

A Comparative Analysis of the Relationship between Being and God in Ibn ‘Arabī and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

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Introduction

The perennial human questions “From where?”, “For what?”, and “To where?” lie at the heart of both classical theology and contemporary philosophy of religion. Modern transformations in science and philosophy, particularly after Descartes and the rise of anthropocentric epistemologies, have intensified debates about the relation between God and the temporal universe and about the compatibility of scientific cosmology with religious doctrines. Within Islamic intellectual history, mystical metaphysics—especially the school of Ibn ‘Arabī—offered a distinctive account of the God–world relation centred on divine self-manifestation. In modern Christian thought, Teilhard de Chardin sought to reconcile evolutionary science with Christocentric theology by presenting the cosmos as a teleological process of increasing complexity and consciousness.

While the God–world relation has been extensively discussed in Islamic philosophy, Christian theology, and comparative philosophy, Teilhard’s world-view remains largely under-studied in Persian scholarship, and systematic comparisons between him and Ibn ‘Arabī are rare. This study addresses that gap by analysing how each thinker conceptualises (a) the ontological status of the cosmos, (b) the process by which it unfolds, and (c) its final end in relation to God. The main research question is: *How do Ibn ‘Arabī and Teilhard de Chardin respectively understand the relation between being and God, and in what sense do their views converge or diverge regarding origin, process, and ultimate unity?*

Methodology

The research employs a descriptive–analytic and comparative method. In the first step, the primary metaphysical structures of Ibn ‘Arabī’s thought are reconstructed on the basis of his major works, especially *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya* and *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, alongside key commentarial sources in the tradition of theoretical mysticism. Particular attention is paid to the doctrines of the unity of personal existence, the system of divine Names and Attributes, the fixed entities (a‘yān thābita), tajallī, ḥarakat ḥubbiyya (love-driven motion), and the notion of the Perfect Man (al-insān al-kāmil).

In the second step, Teilhard's evolutionary cosmology is examined through his main works, notably *The Phenomenon of Man*, *The Divine Milieu* and *The Future of Man*, and through contemporary studies on his thought. Here, the focus falls on the concepts of matter–spirit continuity, the “complexity–consciousness” law, the noosphere, psychic and material energy, and the Omega Point identified with the Cosmic Christ.

In the third step, the two systems are compared along three coordinated axes—beginning (origin), process, and final end—as well as a methodological axis contrasting mystical–metaphysical reasoning with scientific–theological synthesis. The aim is not to reduce one framework to the other, but to place their key notions in a dialogical and mutually illuminating relation.

Main Findings

Ontological status of the cosmos

For Ibn ‘Arabī, only the Divine Essence truly *is*; all other beings are manifestations and relations of this one personal Existence. The cosmos possesses no independence—neither in existence nor in quiddity—but is constituted through the continuous self-disclosure of God according to the capacities of the fixed entities and the modalities of the divine Names. Multiplicity is thus the differentiated appearance of a single ontological reality.

Teilhard, by contrast, affirms the genuine reality of the evolving cosmos, yet refuses to see it as merely material. For him, matter and spirit are two aspects of a single process in which “inside” (interiority, consciousness) intensifies as “outside” (complexity of structure) increases. The world is therefore a living, two-dimensional reality—material and psychic—whose evolution expresses a deeper, Christocentric telos.

Process of becoming

In Ibn ‘Arabī's framework, the process is governed by love-driven motion: the Divine loves to see Its own perfections in the mirrors of creation, which motivates ongoing *tajallī*. The distinction between *jalā* (the latent clarity of perfections in the Essence) and *istijlā* (their manifestation in the realm of creation) explains how the One appears as many without compromising its unity. The Perfect Man represents the culminating mirror in which all Names and Attributes are most comprehensively reflected.

For Teilhard, the process is described by the law of complexity–consciousness. From cosmic expansion and physico-chemical structures to life, thought, and human self-consciousness, the universe undergoes an ascending movement of interiorisation and unification. The emergence of the noosphere—a planetary layer of thought and communication—marks a new phase in which human cooperation, technology and culture drive a collective deepening of consciousness.

Final end and unity

Ibn ‘Arabī locates the consummation of the process in the Perfect Man, who is the locus of the most complete divine self-manifestation and the ontological mediator between Creator and creation. The end is articulated in terms of proximity, annihilation in God (*fanāʾ*) and subsistence by Him (*baqāʾ*), all within the horizon of

the unity of personal existence: the many are finally recognised as nothing but relations and modes of the One.

Teilhard's final end is the Omega Point: the eschatological convergence of all lines of evolution into a supreme centre of consciousness and love. Identified with the Cosmic Christ, Omega is both transcendent and immanent, drawing the universe from ahead. At Omega, the plurality of personal centres is not dissolved but united in a higher synthesis of love, where God is "all in all" while personal distinctness is preserved.

Discussion and Conclusion

The comparison reveals both structural analogies and fundamental differences. On the side of analogy, both thinkers:

- affirm a dynamic, non-static universe directed towards a higher unity;
- assign a central, mediating role to the human being in the unfolding of that process (the Perfect Man vs. the builder of the noosphere);
- reject a merely deistic model of God in favour of an intimate, ongoing relation between God and the cosmos.

On the side of difference, Ibn 'Arabī's unity is primarily ontological and grounded in divine self-manifestation; the world is a set of dependent manifestations without intrinsic self-subsistence. Teilhard, however, presupposes the relative autonomy and temporal novelty of the universe, interpreting its evolution as a genuine historical drama in which God graciously allows creaturely cooperation and freedom. Methodologically, Ibn 'Arabī argues from mystical unveiling and metaphysical reasoning anchored in Qur'anic language, whereas Teilhard reasons from scientific data toward a Christian theological synthesis.

The study concludes that the two approaches are not simply incompatible but potentially complementary. Ibn 'Arabī offers a profound metaphysical grammar of divine presence, which can deepen the ontological understanding of a God-related cosmos. Teilhard provides a historically and scientifically informed vision of cosmic development which can enrich discussions of temporality, emergence and collective consciousness within mystical theology. Taken together, they point toward a theocentric yet process-sensitive account of the relation between being and God, capable of drawing on both Islamic theoretical mysticism and modern Christian evolutionary thought.

Keywords: Ibn 'Arabī, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, unity of being, Omega Point, noosphere, God–world relation.