

## From Process to God: A Muslim's Critical Engagement with Charles Hartshorne

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Major religious traditions devote significant effort to understand the nature of the relationship between God and the world. The lure of this discussion stems from the profound implications it bears on humanity's religious experience. The fundamental questions pertaining, especially, to the psychological aspects of human religiosity are answered with an eye on the metaphysical assumptions on the God-cosmos relationship. Charles Hartshorne, one of the most influential philosophers of religion of the last century, develops a set of metaphysical concepts in order to understand the God-cosmos relationship in the age of science. In his system, God and the world exist in a dynamic and mutually enriching relationship, and the immanence or dependence of God upon the world is the most notable hallmark.

In this article, I first critically examine Hartshorne's ideas on the nature of the God-cosmos relationship and, within the larger context, the process philosophy of Alfred N. Whitehead and Hartshorne himself, with a special focus on the development of these ideas. I, then, turn to formulate some critical questions and, from an Islamic point of view, indicate some possible inconsistencies in Hartshorne's system of thought.

**Key words:** Philosophy of Religion, Charles Hartshorne, Process, God, Islam.

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Major religious traditions devote significant effort to understand the nature of the relationship between God and the world. The lure of this discussion stems from the profound implications it bears on humanity's religious experience. Namely, God and human relationship is, consciously or unconsciously, conceptualized in the light of the perceptions of God and cosmos relationship. The fundamental questions pertaining, especially, to the psychological aspects of human religiosity are answered with an eye on the metaphysical assumptions on the God-cosmos relationship. For example in formulating an answer to the problem of theodicy, the entire relationship of God and the world must be examined. How does God relate to my sorrows

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and joys? In what psychology should I pray? How do I relate to other humans and nature? These and similar questions are, inevitably, answered on the basis of our presumptions and convictions regarding the nature of the relationship of the Divine and the world.

Charles Hartshorne (1897-2000), a process theologian and one of the most influential philosophers of religion and metaphysicians of the last century, develops a set of metaphysical concepts in order to understand the God-cosmos relationship in the age of science. In accordance with the overall project of Process Philosophy and Theology, he attempts to contribute to the construction of a larger metaphysical framework in which diverse religious and scientific experiences of humanity can be construed consistently and coexist complementarily. In his system, God and the world exist in a dynamic and mutually enriching relationship, and the immanence or dependence of God upon the world is the most notable hallmark.

In this article, I first critically examine Hartshorne's ideas on the nature of the God-cosmos relationship with a special focus on the development of these ideas within the larger context of the process philosophy of Alfred N. Whitehead and Hartshorne himself. I, then, turn to formulate some critical questions which, I believe, might indicate some inconsistencies in Hartshorne's system of thought.

## God and the World

The term "divine relativity" serves as a key for understanding Hartshorne's account of the relationship of God to the world. In Hartshorne God is a dipolar deity with both abstract and concrete poles. The abstract pole refers to immutable aspects of God (goodness, wisdom), concrete pole refers to the growth in God's knowledge of the world as the world itself develops and changes.<sup>1</sup> This in turn posits a dipolar or dualistic concept of God who has an absolute and relative side.<sup>2</sup>

Hartshorne develops the idea of the divine relativity<sup>3</sup> to imply that God is not the "wholly other", or utterly transcendent as the orthodox Christian

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1 Simoni, Henry Wilson, "Three models of the relationship of God and world: Hartshorne, Plotinus and Neville" (PhD diss., Boston University, 1995), 13.

2 To quote Hartshorne; *God, on the other hand, in his actual or relative aspect, unqualifiedly or with full effectiveness has or contains us; while in his absolute aspect he is the least inclusive of all individuals*. Charles Hartshorne, *The Divine Relativity: A Social Conception of God, (Terry Lectures)* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948), 92.

3 For more detailed discussion of Hartshorne's theory of divine relativity, please see Henry Simoni-Wastila, "Omniscience and the Problem of Radical Particularity:

theology claims. Hartshorne holds that in the traditional Christian accounts God, developed mostly by such thinkers as Thomas Aquinas and Saint Augustine are depicting God as ultimately distant from the world, the realm of imperfection and temporality. The transcendence is emphasized to an extent that the immanence is almost lost to the sight. For Hartshorne such conceptualizations constitute insurmountable predicaments for Judeo-Christian tradition when it deals with challenging theological and philosophical problems. For instance the problem of theodicy is difficult to tackle when one holds on to the understanding of an ultimately transcendent God because this implies an ontological distance between human suffering and the Divine immutability. As a remedy he attempts to offer a more balanced approach between transcendence and immanence. In the search for balance he emphasizes the immanence of God to the extent of envisaging that God feels the dread and sufferings in the world. God is "the fellow sufferer of who understands" if we use Whitehead's maxim. God is in the space and time and is manifested in and through all aspects of physical world. The spiritual world permeates the physical world without annihilating it, or, more truly, the physical world is melted in the metaphysical. As such Hartshorne's articulation of the concept of the divine relativity bears the lure of the mystical traditions which subsume transcendence in a greater immanence. Hartshorne's theological system offers a closer relationship with an emphatic God.

In addition to calling his theism dipolar he refers to it as a type of panentheism (God is all of this world and more). In Hartshorne's view panentheism means that all is in the one God in that all creaturely feelings (joy, suffering) are included in the divine life. It is as though, to use soul-body analogy, God is the soul or mind of the physical-natural world. God is also the animating power behind all events.<sup>4</sup> But Hartshorne does not go to the extent of identifying God and the cosmos. He is not a pantheist. In contrast, he thinks of God as distinguishable from his creatures. Panentheistic soul-body analogy allows him to assert immanence without falling into pantheistic identification

For Hartshorne the classical concept of God is a distorted philosophical construction under the influence of Greek thought. For him Aristotelian conceptualization of God as the prime mover and Platonic alienation between this mundane world and the realm of ideas readily paves the way for

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Does God Know How to Ride a Bike," *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 42(1997), 1-22, and Henry Simoni-Wastila, "Divine Possibility and the Problem of Radical Particularity: Does God Feel Your Pain?," *Religious Studies* 33 (1997), 327-347.

4 Here he approaches "the ground of being theologies."

the exaggerate distinctness, endurance, absoluteness of God. A literal reading of the Judeo-Christian canonical sources however reveals a different picture. Especially the Judaic tradition understands God as in the process of the reality and, accordingly, stresses the mutability, historicity and relationality. In some assertions of the Hebrew bible, although they are in sharp contrast with medieval understandings of transcendence, God is supremely relational, changing, immanent, so that he is not utterly independent, immutable, and transcendent. Hartshorne urges for revitalization of the Hebraic concept of God which is also the original Christian depiction of God before it is distorted by the penetration of Greek thought and the Hellenistic cultural chaos. Hartshorne writes:

“Is it not time Christianity should be judged in its own terms, not in terms of its borrowed Greek garments, however good a fit these may have long appeared to exhibit....I believe that the fundamental religious insight (into the essentially social character of the supreme or cosmic view) was more vividly present to Jews than any other ancient people, and to Jesus than to any other man.”<sup>5</sup>

### **Grounding for the Theory of Divine Relativity**

Hartshorne's account of the relationship of God and the world can be traced back to his views on the philosophical implications of the modern scientific conclusions (especially the theory of evolution and modern physics) and his theory of knowledge of God. For Hartshorne, the picture of the world presented by modern science is at odds with classical concept of God. Extrapolating from this standpoint Hartshorne attempts to construct a new concept of God which can be reconciled with the picture of the universe presented by modern scientific worldview. The monstrosities in the world, the chance factor suggested by evolution and mutations, and fundamentally non-deterministic depiction of the universe by quantum mechanics are hard to reconcile with the classical concept of the omnipotent God. On the other hand the general orderliness and almost deterministic nature of macro cosmos can not be reconciled with there being no Orderer or Persuader. To transcend this predicament, Hartshorne attributes free will, self determination, and consciousness to everything including the fundamental particles. The particles as the ground of all observed natural events are subjected to the persuasive power of God. The non-deterministic nature of the subatomic world manifests the persuasive power of God as opposed to classical concept

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5 Charles Hartshorne, *Man's Vision of God and the Logic of Theism* (Willett, Clark & company: 1941), xiv.

of unilaterally controlling God. Here we see an attempt to reconcile the apparent monstrosities, chance mutations, non-deterministic particles with the general orderliness and beauty of the universe.

Hartshorne's theological system envisages that God exercises relational and persuasive power on the world, not a unilateral control. In other words, God is omnipotent in the sense of persuasion. That means that the universe is characterized by a never ending change or process. The universe is not constituted by material substances, but by serially-ordered events. All events contribute the process reality of universe. The direction of this process determined not by an omnipotent God, but by free will and self-determination. God offers possibilities to this universal free will. God guides people, particles, animals, plants, animate-inanimate beings to the greatest good possible, but does not coerce them. To say it in another way, God has a will in everything, but not everything occurs is God's will<sup>6</sup>, because the universe is characterized by free will and self-determination. The pervasiveness of free will explains why there is evil in the world, because, for Hartshorne, in this given context God cannot end evil, pain and suffering. It is readily seen that Hartshorne, among other things, attempts to overcome the problem of theodicy. He holds that the classical concept of omnipotent God cannot but produce insidious forms of the theodicy problem. Moreover, God must be sympathetic to our sorrows as way to overcome the problem of theodicy. This sympathetic relation is a logical outcome of *agape*, God's love towards creation. For Hartshorne God "Either loves all beings, that is, is related to them by a sympathetic union surpassing any human sympathy, or religion seems a vast fraud."<sup>7</sup>

Hartshorne sees an irreconcilable conflict between omnipotence (and omnibenevolence) and the suffering of creatures. In dealing with this problem, the traditional theological strategies redefine suffering and attempt to show the greater good hidden in apparent suffering. For Hartshorne this discursive strategy doesn't do the trick, because the suffering is so real and can not be disguised by any delusional rhetoric. Instead he calls for a radical transformation in our understandings of God's attributes. Thus, God is not omnipotent in Hartshorne's view. God's power is what bestows free will and self determination to creatures. But it is precisely at this moment of bestowal God's power becomes subject to an authentic limitation, for free will to be

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6 John Cobb and David Griffin, *Process Theology: An Introductory Exposition* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976), 14-16.

7 Charles Hartshorne, *The Divine Relativity: A Social Conception of God, (Terry Lectures)* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948), 92.

real. In this regard we can conclude that the orderliness and beauty stems from God's intervention to the process, the flow of being, with a persuasive power. The disorder and evil, on the other hand, stems from the partial freedom and power bestowed to the animate and inanimate beings. This world is in fact the best not because everything is for the best as it is, but it is the best world given love as a persuasive influence and at the same time personal freedom of human-nonhuman participants of the process.

There is also an epistemological base for Hartshorne's account of the relationship of God and the world. The Classical Christian epistemological theory asserts that the knower is in a cognitive relation to the known.<sup>8</sup> More clearly the knower must be related to the known either physically or intellectually. Hartshorne extends this epistemology without losing the humanly connotations to the divine, meaning that God must be intimately related to the object known. How can God be omniscient without feeling of the feeling of a sufferer? Does God have a merely factual report of what has happened in the world or does God have knowledge of the participant in the process? Namely, for God to be really omniscient, God is to be in an authentic relation with the created order. To put it bluntly, God knows suffering as a sufferer experience it, thus God suffers in a way appropriate to his perfection.

This implies a hierarchical relation of the knower to the known. At the bottom there is known object (a rock, an oyster) which is not related to much else of the world. In the middle are human beings who are relatively related to the world and, thus, knows and feels to a certain degree. At the top there is "*the eminent individual*"<sup>9</sup> who knows everything because he is absolutely related to the world.

Moreover from Hartshorne's panentheistic point of view the physical world is a part of the Divine Being. The absolute "relationality" suggested by Hartshornian panentheism indicates that God knows and loves literally but humans know and love analogically and metaphorically. A participant's knowledge is not the same as an observer's knowledge and somewhat superior to that. Hartshorne concludes that God does not only know "intellectually" but also know "experientially" in the perfect sense of the term. To quote Hartshorne, "what does it mean to know what sorrow is, but never to have sorrowed, never to have felt the quality of suffering?"<sup>10</sup> God cannot be called

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8 For this discussion see Charles Hartshorne, *Aquinas to Whitehead: Seven Centuries of Metaphysics of Religion* (Marquette University Publications: 1976)

9 Charles Hartshorne, *The Divine Relativity: A Social Conception of God, (Terry Lectures)* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948), 48

10 Hartshorne, *The Divine Relativity: A Social Conception of God*, 56.

omniscient unless he feels the joy and suffering of the created beings as they experience them. Feeling the pain of the sufferer is a prerequisite for perfect knowing. That means God's knowledge is participatory and experiential.<sup>11</sup>

Hartshorne places his theory of knowledge of God in an onto-theological construction. This is a panentheistic relation which almost identifies an empathetic and immanent God with the universe and presumes that the universe is a part of God (although God transcends it). His system has also an element of transcendence to prevent pantheism from collapsing into pantheism.<sup>12</sup> To quote Hartshorne; *panentheistic doctrine contains all of deism and pandeism except their arbitrary negations.*<sup>13</sup>

Hartshorne's theological panentheism seems to have its roots in Spinoza's pantheism according to which God is the only substance which is differentiated, or modified, into infinitely various modes constituting the physical world. Spinoza's system offers a substantial continuity between God and the world. Hence Spinoza identifies God and cosmos which in turn allows that God does not need motive for creation. While Hartshorne gives up the idea of the identification of God and cosmos, he keeps the intimate relationship of God and cosmos. God is bound to create. God must have the world for its perfection. Here his pantheism becomes panentheism. God contains the universe but not identical with it. Because God interacts with everything in the universe, God is changeable. However, there are also immutable attributes of God such as, goodness, wisdom, and justice. Even though God is eternally good, just and wise God can surpass himself. Nothing can surpass God but God can surpass him/herself. The interaction between God and the world is mutually enriching to the extent that God is *bound* to this relationship.

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11 For further discussion please see, William J. Hill, "Does Divine Love Entail Suffering in God?" in *God and Temporality*, edited by Bowman L. Clarke and Eugene T. Long. (New York: Paragon, 1984), 101-13.

12 To the best of my knowledge, Hartshorne does not provide a clear definition of the nature of this relation or an analogy. Is the relationship between God and the world comparable to the relationship between cells and body, or between soul and body? Is the world like a baby in her mom's womb? The exact manner in which God is identical with the cosmos is not all clear to me. He does not claim to explain it in any exhaustive fashion. But I think it is possible to provide suggestive analogies. A rough analogy, for example, is the relationship between cells and body, and soul. Cells are intimately connected to the body. But body has its own identity which transcends the totality of the cells. The body is more than the sum the cells. Body is also not completely independent from the cells. Cells are contained within body in a way that they constitute the body. But the reality of man with the soul and body can not be reduced to the sum of cells.

13 Charles Hartshorne, *Man's Vision of God and the Logic of Theism* (Willett, Clark & company: 1941), 348.

Hartshorne affirms that God works in this process to actualize potentialities to bring out the greatest good.<sup>14</sup>

God is temporal for Hartshorne. God is not outside of time but rather exists in time.<sup>15</sup> God “becomes”, to use process philosophy’s terminology, infinitely surpasses his own perfection. Furthermore, God’s perfection lies exactly in this temporality and relationality.<sup>16</sup> As I alluded above, for Hartshorne the perfection necessitates a relational interaction with the creation. Furthermore God must have real ontological relation with the world. An absolutely distant God is not consistent with the world because of permeating presence of the pains and sorrows. He writes:

“suppose..., a man says I can be equally happy and serene and joyous regardless of how men and women suffer around me. Shall we admire this alleged independence? I think not. Why should we admire it when it is alleged of God.”<sup>17</sup>

### **A Critical Engagement with Hartshorne’s Account of God-Cosmos Relationship**

Hartshorne’s system has merits. The emphasis on free will and self determination provides new perspectives in answering the question of theodicy. The concepts of process, change and relationality offer a new way of thinking about the world and God. It is also possible to say that his theological system promises valuable insights for the integration of science and religion.

I believe there are inconsistencies too. In formulation of my objections I will harken back to my background as Muslim. Therefore, before I formulate my questions a few words on the Qur’anic concept of God is necessary. The concept of God in Islam is founded upon Oneness (*Tawhid*), transcendence (*tanzih*) and immanence (*tasbih*). God is transcendent, greater than all we can conceive, incomparable to his creation (*tanzih*). God is also immanent, comparable, and close, or as the Quran attests closer to us than our jugular vein (*tashbih*). To God belongs “All the beautiful names” (Qur’an, 7: 180,

14 C. Robert Mesle, *Process Theology: A Basic Introduction* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 1993), 65-68, 75-80.

15 For a detailed discussion on Hartshorne’s concept of temporal God please see Simoni, Henry Wilson, “Three models of the relationship of God and world: Hartshorne, Plotinus and Neville” (PhD diss., Boston University, 1995).

16 This is an extreme opposite of the traditional convictions where God is absolute, not as contingent; because a contingent God could not provide an ontological foundation for a contingent world. Secondly, contingency implies lack of power thus lessen the passion for piety.

17 Hartshorne, *The Divine Relativity: A Social Conception of God*, 44.



59: 24), the names of beauty (*Jamal*), majesty (*Jalal*) and perfection (*kamal*).<sup>18</sup> Divine names are continuously manifested in creation. Therefore one can find God in and through creation. All levels of existence are various combinations of the Divine Names.<sup>19</sup>

To explain the mystery of creation, following famous sacred prophetic tradition has been used countless times (especially by Sufis): "I was a hidden treasure. I wanted (or loved) to be known and created the creation."<sup>20</sup> The key words of the prophetic tradition are *love* and *know*. These concepts, for Sufi metaphysics, explain why God has created the world and how God relates to the world. Because of *love* God manifests Itself in (or as) the creation, and through creation we *know* God.<sup>22</sup>

Once *marifah* (knowing) and *muhabbah* (loving) are constituted as the two central axes around which everything turns, a question necessarily arises. How one can know about and love God by extrapolating from the created order? Although there are myriad answers given to this question, Asharite-Maturidi position took precedence. To answer this central question these schools of thought employ the doctrine of Divine Attributes<sup>23</sup> that was developed and enhanced by such thinkers as al-Ghazali, Cuveyni, er-Razi, Kadi Beyzavi, Bâkîllânî, Şehristânî, Teftâzânî, es-Semerikandi ve Cürçânî. There is a consensus that the attributes we perceive in physical beings and occurrences, like knowledge, will, power and so on, are manifestations of the Divine Attributes and Names. Al-Ghazali (d. 1111), an Asharite theologian, philosopher and

18 The Names of the Majesty includes the Just, the Majestic, the Reckoner, the Giver of Death, the Victorious, the All-Powerful. The Names of Beauty includes the All-Merciful, the Forgiver, the Gentle, the Generous, The Beautiful, Love. Such verses as "My mercy has encompassed everything" (Qur'an, 7: 156) and "God has written mercy upon Himself" (Qur'an, 6: 12, 54) indicate that the Names of Beauty take precedence over the Names of Majesty.

19 For a beautiful elaboration on names and the word please see, S. H. Nasr, *The Heart of Islam* (New York: Harper Collins Publication, 2002), 3.

20 'Ali b. Sultan Muhammad al-Harawi al-Qari, *al-Masnu' fi Ma'rifat al-hadith al-Mawdu'* (Al-Riyad: Maktabat al-Rushd, 1404 AH), 1: 141.

21 As Ibn Taymiyya and others stated, no chain of transmission is known for this, whether weak or strong. But the same meaning can be inferred from a verse, which says: "I created Jins and humans only that they may *worship* me (Qur'an 51:56), meaning that "they may *know* (ma'rifah) me" as Ibn Abbas explains.

22 Construing the whole world in the light of this *hadith* many Sufis over the ages have spoken of "Divine love" permeating the whole world to which Dante refers to at the end of the *Divine Comedy* when he speaks of "the love that moves the sun and the stars."

23 Michael E. Marmura, "Al-Ghazali." In *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy*, ed. Peter Adamson and Richard C. Tylor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 142-143.

mystic, elaborates and expands on this doctrine. He holds that the divine attributes (*sifat*) of life, knowledge, will, power, speech, hearing and seeing are co-eternal with the divine essence (*dhat*) and intimately related to it but are not identical with it.<sup>24</sup> They are eternal coexisting uncaused attributes. The divine attributes are manifested each and every moment in physical and nonphysical occurrences. Divine will and power are pervasive and divine attributes are direct causes of each and every temporal event.<sup>25</sup> The attributes of creatures point to the attributes of the Creator, just as a painting informs us about the painter. But, as the painting is not identical to the painter, the attributes of creatures are not identical with the attributes of their Creator. Here the underlying concern is to walk a fine line between immanence (*tashbih*) and transcendence (*tanzih*). Since God is immanent, a limited knowledge of God by extrapolating from the cosmos is deemed possible to acquire. Since God is also transcendent, no knowledge can be exhaustive.

With these caveats in mind now I turn to formulate some questions which, if they remain unanswered, deeply problematize the process theology in general and Hartshorne's conclusions in particular.

1- Why does Hartshorne abstain from attributing a coercive power to God? In principle it is possible that God has coercive power but chooses to act persuasively. A God who *chooses* to act persuasively might well be regarded more supreme than a God who *has to* act persuasively. If God bestows everything free will, and if the world is characterized by self determination, then God is expected to have free will and be able to choose between being persuasive or coercive.

2- If God experiences joy and suffering, does God experience evil intentions and temptations as we do? If the answer is yes then, according to Hartshorne's epistemological views, God is qualified with evil whether aesthetic, moral or cognitive. As Henry W. Simoni shows Hartshorne deems experiential knowledge as the perfect form of knowledge.<sup>26</sup> And if God is not qualified with evil as we do then how can he empathize with human beings? If the knower must be related to the known either physically or intellectually, and if the empathy is the only way of knowing human beings' lived existential situation, as Hartshorne claimed, then how can God

24 Edward Omar Moad 2007. "Al-Ghazali on Power, Causation, and 'Acquisition.'" *Philosophy East & West* 57, no. 1 *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCOhost (accessed December 12, 2009), 6.

25 Alon, Ilai, "Al-Ghazālī on Causality" *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 100, No. 4 (Oct. - Dec., 1980): 398.

26 Simoni, "Three models of the relationship of God and world: Hartshorne, Plotinus and Neville", 13.

know the evil intentions and temptations without experiencing them? If the answer is “God does not know evil intentions and temptations as we do” then God is not omniscient. But Hartshorne want to affirm that God is omniscient. Hartshorne’s system does not intend to reach this conclusion, but apparently it does.

3- Process theology in general and Hartshorne particular envisage a mutually enriching relation between God and the world. Namely, God benefits from his intimate interaction with the world, and experiences the novelty of the world as a new creation and takes pleasure in. But this also indicates that God gives and creates for something in return. At this point it is logical to think that a God giving and creating for the sake of his essence is more benevolent and perfect than a God who gives for something in return. How does God require the world? For the sake of immanence are we not giving away transcendence? This is, then, not a balanced approach. How can we do justice to transcendence within this context?

4- Why does God need to know things as we do, namely, experientially? It is logical that God has a distinctive level of transcendent experience that includes our experiences of joy and suffer but not exhausted by them; and is omniscient without experiencing things as we do. Why does Hartshorne apply human cognitive process to God? Is not this a category mistake?

5- Hartshorne writes that God is not only the first cause of the world but also the cause of everything.<sup>27</sup> God allures creation for good but God is still the creator of the chosen path by the created beings. God is the supreme effect of all events. When we include sympathetic relation between God and the world to this picture, we can conclude that God is understood as the mirror of the world-not the world as the mirror of God-. But, there seems to be a theological problem here. Being, at once, the supreme cause of everything and “fellow sufferer”, God causes his own suffering. But isn’t this picturing God as, to put it bluntly, masochistic? It is not clear to me how Hartshorne transcends this predicament. At the end of the day, a masochistic God is as problematic as an aloof God.

## Conclusion

Constituting a balance between transcendence and immanence is a challenge for each religious tradition, especially for monotheisms. Hartshorne attempts to create a balance between transcendence and immanence but this balance, I believe, remains to be tenuous. It could be that no explanation is

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27 Hartshorne, *The Divine Relativity: A Social Conception of God*, 80.

possible, or it could be that the nature of the reality of God is impenetrable, or it could be that no linguistic structure can elaborate such balance.

The search continues for a conceptual framework which can, at once, attest transcendence and immanence in consistency with what we know about the world.

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### Özet

#### **Süreç'ten Tanrı'ya: Charles Hartshorne'a Bir Müslümanın Eleştirel Söylemi**

Büyük dini gelenekler Tanrı ve âlem arasındaki ilişkinin doğasını anlamak için önemli ölçüde çaba harcamıştır. Bu tartışmanın cazibesi, insanlığın dini tecrübesini taşıyan derin etkilerden kaynaklanmaktadır. Temel sorulara ilişkin, özellikle de, Tanrı-âlem ilişkisinde metafiziksel varsayımlarını hesaba katarak, insanın dindarlığının psikolojik boyutlarına dair cevap verilmektedir. Charles Hartshorne, geçen yüzyılın en etkili din filozoflarından ve bilim çağında Tanrı-âlem ilişkisini anlamak için bir dizi metafizik kavram geliştirmiştir. Onun sisteminde, Tanrı ve âlemin dinamik ve birbirini zenginleştiren bir ilişkisi vardır ve Tanrı'nın dünyadaki içkinliği ya da dünyaya olan bağımlılığı en önemli özelliğidir.

Bu makalede, ilk olarak Hartshorne'nin Tanrı-âlem ilişkisinin doğası üzerine düşüncelerini, daha geniş çerçevede ise Alfred N. Whitehead ve Hartshorne'nun süreç felsefelerini, bu düşüncelerinin geliştirilmesine odaklanarak eleştireceğim. Daha sonra, bazı kritik soruları oluşturup, İslâmi bir bakış açısından kalkarak, Hartshorne'nun düşünce sisteminde bazı tutarsızlıkların olabileceğine işaret edeceğim.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Din Felsefesi, Charles Hartshorne, süreç, Tanrı, İslâm.

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