keduanya, terlibat dalam taraf keberlakuan, aspek keagamaan, dasar pencapaian, pandangan terhadap Tuban, dan kedudukan atas penggunaan teknologi digital. Secara teoretis, pembahasan ini memperkaya khazanah keilmuan terkait spiritualitas dan filsafat teknologi. Namun secara praktis, pembahasan ini mengantarkan kebingungan pada para praktisi dalam pemanfaatan teknologi, dikarenakan perkembangan dan penggunaannya yang memisah tegas dua konsepsi tersebut. Rekomendasi dari penelitian ini berupa adanya penelitian lanjutan, yang membahas apakah ada alternatif teori yang menjembatani dua konsepsi yang bersinggungan tersebut.*

**Kata Kunci:** *Antropologi Digital, Homo Deus, Insan Kamil, Muhammad Iqbal.*

## Introduction

In the dynamics of contemporary civilization, human life continues to evolve rapidly and intricately. On one hand, we observe philosophical-spiritual thoughts, as introduced by Muhammad Iqbal in his concept about human existence. On the other hand, we also witness digital technological advancements, particularly in the field of artificial intelligence (AI) in the form of Brain-Computer Interface (BCI), bringing forth intriguing new challenges and opportunities in connecting human existence with the technological world.

Muhammad Iqbal, a prominent thinker in the Islamic world, introduced his religious existentialist thoughts through the concept of ego as a view of the ontological basis of human existence. Iqbal's existentialist thinking is built on various assumptions, including the idea that every human possesses inherent potential and acts as God's representative on Earth.<sup>1</sup> The consistent and consequential process of self-actualization, by integrating intellectual, emotional, and spiritual awareness, is described as a way to achieve a level of perfection. *Insan Kamil*, a term referring to this level coined by subsequent scholars, is the perfect representation of human individuality as the best divine vicegerent on Earth.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile, the rapid and remarkable development of digital technology in artificial intelligence is ongoing. Artificial intelligence, initially perceived as a threat to human existence, is now being integrated with humans through BCI. This technology connects the human organic brain with a computer as a form of artificial intelligence. It enhances mobility, accessibility, communication, and competency for users, both with and without disabilities.<sup>3</sup>

In connection with Iqbal's philosophical thoughts and the development of digital technology, several intriguing questions arise, such as: Can the concept of *Insan Kamil* from Iqbal's perspective be implemented in the current digital era? How does it compare to the perspective of digital anthropology, which studies the relationship between humans and digital technology? These questions open the door to further in-depth philosophical research that stimulates thought.

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<sup>1</sup> Suhermanto Ja'far, 'Konsep Iqbal tentang Metafisika' (Depok: Program Pascasarjana Universitas Indonesia, 2003): 18-27.

<sup>2</sup> Musthofa Anshori Lidinillah, 'Agama dan Aktualisasi Diri dalam Perspektif Iqbal', *Jurnal Filsafat* 10, no. 2 (2000): 256.

<sup>3</sup> Shiv Kumar Mudgal et al., 'Brain Computer Interface Advancement in Neurosciences: Applications and Issues', *Interdisciplinary Neurosurgery* 20, no. 69 (June 2020): 7.

In existing literature, research on Iqbal's thoughts has been extensively conducted from various aspects, including philosophy,<sup>4</sup> mysticism (*tasawwuf*),<sup>5</sup> literature,<sup>6</sup> politics,<sup>7</sup> and others. More explicitly, regarding the concept of ego and *Insan Kamil* in Iqbal's perspective, several studies have descriptively and explanatorily addressed these topics. Other interesting studies have explored their relevance and implications, including panentheistic philosophy of divinity,<sup>8</sup> Islamic education,<sup>9</sup> human resource development,<sup>10</sup> social and religious issues,<sup>11</sup> as well as contemporary Indonesian problems.<sup>12</sup>

Therefore, research discussing and comparing views on *Insan Kamil* or the pinnacle of human existence from Iqbal's perspective and digital anthropology is an urgent and essential endeavor. This article seeks to provide a critically reflective understanding of the

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<sup>4</sup> Asep Kurniawan, 'Filsafat Islam Metafisika Muhammad Iqbal tentang Tuhan sebagai Ego', *Jurnal Yaqzhan: Analisis Filsafat, Agama dan Kemanusiaan* 3, no. 1 (June 2017): 57.

<sup>5</sup> Aam Abdillah and A. Bachrun Rifai, 'Perkembangan Pemikiran Konsep Pendidikan Diri dalam Perspektif Tasawuf Muhammad Iqbal', *Al-Tsaqafa: Jurnal Ilmiah Peradaban Islam* 16, no. 1 (June 2019): 135–58.

<sup>6</sup> Ahmad Ghozi, 'Kekuatan Karya Sastra Muhammad Iqbal dan Pengaruhnya terhadap Masyarakat Islam India', *El-Qudwah: Jurnal Integrasi Sains dan Islam* 4, no. 5 (2013): 179.

<sup>7</sup> Rodliyah Khuza'i, 'Pemikiran Politik Mohammad Iqbal', *MIMBAR: Jurnal Sosial dan Pembangunan* 19, no. 2 (2003): 179.

<sup>8</sup> Suhermanto Ja'far, 'Panenteisme dalam Pemikiran Teologi Metafisik Moh. Iqbal', *Jurnal Kalam* 6, no. 2 (February 2017): 273.

<sup>9</sup> Kusdani, 'Konsep *Insan al-Kamil* Menurut Muhammad Iqbal dan Implikasinya terhadap Pendidikan Islam' (Pekanbaru: Program Pascasarjana UIN Sultan Syarif Kasim, 2009): 138.

<sup>10</sup> Ilzami Imamudah, '*Insan Kamil* dalam Perspektif Muhammad Iqbal dan Relevansinya bagi Pengembangan Sumber Daya Insani' (Lampung: Program Pascasarjana UIN Raden Intan, 2018): 129.

<sup>11</sup> Abdullah Firdaus, 'Konsep Khudi Dalam Ranah Sosial Dan Agama', *TAJIDID: Jurnal Ilmu Ushuluddin* 15, no. 2 (December 2016): 207.

<sup>12</sup> Zulkarnain, 'Filsafat Khudi Mohammad Iqbal dan Relevansinya terhadap Masalah Keindonesiaan Kontemporer' (Medan: Program Pascasarjana UIN Sumatera Utara, 2016): 103-104.

concept of Insan Kamil presented by Iqbal and the perspective of digital anthropology. This article attempts to draw comparisons between Insan Kamil in Iqbal's thought and the study of digital anthropology. It is expected that this article will contribute to human civilization by exploring the meaning of existence and spirituality in the era of massive and explosive digital technology today.

In this research, the method used is library research with philosophical approach to obtain a comprehensive and critical understanding about Insan Kamil or the pinnacle of human existence. Works by Iqbal, Yuval Noah Harari, and various related scholarly literature serve as the data sources for this research. The data analysis technique used consists of qualitative and comparative. The qualitative analysis technique provides a strong framework to explore the complexity of the concept of Insan Kamil from the perspectives of Muhammad Iqbal and digital anthropology. Meanwhile, the comparative analysis technique serves as a basis to delve into the similarities and differences between the views of Iqbal and digital anthropology, regarding the pinnacle of human existence in the digital era.

## **Insan Kamil in the Perspective of Muhammad Iqbal**

Etymologically, "Insan Kamil" is a phrase in Arabic composed of the terms "*al-insān*" and "*al-kāmil*," which respectively mean human and perfect or complete. Insan Kamil can be interpreted as a perfect or complete human. Meanwhile, in terminological terms, Insan Kamil can be understood as a concept referring to the highest status or achievement of a human in their existence. In the mystical tradition of Islam, this concept has long existed and was popularized by Ibn 'Arabi and 'Abd al-Karīm al-Jilli. Yet, in the context of Iqbal's thought, this concept holds a specific and more philosophical meaning.

In Iqbal's view, there is essentially no explicit discussion on how the concept of Insan Kamil is detailed and profound.

However, the term “Insan Kamil” or “*insan-e-kamil*” is mentioned several times in Iqbal’s works. In Nicholson’s English translation, it is referred to as the “Perfect Man”.<sup>13</sup> Meanwhile, among Indonesian scholars who later examined Iqbal’s thoughts, many used different terms such as authentic human,<sup>14</sup> superhuman,<sup>15</sup> etc. The meaning of Insan Kamil in Iqbal’s perspective can be understood through the concept of ego in his effort to reconstruct Islamic thought. Insan Kamil can be understood as the highest level that the ego can reach in its evolution.

With evolution understood as an ongoing process of continuous change, this means that the Insan Kamil does not point towards individuals who have reached the endpoint of existential, spiritual, or moral development. Instead, it refers to a point of continuity where individuals can perpetually actualize their full potential for their own lives and the surrounding environment. Thus, according to Iqbal’s perspective, Insan Kamil signifies the pinnacle of human perfection as an existing ego continually evolving in its individuality.<sup>16</sup>

Iqbal explains that there are three stages of education for the ego assumed to reach a higher, highest, or perfect level. These stages include obedience to the law, self-control, and divine vicegerency. Obedience to the law, in Iqbal’s context, is a crucial initial step in the spiritual journey towards Insan Kamil. It is not about restricting freedom but rather about self-management in the face of freedom. Obedience to the law represents how Insan Kamil is a disciplined and professional individual. Through this

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<sup>13</sup> Muhammad Iqbal, *The Secrets of the Self* (London: Macmillan and Co. Limited, 1920): 29.

<sup>14</sup> Alim Roswanto, *Gagasan Manusia Otentik Dalam Eksistensialisme Religius Muhammad Iqbal* (Yogyakarta: Idea Press, 2009): 1.

<sup>15</sup> Maria Ulfa, ‘MANUSIA SUPER (Study Komparatif Perspektif Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche dan Muhammad Iqbal)’ (Semarang: Program Studi Filsafat Islam UIN Walisongo, 2009): 76.

<sup>16</sup> Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (California: Stanford University Press, 2013): 47-48.

process or stage, becoming Insan Kamil means being consistent and conscientious in actualizing oneself based on principles, values, and ethics, for the common good and the universe.<sup>17</sup>

Next, the second stage is self-control as a step to surpass worldly desires and pleasures. It is a process of liberation from the shackles of the lower ego and a journey towards higher and purer self-realization. Self-control, in this context, is not just about restraint but also about self-actualization in a higher capacity and in line with the best representation of God's creation on earth. Through self-control, individuals lay the foundation to achieve spiritual perfection, overcome internal obstacles, and realize their full potential to attain Insan Kamil.<sup>18</sup>

Lastly, becoming the best representation of divine vicegerent on earth is an ongoing final stage where individuals continuously strive to uphold and deepen existential and spiritual perfection. This stage is about dedicating oneself to the common good, creating positive changes in the world, and embodying high moral and spiritual values. As Divine vicegerent or God's caliph, individuals become a perfect representation of divine values. The success of Divine vicegerent is judged by the consistency and consequences of living out the role as depicted. Thus, individuals achieve perfect internal harmony between intellectual, moral, and spiritual aspects; which is the essence of becoming Insan Kamil, the pinnacle of existential and spiritual perfection of humans on earth.<sup>19</sup>

In addition, concerning this, Iqbal also articulates several factors that can strengthen the ego, which can be understood in the context of optimizing Insan Kamil. Love, *faqr* (simplicity), courage, tolerance, *kasb-i-halal* (lawful endeavor), and creative-original activities are things that can be understood as crucial to emphasize in optimizing individual achievement in the Insan Kamil level. Love

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<sup>17</sup> Iqbal, *The Secrets of the Self*, 73-74.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 75-76.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 78-83.

provides the motivation for self-development and connection with the Divine. *Faqr* teaches the importance of balancing material and spirituality. Courage enables individuals to pursue truth and the highest achievements. Tolerance promotes social harmony and appreciation for diversity. *Kasb-i-balal* respects effort and ethics in seeking blessings. Creative-original activities serve as a means to understand one's existence more deeply, stimulate ego growth, and unite the relative ego with the Absolute Ego or God.<sup>20</sup> All of these become an essential foundation in strengthening individuals in their existential journey towards the pinnacle of perfection, including in the digital era.

Meanwhile, some factors that weaken the ego such as fear, dependence, slavery, and pride in lineage can be understood as crucial obstacles that weaken individuals in optimizing themselves towards and achieving *Insan Kamil*. Fear binds inner potential with doubt and anxiety, while dependence hinders independence and the courage to take action. Slavery, both physical and mental, destroys human dignity and imprisons freedom, as well as hinders the ability to continue to grow and develop. Then, pride in lineage can foster an unfounded sense of superiority and obstruct the understanding that true glory is achieved through personal effort and achievement, not through bestowal or inheritance.<sup>21</sup> All of these, if not eroded and avoided, could potentially hinder someone from embarking on an authentic journey towards self-awareness and higher spiritual enlightenment as the perfect level of human existence.

Overall, *Insan Kamil* in the perspective of Muhammad Iqbal represents the pinnacle of human perfection as an individual who consistently actualizes and controls oneself according to the principles, values, and ethics in place. Achieving *Insan Kamil* means becoming the best representation of Divine vicegerent or God's

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<sup>20</sup> Kusdani, 'Konsep *Insan al-Kamil* Menurut Muhammad Iqbal dan Implikasinya terhadap Pendidikan Islam', 85-94.

<sup>21</sup> Zulkarnain, 'Filsafat Khudī Mohammad Iqbal dan Relevansinya terhadap Masalah Keindonesiaan Kontemporer', 65-69.



caliph who serves, creates transformation, and embodies moral and spiritual values. It is imperative for an individual to strive to develop deep love, both towards God and His creation, as the foundation to overcome fear and attain courage. The state of *faqr*, or spiritual awareness that liberates from worldly attachments, is instilled concurrently with the spirit of courage to face challenges and tolerance towards differences. Pursuing *kasb-i-balal*, as the ethical and moral means of livelihood, and engaging in original creative activities are crucial steps to strengthen character and enhance the independence of personality. By overcoming fear, rejecting dependence, slavery, and the pride of lineage, individuals can build a strong foundation for personal and spiritual growth, optimizing the attainment of Insan Kamil idealized by Iqbal. The progress of digital technology is not considered a hindrance to be avoided but rather a challenge to optimize its benefits and mitigate its harms.

## **Homo Deus in the Perspective of Digital Anthropology**

Similar to Insan Kamil in Iqbal's perspective, in the perspective of digital anthropology, there is also no explicit discussion found regarding what and how the concept of the pinnacle of human existence is in detail, let alone in-depth. In fact, terms like "Insan Kamil" or similar ones are hardly ever mentioned. Nevertheless, some concepts such as Homo technologicus,<sup>22</sup> Homo cyberneticus, or cybernetics organism (cyborg),<sup>23</sup> and Homo Deus indicate how the meaning of the pinnacle of human existence can be understood in the perspective of digital anthropology. Reviewing the etymological meaning of Insan Kamil as a perfect or complete human—where perfection or completeness is often attributed to the divine or God—one of the concepts that comes closest to this

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<sup>22</sup> Rufus Goang Swaradesy, 'Hubungan Manusia dan Teknologi dalam Tinjauan Filsafat Teknologi Don Ihde (Studi Film Say Hello to Yellow Karya BW Purba Negara)', *LAYAR: Jurnal Ilmiah Seni Media Rekam* 8, no. 1 (2021): 18.

<sup>23</sup> Kuldeep Singh Kaswan et al., *CYBORG: Human and Machine Communication Paradigm* (Boca Raton: CRC Press, 2023): 1-7.

is Homo Deus from the renowned anthropologist and historian, Yuval Noah Harari.

Homo Deus is a concept that explains how humans are approaching divine characteristics. This concept provides critical and profound insights into how technological advancements can transform humans into beings with capabilities beyond the usual limits of humanity. Just as the term suggests, with “deus” meaning God or Divine, this concept indicates the potential for humans to approach what can be considered divine.<sup>24</sup> In this context, Homo Deus can be seen as a stage of human evolution where technology is not just a tool but also an integral part of human existence, leading them toward the pinnacle of existential perfection—as far as it is possible and understood currently in the perspective of digital anthropology.

Fundamentally, Homo Deus is formulated by observing human efforts to challenge the limits of their humanity by integrating technology into the construction of their identity. This includes genetic engineering to eliminate diseases and extend life, as well as the use of cybernetic technology to enhance physical, mental, and intellectual capacities. This concept not only transforms the way we view the human body and mind as ontological realities but also our understanding of what it means to be human.<sup>25</sup>

Furthermore, in the perspective of digital anthropology, Homo Deus also represents the culmination of human efforts to overcome various limitations through technology. Homo Deus is a human entity that has surpassed biological limitations and approached divine characteristics such as vast power and immortality. Developments like Brain-Computer Interface (BCI) in this context demonstrate how the human mind can be directly

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<sup>24</sup> Yuval Noah Harari, *Homo Deus: Masa Depan Umat Manusia* (Tangerang: Pustaka Alvabet, 2018): 23.

<sup>25</sup> Syazna Maulida and Suhermanto Ja'far, 'Islam And Homo Deus in Anthropocentric Theology: A Religious Challenge in the Future', *TAJIDID: Jurnal Ilmu Ushuluddin* 21, no. 1 (2022): 112-117.

connected to the digital world. This opens up possibilities for extraordinary and exponential cognitive enhancements, even creating entirely new ways of communication and interaction.

The achievement of humanity towards *Homo Deus*, critically and philosophically, reveals the central role of science and technology. In this modern era, science is no longer just a tool for understanding the universe but has become a driving force shaping human reality itself. Meanwhile, technology, as the applied product of science, transforms how humans interact with the world and with each other. Thus, fundamentally, technology changes the understanding of life, death, well-being, and human existence in its existential dimensions.

Historically, the progress of scientific knowledge has enabled humans to overcome many challenges previously considered unavoidable fate, such as diseases, hunger, and even the limits of life. Furthermore, scientific knowledge has also enhanced human well-being. In the journey towards *Homo Deus*, science and technology play a dual role as problem-solving tools and catalysts for increasingly higher human aspirations. For instance, synthetic biology, nanotechnology, and artificial intelligence not only help extend human life but also open possibilities to create entirely new forms of life, full of happiness or well-being, whose capabilities and limits far surpass what is currently understood as 'human,' seeming to deny and surpass the divine.<sup>26</sup>

In its more practical aspect, Brain-Computer Interface (BCI), a revolutionary innovation in cutting-edge technology, serves as a key bridge in the human transition from *Homo sapiens* to *Homo Deus*. BCI marks a turning point in human evolution due to its ability to integrate brain functions directly with computers and technology. With BCI, humans as a species not only use technology as an external tool but literally connect their minds to the digital system. This allows unprecedented two-way information exchange,

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<sup>26</sup> Harari, *Homo Deus: Masa Depan Umat Manusia*, 49.

opening possibilities to enhance extraordinary and exponential human physical and cognitive abilities, such as amplifying the body with exoskeletons, accelerating the learning process, accessing information instantly, and even telepathic communication through digital networks.<sup>27</sup>

Moreover, BCI can provide new ways for individuals with physical limitations to interact with the world, breaking previously perceived inevitable limitations. In the context of Homo Deus, BCI is not just an assistive tool and enhancement; it is an evolutionary step towards a form of life where the boundaries between biology and technology become blurred, leading to an expanded and enhanced human existence, where the line between human and machine is no longer clear, manifesting a new reality where humans have capabilities that exceed traditional biological limits.<sup>28</sup>

Thus, science and technology play a central role in the transition of humanity from Homo sapiens to Homo Deus. The progress of scientific knowledge becomes a stage that allows humans to extend life and opens opportunities to create new forms of well-being beyond traditional limits. To reach Homo Deus, simply integrating BCI, illustrating the direct integration of brain functions with digital technology, provides enhanced cognitive abilities and enables new interactions between humans and machines. Through the development and application of science and technology, this becomes the catalyst and foundation in human achievement towards Homo Deus as the pinnacle of human existence in the perspective of digital anthropology.

Overall, Homo Deus in the context of digital anthropology is not only understood to depict technological progress but also expands the understanding of what might be the future of humanity. The concept of the pinnacle of human existence, which

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<sup>27</sup> Rajesh P. N. Rao, *Brain-Computer Interfacing: An Introduction* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013): 239-269.

<sup>28</sup> Yuval Noah Harari, *Sapiens: Riwayat Singkat Umat Manusia* (Tangerang: Pustaka Alvabet, 2017): 494-495.

may not have been fundamentally discussed in the study of digital anthropology, becomes understandable through the concept of Homo Deus. The divine characteristics qualifying Homo Deus represent the meaning of perfection intended by Insan Kamil. The pinnacle of human existence in the perspective of digital anthropology can be understood as Homo Deus, namely, humans who surpass traditional biological limits and approach divine characteristics.

## **The Pinnacle of Human Existence in the Digital Era between Iqbal's Perspective and Digital Anthropology**

The pinnacle of human existence, as viewed through the lenses of Iqbal and digital anthropology, offers two distinct interpretations. Each perspective shares similarities on certain aspects while differing on others. The following provides a further discussion to comprehend the comparison between Insan Kamil in Iqbal's perspective and Homo Deus in digital anthropology.

### **1. Similarities**

The pinnacle of human existence, as explained by Muhammad Iqbal and understood in digital anthropology, exhibits intriguing and profound similarities or points of convergence. Despite originating from different frameworks, both share a common perspective in envisioning the enhancement of collective human well-being, recognizing the evolutionary nature of human life and existence, understanding that each individual possesses unlimited potential that can be actualized, and emphasizing the importance of adherence to law and ethics.

Firstly, looking towards the enhancement of collective human well-being. In Iqbal's perspective, it is believed that the attainment of spiritual and existential perfection by individuals, or Insan Kamil, is manifested in the improvement of the well-being of society as a whole. The positive contributions of each individual

to civilization in reaching its maximum potential are integral to Iqbal's understanding of the journey towards perfection.<sup>29</sup> Similarly, through the lens of digital anthropology, particularly in the vision of Homo Deus and applications like BCI, there is a shared objective. The realization of this vision through the application of technology is aimed at collectively assisting humans, providing greater access to individual potential, and enhancing overall quality of life.<sup>30</sup>

Secondly, acknowledging the evolutionary nature of human life and existence. Iqbal perceives life and humanity as something evolutionary. Intrinsic evolution and existential growth are positioned as key elements in achieving the highest level of perfection. Iqbal emphasizes the importance of continuous development and progress in the journey towards excellence.<sup>31</sup> Similarly, within the realm of digital anthropology, especially through the achievement of Homo Deus and the development of BCI, a similar embrace of the evolutionary viewpoint is observed. Technology is seen as a product of human evolution. The application of technology provides humans with the ability to continue evolving in cognitive, emotional, and physical capacities. By leveraging technology, humans can accelerate their evolutionary process towards higher stages (Homo Deus).<sup>32</sup>

Thirdly, understanding that each individual possesses unlimited potential that can be actualized. Iqbal rejects deterministic and essentialist views of humanity. For Iqbal, every individual has unlimited potential that can be actualized. The concept of individual freedom to develop and realize one's potential is at the

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<sup>29</sup> Mohsin Afzal Dar and Muhammad Iqbal, 'Iqbal's Concept of Insan-i-Kamil or Mard-i-Momin (Perfect Man)' 6, no. 2 (2023): 53-54.

<sup>30</sup> Harari, *Homo Deus: Masa Depan Umat Manusia*, 1.

<sup>31</sup> İlyas Altuner, 'The Philosophy of the Self in Muhammad Iqbal', *Entelekyia Logico-Metaphysical Review* 6, no. 2 (November 2022): 42.

<sup>32</sup> Demosthenes G Katritsis, 'In Search of Homo Deus', *Arrhythmia & Electrophysiology Review* 9, no. 3 (2020): 112.

core of Iqbal's understanding of *Insan Kamil*.<sup>33</sup> Similarly, digital anthropology adopts a similar perspective. Technology, especially BCI, provides a tool to liberate humans from deterministic constraints and opens up new opportunities for individual growth. The application of this technology creates an environment where each individual can actualize their potential without being restricted by specific deterministic or essentialist factors.<sup>34</sup>

Fourthly, emphasizing the importance of adherence to law and ethics. Iqbal underscores the importance of obedience to law and ethics in the spiritual journey. Ethics is considered the foundation and stage for individuals to achieve spiritual and existential perfection.<sup>35</sup> Digital anthropology also recognizes the importance of ethical principles and adherence to law in the development and application of technology, including BCI. Ethical aspects serve as guidelines to ensure that technology is used to enhance the quality of life and well-being of humans. Legal aspects are emphasized to guide humans in achieving *Homo Deus* without losing control.<sup>36</sup>

Overall, in the perspectives of Muhammad Iqbal and digital anthropology, they share similarities on certain aspects. Both point towards the enhancement of collective human well-being by believing that human evolution, the actualization of individual potential, and adherence to law and ethics are key elements. Iqbal, with the concept of *Insan Kamil*, emphasizes the positive contribution of individuals to society, including the use of technology as an integral part of spiritual perfection. Digital anthropology, through the vision of *Homo Deus* and BCI, also aims to improve the collective quality of human life. Both acknowledge the evolutionary nature of human life, encourage

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<sup>33</sup> Roswanto, *Gagasan Manusia Otentik Dalam Eksistensialisme Religius Muhammad Iqbal*, 102-104.

<sup>34</sup> Harari, *Homo Deus: Masa Depan Umat Manusia*, 254.

<sup>35</sup> Iqbal, *The Secrets of the Self*, 73-74.

<sup>36</sup> Harari, *Homo Deus: Masa Depan Umat Manusia*, 405.

continuous growth, and reject deterministic views. While Iqbal emphasizes individual freedom to actualize potential, digital anthropology sees technology, particularly BCI, as a tool to liberate humans from deterministic constraints. In the midst of it all, both Iqbal and digital anthropology stress the importance of adherence to law and ethics as guidance in achieving these goals.

## 2. Differences

Insan Kamil in the perspective of Iqbal and Homo Deus in the perspective of digital anthropology, originating from different frameworks, certainly exhibit differences. They have distinct and even opposing understandings, particularly in terms of the level of applicability, religious aspects, foundational achievements, views on God, and the potential for self-destruction. The following is a detailed explanation of these differences.

Firstly, the level of applicability. Insan Kamil in Iqbal's perspective applies to individual achievement or personal human existence. Iqbal emphasizes self-development through spiritual experience and deep personal understanding.<sup>37</sup> In contrast, Homo Deus, in the context of digital anthropology, focuses more on the development of humans as a species (*Homo sapiens*). This understanding is not only related to individual achievements but also to the communal evolution of humans, which may involve fundamental changes in the characteristics of the human species. Therefore, it is said that BCI serves as a transmission bridge from the evolution of *Homo sapiens* towards *Homo Deus*, the species of the future.<sup>38</sup>

Secondly, religious aspects. Insan Kamil in Iqbal's perspective is rooted in the understanding of Islamic religion. Iqbal envisions

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<sup>37</sup> Shumaila Rafiq Naseem Akhter, 'Analytical Study Of The Allama Iqbal Philosophy Of Perfect Man Under The Light Of Islamic Concept', *Multicultural Education* 8, no. 5, (June 2022): 175.

<sup>38</sup> Lucilla Gatt et al., 'BCI Devices and Their Capacity to Express Human Will Having Legal Value: A Model of Risk-Based Classification', *European Journal of Privacy Law & Technologies*, no. 1 (2022): 289.



human evolution towards perfection as a spiritual journey involving obedience to Islamic principles. The achievement of Insan Kamil, as a representation of a perfect human, is closely related to the understanding and submission to religious teachings.<sup>39</sup> In contrast, in the context of digital anthropology, Homo Deus departs from a spirit of humanity or humanism that is free from religious ties. The achievement of Homo Deus does not depend on faith or specific religious teachings. Transhumanism, which can be understood as the foundation of Homo Deus, emphasizes human development through technology and data understanding rather than religious aspects.<sup>40</sup>

Thirdly, foundational achievements. The achievement of Insan Kamil in Iqbal's perspective is based on spiritual and mental experiences. Iqbal emphasizes the importance of spiritual growth, soul evolution, and meaning in achieving perfection. The understanding of God as the Ultimate Ego forms the basis for human development.<sup>41</sup> In contrast, Homo Deus, based on a more positive and technological scientific approach, especially through the use of BCI, achieves more through programming and data management. The soul or spirit is interpreted as a result of brain performance, similar to software running on hardware, without incorporating dimensions of the soul or spirituality into its understanding.<sup>42</sup>

Fourthly, views on God or the Ultimate Ego. Iqbal's perspective involves the view that God or the Ultimate Ego is the highest entity and the ultimate goal of human evolution. The achievement of Insan Kamil becomes a kind of unity and closeness

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<sup>39</sup> Iqbal, *The Secrets of the Self*, 74.

<sup>40</sup> Daekyung Jung, 'Transhumanism and Theological Anthropology: A Theological Examination of Transhumanism', *Neue Zeitschrift Für Systematische Theologie Und Religionsphilosophie* 64, no. 2 (2022): 172–94.

<sup>41</sup> Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, 47-48.

<sup>42</sup> Rao, *Brain-Computer Interfacing: An Introduction*, 16-17.

to God as the desired reality by Iqbal.<sup>43</sup> Meanwhile, in digital anthropology, there is a tendency to surpass the concept of God or divine figures. Homo Deus is indicated to go beyond God, as seen in the goal of bringing humans to eternity, vast power, and happiness.<sup>44</sup> There is an ambition to achieve autonomy without dependence on the spiritual dimension of divinity.

Fifthly, the position on the use of technology. As expressed by Paul Virilio, every technology—including digital-based technology—carries its own negativity, created at the same time as the development of the technology itself.<sup>45</sup> Insan Kamil in Iqbal's perspective tends to avoid the potential for self-destruction. The emphasis on ethical and spiritual values is directed towards maintaining balance and harmony in achieving perfection. Therefore, the use of technology in this context is only minimal and outside the threshold of dependence. In contrast, in the lens of digital anthropology, Homo Deus, where technology plays a central role in its transformation and dynamics, has the potential to face challenges of self-destruction, especially when relying on artificial intelligence through BCI, which opens windows to technological singularity and transcendence that are increasingly close.<sup>46</sup> The risk lies in the potential where humans lose control and seemingly relinquish control to technology, threatening personal identity and self-autonomy.

Thus, there are fundamental differences between Insan Kamil in the perspective of Muhammad Iqbal and Homo Deus in digital anthropology. In Iqbal's perspective, Insan Kamil applies to the level of human existence as individuals, unlike digital anthropology which applies to the species level. Iqbal's Insan Kamil is closely tied to the teachings of Islam, acknowledging the spiritual dimension, considering God as the highest goal, and utilizing technology

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<sup>43</sup> Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, 48.

<sup>44</sup> Harari, *Homo Deus: Masa Depan Umat Manusia*, 24.

<sup>45</sup> Paul Virilio, *Politics of the Very Worst* (New York: Semiotext(e), 1999): 89.

<sup>46</sup> Ray Kurzweil, *The Singularity is Near* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2005): 24.

cautiously to prevent potential self-destruction. Meanwhile, Homo Deus in digital anthropology places humanity as the primary focus, is oriented towards science and technology, seems to view God as something to be surpassed, and potentially faces the risk of self-destruction through reliance on artificial intelligence, especially BCI.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the discussion of the pinnacle of human existence in the perspectives of Muhammad Iqbal and digital anthropology above, it can be concluded that the exploration of the concept of Insan Kamil from Muhammad Iqbal and Homo Deus from digital anthropology provides an understanding that the pinnacle of human existence is articulated differently. Insan Kamil represents an individual who consistently self-actualizes, exercises self-control, and becomes a positive agent of change in adherence to spiritual and ethical principles. On the other hand, Homo Deus illustrates humans surpassing traditional biological limits, entering a technological era that approaches divine characteristics. Despite substantial differences in applicability, views on God, and positions on technology, there are also points of convergence between the two. The motivation to enhance human well-being, the understanding of the evolution of human existence, and the principle that each individual has unlimited potential serve as common foundations.

Theoretically, this discussion enriches the scholarly discourse related to spirituality and the philosophy of technology. However, practically, this discussion leads to concerns among practitioners in the digital era, due to the development and utilization of technology clearly separating these two concepts. The recommendation from this research is the need for further research, which explores whether there are alternative theories that bridge these intersecting concepts.[]

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