

# Divine Immanence

Entry #:	53.89.5
Word Count:	13653 words
Reading Time:	68 minutes
Last Updated:	September 26, 2025

*"In space, no one can hear you think."*

## Table of Contents

### Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Divine Immanence</b>	<b>2</b>
1.1	Introduction to Divine Immanence . . . . .	2
1.2	Historical Development of Divine Immanence . . . . .	3
1.3	Divine Immanence in Eastern Religions and Philosophies . . . . .	5
1.4	Divine Immanence in Abrahamic Religions . . . . .	7
1.5	Philosophical Foundations of Divine Immanence . . . . .	9
1.6	Divine Immanence in Modern Religious Movements . . . . .	11
1.7	Scientific Perspectives on Divine Immanence . . . . .	13
1.8	Artistic and Cultural Expressions of Divine Immanence . . . . .	15
1.9	Psychological Dimensions of Divine Immanence . . . . .	17
1.10	Section 9: Psychological Dimensions of Divine Immanence . . . . .	17
1.11	Ethical and Social Implications of Divine Immanence . . . . .	20
1.12	Critiques and Challenges to Divine Immanence . . . . .	22
1.13	Section 11: Critiques and Challenges to Divine Immanence . . . . .	23
1.14	Contemporary Relevance and Future Directions . . . . .	25

# 1 Divine Immanence

## 1.1 Introduction to Divine Immanence

The concept of divine immanence represents one of humanity's most profound and enduring philosophical and religious intuitions—that the sacred is not merely distant and transcendent but is present and active within the fabric of the material world. This fundamental idea has manifested across countless cultures and throughout millennia, shaping how humans understand their relationship to the cosmos, nature, and each other. Divine immanence stands in contrast to divine transcendence, which posits the divine as existing beyond, above, or independent from the material universe. Yet these concepts are not necessarily mutually exclusive; many religious and philosophical traditions have sought to balance both perspectives, creating nuanced understandings of how the sacred simultaneously dwells beyond and within creation.

At its core, divine immanence encompasses several key philosophical positions. Pantheism identifies the divine with the universe itself, asserting that God and the cosmos are one and the same—a perspective famously articulated by philosophers such as Baruch Spinoza, who described God as “Nature itself” (*Deus sive Natura*). Panentheism, by contrast, maintains that the divine is both in the world and beyond it, with the universe existing within God while God nevertheless transcends the universe. Animism, perhaps the most ancient expression of immanence, perceives spirits or divine presences inhabiting natural objects, phenomena, and living beings. These concepts form a spectrum along which various traditions position themselves, from the radical immanence of certain Eastern philosophies to the more balanced approaches found in many Western religious systems. For instance, while Abrahamic traditions have often emphasized divine transcendence, they have simultaneously developed rich concepts of immanence, such as the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation or the Jewish concept of *Shekhinah* (the divine presence dwelling among humanity).

Throughout human history, immanent conceptions of the divine have held remarkable cross-cultural appeal, addressing fundamental questions about meaning, purpose, and humanity's place in the cosmos. Ancient agricultural societies, for example, developed elaborate rituals to honor divine forces believed to dwell within the earth, rivers, and growing crops—understandings that helped them navigate the uncertainties of seasonal changes and natural disasters. The psychological appeal of immanent divinity lies partly in its accessibility; if the sacred permeates everyday reality, then encounters with the divine become possible in ordinary circumstances, not merely in extraordinary religious settings. This democratization of the sacred offers a profound sense of connection and belonging, transforming how humans perceive themselves in relation to the wider world. The concept of immanence provides frameworks for understanding human dignity and purpose, suggesting that if the divine dwells within creation, then all beings may participate in or reflect sacred qualities. This perspective has inspired ethical systems emphasizing reverence for life, environmental stewardship, and compassionate relationships across many different cultural contexts.

This article embarks on a comprehensive exploration of divine immanence, employing a multidisciplinary approach that encompasses theological, philosophical, scientific, and cultural dimensions. The journey begins with an examination of the historical development of immanent concepts, tracing their evolution from prehistoric animism through classical antiquity and into medieval thought. From there, the article delves into

the rich tapestry of Eastern religious and philosophical traditions, exploring distinctive expressions of immanence in Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism, as well as various forms of East Asian religious syncretism. The investigation then turns to Abrahamic religions, analyzing how Judaism, Christianity, and Islam have understood and expressed divine immanence both in mainstream theology and mystical traditions. Philosophical foundations receive thorough attention, from classical approaches through German idealism to contemporary perspectives, followed by an exploration of how modern religious movements have reimagined and emphasized immanent concepts. The article then engages with scientific perspectives, examining how fields such as quantum physics, consciousness studies, systems theory, and evolutionary biology have interacted with or informed concepts of divine immanence. Artistic and cultural expressions, psychological dimensions, and ethical implications all receive detailed consideration, providing a holistic understanding of how immanence manifests in human experience and practice. The article concludes with an examination of critiques and challenges to divine immanence, followed by an exploration of contemporary relevance and future directions in our rapidly changing global context. Throughout this exploration, areas of controversy and ongoing debate are acknowledged, such as tensions between immanent and transcendent perspectives within religious traditions, philosophical objections to immanent conceptions, and scientific materialist critiques. By presenting diverse viewpoints with respect and scholarly rigor, this article aims to provide readers with a comprehensive understanding of divine immanence—one of humanity’s most enduring and influential ways of conceptualizing the sacred dimensions of existence. As we now turn to the historical development of these ideas, we will discover how ancient humans first began to perceive the divine within the world around them, laying foundations that continue to influence religious and philosophical thought to this day.

## 1.2 Historical Development of Divine Immanence

The historical development of divine immanence reveals humanity’s persistent quest to locate the sacred within the fabric of the world, a journey that begins in the mists of prehistory and evolves through increasingly sophisticated philosophical and theological formulations. As early humans sought to make sense of their environment and their place within it, they often perceived spiritual forces animating natural phenomena, laying the groundwork for later, more systematic conceptions of divine presence. This evolution continued through the ancient civilizations of the Near East and Mediterranean, where deities became intimately associated with natural elements and cosmic forces, before reaching new levels of abstraction and complexity in the philosophical systems of classical Greece and Rome. By the Hellenistic period and into the early medieval era, these ideas had been synthesized, challenged, and reimagined in ways that would profoundly influence subsequent religious and philosophical thought across multiple cultural contexts.

The earliest expressions of divine immanence emerge from prehistoric animistic beliefs, where spiritual presence was perceived in natural objects, animals, and forces. Archaeological evidence from Paleolithic cave paintings, such as those at Lascaux and Chauvet in France, suggests a worldview where animals possessed spiritual significance beyond their physical existence, possibly representing manifestations of divine power or ancestral spirits. Neolithic sites like Göbekli Tepe in Anatolia, dating back over 11,000 years, feature monumental stone pillars carved with animal reliefs, indicating complex ritual practices centered on the sa-

credness of nature and possibly the immanence of divine forces within the animal world. The widespread distribution of Venus figurines across Eurasia, dating from the Upper Paleolithic period, may reflect beliefs in a goddess immanent in fertility and the life-giving forces of nature. These prehistoric conceptions, though lost to direct historical record, likely formed the substrate upon which later religious systems built their understanding of divine presence in the material world.

In ancient Egyptian religion, divine immanence manifested through gods who were simultaneously transcendent deities and immanent forces in nature. The sun god Ra, for instance, was not merely a ruler of the heavens but was believed to be physically present in the solar disk, journeying across the sky each day and through the underworld each night. The concept of the *ka*, or life force, represented an immanent divine element within each person, while the Nile River itself was considered the embodiment of the god Hapi, whose annual flooding brought life to the land. The Egyptians also developed sophisticated notions of divine presence in sacred objects and spaces, with statues of gods believed to house the actual presence of the deity when properly consecrated through elaborate rituals. This immanent understanding extended to the pharaoh, who was seen as the living incarnation of Horus, bridging the human and divine realms.

Mesopotamian civilizations similarly embraced immanent conceptions of divinity, with gods intimately connected to natural forces and cosmic phenomena. The Sumerian goddess Inanna, later known as Ishtar to the Akkadians and Babylonians, was associated with the planet Venus and embodied the morning star's presence in the dawn sky. The god Enlil represented the immanent power of wind and storms, while Ea was the divine force within fresh waters essential for life. The Epic of Gilgamesh reflects a worldview where the divine permeates natural boundaries, with the Cedar Forest guarded by the demigod Humbaba and the waters of death transcended by the hero through divine assistance. These Mesopotamian traditions influenced neighboring cultures, including the ancient Hebrews, whose early conception of El Shaddai (God of the Mountain) and later Yahweh contained immanent elements alongside developing transcendent qualities.

Ancient European and Mediterranean religions also featured prominent immanent dimensions. The Minoan civilization of Crete revered goddess figures associated with natural forces, while Mycenaean religion incorporated deities linked to specific locations and natural phenomena. In proto-Celtic societies, sacred springs, groves, and mountains were believed to house divine spirits, a tradition that continued in later Celtic druidism. Greek religion before the philosophical age included nymphs inhabiting springs and trees, satyrs in wild places, and gods like Poseidon directly present in earthquakes and sea storms. The Roman concept of *genius* represented an immanent divine spirit in individuals, places, and even collective entities like the state, while household gods (*lares* and *penates*) were believed to dwell within the home, protecting and nourishing the family. These diverse ancient traditions collectively demonstrate how early human societies perceived the sacred as intimately woven into the natural world, establishing patterns that would continue to evolve in more systematic philosophical and theological frameworks.

Classical Greek philosophy marked a significant development in conceptualizing divine immanence, moving from mythological narratives to rational inquiry about the nature of divine presence in the cosmos. The pre-Socratic philosophers of the 6th and 5th centuries BCE sought to identify a fundamental divine substance or principle immanent within all reality. Thales of Miletus proposed that water was the primary substance

(*arche*) of all things and thus the divine essence permeating existence, a conclusion he reportedly reached after observing that all life depends on moisture and that water itself can transform into solid, liquid, and gaseous states. His student Anaximander conceived of the *apeiron* (the boundless or indefinite) as an eternal, divine principle from which all opposites emerge and into which they return, suggesting an immanent divine unity underlying cosmic diversity. Anaximenes, in turn, identified air (*pneuma*) as the divine substance, condensing into wind, clouds, water, earth, and stones through processes of rarefaction and condensation, thereby locating divinity within the very breath of life and the atmospheric forces that shape the world.

Heraclitus of Ephesus introduced the concept of *Logos* as an immanent divine reason or universal law governing the cosmos, famously stating that “all things are one” and that this unity is maintained through the tension of opposites. He perceived fire as the most fitting symbol for this divine principle, constantly transforming yet remaining itself, much like the eternal flux of existence. The Pythagoreans, meanwhile, found divine immanence in the mathematical relationships underlying reality, believing that numbers and their harmonies revealed the rational structure of a cosmos infused with sacred meaning. These early philosophical attempts to locate the divine within the natural world set the stage for more systematic developments by Plato and Aristotle.

Plato’s complex philosophy balanced transcendent and immanent elements of the divine. In his dialogues, particularly the *Timaeus*, he describes a transcendent realm of eternal, perfect Forms, with the Form of the Good being the highest divine principle. Yet this transcendent

### 1.3 Divine Immanence in Eastern Religions and Philosophies

...transcendent realm also participated in the material world through the doctrine of participation, wherein physical objects imperfectly reflected the perfect Forms. This philosophical balance between transcendence and immanence would find even more sophisticated expression in Eastern religious traditions, where divine presence within the material world became not merely a philosophical proposition but a lived reality embedded in cultural practices and spiritual disciplines.

Turning to the vast religious landscape of Eastern traditions, we encounter some of humanity’s most nuanced and developed conceptions of divine immanence. Hindu thought, in particular, offers a rich tapestry of immanent understandings through the concept of Brahman—the ultimate reality that is simultaneously transcendent and immanent. The Upanishads, philosophical texts that form the foundation of Hindu Vedanta, teach that Brahman is “nearer than the nearest, farther than the farthest,” permeating all existence while transcending it entirely. This paradoxical understanding finds its most profound expression in the Mahavakya or “great sayings” of the Upanishads, particularly “Tat Tvam Asi” (Thou art That), which declares the fundamental identity between Atman (the individual self or soul) and Brahman (universal reality). The Chandogya Upanishad illustrates this immanence through the story of Uddalaka Aruni teaching his son Shvetaketu, using the analogy of salt dissolved in water—invisible yet pervading every drop—to demonstrate how Brahman permeates all existence while remaining undifferentiated.

Hindu devotional traditions, or bhakti movements, emphasize divine immanence through intimate personal

relationships with deities who are understood as both transcendent realities and immanent presences. The Bhagavata Purana, for instance, describes how Krishna appears simultaneously as the supreme cosmic lord and as a playful cowherd boy accessible to human devotees. This dual nature allows worshippers to encounter the divine through sacred images (murtis), pilgrimage sites, and ritual practices that make the transcendent immanent in tangible forms. Tantric traditions take this immanence further, identifying the divine energy of Shakti as present within the human body and the natural world. The subtle body system of chakras and nadis represents a microcosmic map where universal divine energy flows through individual practitioners, while practices like yoga and meditation aim to realize this immanent divinity directly. The famous Tantric saying “Shiva without Shakti is Shava” (a corpse) emphasizes the necessity of this immanent divine energy for life and consciousness itself.

Buddhism presents a distinctive approach to immanence, initially rejecting the notion of a creator God while developing sophisticated understandings of sacred presence within the phenomenal world. The historical Buddha taught that enlightenment could be found through understanding the nature of existence itself rather than through worship of external deities. This teaching is powerfully illustrated in the story of the Buddha’s enlightenment under the Bodhi tree, where he achieved awakening by directly contemplating the nature of reality, discovering that liberation was immanent within the mind and the present moment rather than dependent on transcendent forces. Mahayana Buddhism later developed the concept of Buddha-nature (tathagatagarbha), the inherent potential for awakening present in all beings. The Lotus Sutra expresses this immanence through the parable of the poor son who fails to recognize his own noble birthright, symbolizing how all beings possess Buddha-nature yet remain unaware of this immanent truth.

Zen Buddhism takes this immanence to its logical conclusion, teaching that enlightenment is not a distant goal to be achieved but an ever-present reality to be recognized. The Zen master Hakuin Ekaku expressed this concisely: “This very place is the Lotus Land; this very body, the Buddha.” Zen practices like zazen (seated meditation) and koan contemplation aim to strip away conceptual thinking to reveal the sacredness of ordinary existence. The famous Zen saying “Before enlightenment, chop wood, carry water; after enlightenment, chop wood, carry water” captures this understanding that the divine is not separate from everyday activities but fully present within them. Tibetan Buddhism, while incorporating elaborate transcendent cosmologies, equally emphasizes immanence through practices like deity yoga, where practitioners visualize themselves as enlightened beings, recognizing that the divine qualities they cultivate are already present within their own mind-stream.

Taoist philosophy presents perhaps the most purely immanent conception of the sacred among major world traditions, centering on the Tao—the Way or principle that flows through all existence without being separate from it. The Tao Te Ching, attributed to Lao Tzu, describes the Tao as ineffable yet ever-present: “The Tao that can be told is not the eternal Tao. The name that can be named is not the eternal name.” Rather than a transcendent deity, the Tao represents the immanent natural order and principle of spontaneous generation that gives rise to and sustains all things. The Tao Te Ching illustrates this through the analogy of water, which takes the lowest place yet nourishes all things without claiming ownership—exemplifying how the Tao operates immanently within nature. Chuang Tzu, the other great Taoist sage, expanded this understanding through stories and parables that dissolve boundaries between human and natural, ordinary and sacred.



His famous butterfly dream questions the distinction between reality and illusion, suggesting that the Tao manifests in all states of being without hierarchy.

Taoism developed sophisticated concepts of microcosm-macrocosm correspondence, seeing the human body as a miniature universe containing the same principles and energies as the cosmos at large. This understanding formed the basis for Taoist alchemy, both internal (neidan) and external (waidan), which sought to harmonize human existence with the immanent divine order. Confucianism, while often perceived as primarily ethical rather than religious, equally contains profound immanent dimensions through its understanding of the sacred within human relationships and social structures. For Confucius, heaven (Tian) was not a transcendent deity to be worshipped but an immanent moral order discernible through proper relationships and ritual propriety (li). The Analects teach that “it is man who can make the Way great, not the Way that can make man great,” emphasizing human responsibility in realizing the immanent sacred potential within social life. The Confucian concept of sagehood represents the full actualization of this immanent divinity within human form, as sages perfectly embody the heavenly principle while remaining fully human.

These Chinese traditions often blended in syncretic approaches that combined Taoist naturalism with Confucian social ethics. Neo-Confucian thinkers like Zhu Xi developed systematic metaphysics

## 1.4 Divine Immanence in Abrahamic Religions

The profound immanent visions of Eastern religious traditions, with their sophisticated frameworks for locating the sacred within the fabric of existence, find intriguing parallels and distinctive counterpoints within the Abrahamic faiths. While often characterized by an emphasis on divine transcendence, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam have nevertheless developed rich and nuanced understandings of divine presence within the created order. These traditions grapple with the fundamental tension between a God who is utterly beyond creation yet intimately involved within it, yielding diverse theological formulations and mystical explorations that reveal the enduring human intuition of divine immanence even within strongly monotheistic contexts. The exploration of these Abrahamic perspectives reveals not merely doctrinal positions but lived experiences and interpretive traditions that have shaped the spiritual landscapes of billions across centuries.

Jewish concepts of divine immanence are deeply rooted in the Hebrew Bible, where God’s presence is often depicted as manifesting within specific locations, natural phenomena, and historical events. The term *Shekhinah* (derived from the Hebrew root meaning “to dwell”) emerges in rabbinic literature to describe the divine presence that inhabits the world, particularly within sacred spaces like the Tabernacle and later the Temple in Jerusalem. The biblical narrative of the burning bush (Exodus 3:2-4) exemplifies this immanence: God appears not in some celestial realm but within a common desert shrub, transforming the ordinary into a locus of revelation while simultaneously declaring the transcendent holiness of the ground. This paradox continues throughout the prophetic tradition, where figures like Isaiah experience the divine presence within the Temple (Isaiah 6:1-8), yet encounter a God whose glory “fills the whole earth” (Isaiah 6:3). The concept of *Shekhinah* evolved significantly in rabbinic thought, coming to represent God’s immanent presence that accompanies Israel in exile, suffering alongside the people and awaiting redemption. This divine indwelling is not limited to grand structures but is understood to permeate the world through acts of righteousness and



the study of Torah. The Talmudic teaching that “when ten people pray together, the Shekhinah rests among them” (Berakhot 6a) illustrates how communal devotion creates sacred space, while the mystical tradition expanded this immanence further.

Kabbalistic mysticism, particularly as articulated in the Zohar and Lurianic Kabbalah, developed an elaborate metaphysical system where divine immanence is expressed through the *sefirot*—ten emanations or attributes through which the transcendent God (*Ein Sof*, the Infinite) reveals and relates to creation. These sefirot form a cosmic tree or structure, with the lowest sefirah, *Malkhut* (Kingdom), often identified with the Shekhinah, representing the divine presence immanent within the material world. The Kabbalists understood the human soul as containing a spark of this divine light, and the performance of *mitzvot* (commandments) as a means of repairing (*tikkun*) the world and drawing the immanent divine presence into fuller revelation. Hasidic Judaism, emerging in 18th-century Eastern Europe, brought these mystical concepts into everyday life, teaching that the divine presence could be encountered through joyful worship, ethical action, and finding holiness in ordinary activities. The Baal Shem Tov, founder of Hasidism, emphasized that “the world is full of lights and sparks,” meaning that divine immanence permeates all existence, waiting to be revealed through proper intention and awareness. This democratization of mystical experience allowed ordinary Jews to perceive the sacred within their daily lives, transforming mundane actions into encounters with the immanent God.

Christian theology approaches divine immanence most radically through the doctrine of the Incarnation—the belief that in Jesus Christ, the eternal Word or Logos of God became fully human while remaining fully divine. The Gospel of John opens with the profound declaration that “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14), using the Greek verb *eskēnōsen* (literally “tabernacled” or “pitched his tent”), echoing the Shekhinah dwelling in the Tabernacle. This represents the ultimate immanence: the transcendent God entering into the very fabric of human existence, experiencing joy, suffering, and death. The Christian understanding of Jesus as both fully divine and fully human creates a unique locus of divine immanence within the person of Christ, who becomes the “image of the invisible God” (Colossians 1:15). Building upon this foundation, Christian theology developed the concept of the Holy Spirit as the immanent presence of God dwelling within believers and the Church. The Acts of the Apostles describes the Spirit descending at Pentecost as tongues of fire (Acts 2:3-4), an image reminiscent of the burning bush, signifying God’s immanent presence empowering the community of faith. Pauline theology further emphasizes this indwelling, teaching that believers’ bodies are “temples of the Holy Spirit” (1 Corinthians 6:19), extending the sacred space of the Temple into the individual believer.

Sacramental theology provides another framework for Christian divine immanence, particularly in Catholic, Orthodox, and Anglican traditions. The sacraments are understood as visible signs instituted by Christ to confer grace, making the transcendent God tangibly present through material elements—water in baptism, bread and wine in the Eucharist, oil in anointing. The doctrine of transubstantiation, articulated at the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) and reaffirmed at the Council of Trent (1545-1563), holds that in the Eucharist, the substance of bread and wine is transformed into the substance of Christ’s body and blood while the appearances remain, representing the most profound immanence of the divine within material creation. Eastern Orthodox theology emphasizes the concept of *theosis* or deification, whereby humans become “partakers of

the divine nature” (2 Peter 1:4) through union with Christ. This is not an obliteration of human identity but a participation in the divine life made possible through the Incarnation, illustrating how immanence leads to transformation. Western Christian mystics like Meister Eckhart, Teresa of Ávila, and John of the Cross explored experiences of divine union, often describing an immanent God discovered within the depths of the soul. Eckhart’s provocative statement that “the eye with which I see God is the same eye with which God sees me” expresses a radical immanence where the distinction between creature and Creator dissolves in mystical experience, though such teachings sometimes brought him into conflict with ecclesiastical authorities.

Islamic concepts of divine immanence must be understood within the framework of *Tawhid*—the absolute unity and transcendence of Allah. The Quran emphasizes God’s transcendence repeatedly: “There is nothing like Him” (42:11) and “He is with you

## 1.5 Philosophical Foundations of Divine Immanence

wherever you are” (57:4), highlighting the Quranic balance between divine transcendence and immanence. This tension within Islam between God’s absolute otherness and intimate presence has generated profound theological reflection and mystical exploration. Sufi traditions, in particular, have developed sophisticated understandings of divine immanence while remaining firmly rooted in the Quranic emphasis on *Tawhid*. The concept of *wahdat al-wujud* (unity of being), most closely associated with the Andalusian mystic Ibn Arabi, teaches that all existence is a manifestation of the divine names and attributes, with creation representing the self-disclosure of God in myriad forms. Ibn Arabi’s concept of the “Perfect Man” (*al-insan al-kamil*) describes human beings as the comprehensive locus where divine qualities are fully manifested, bridging the gap between Creator and creation. Yet this immanence never compromises divine transcendence, as Ibn Arabi carefully distinguishes between the Essence of God (*dhat*) which remains unknowable, and the manifestations (*tajalliyat*) through which God becomes known in creation.

These rich religious traditions across Judaism, Christianity, and Islam demonstrate how monotheistic faiths have navigated the complex relationship between divine transcendence and immanence, developing sophisticated frameworks that honor both dimensions. From the Shekhinah dwelling in the Temple to the Incarnation of Christ in human flesh, from the indwelling Holy Spirit to the Sufi pursuit of divine unity, these traditions reveal the persistent human intuition that the sacred is not merely distant but intimately present within the fabric of existence. This religious exploration of divine immanence finds its philosophical counterparts in the systematic reflections of thinkers across centuries, who have sought to articulate the metaphysical foundations and implications of the divine presence within creation.

The philosophical foundations of divine immanence stretch back to the earliest systematic attempts to understand the relationship between the divine and the material world, building upon and refining the religious intuitions that emerge across cultures. Classical philosophical approaches to immanence developed as thinkers sought to move beyond mythological explanations toward rational accounts of how the sacred might permeate or relate to the natural order. Plato’s theory of Forms, articulated in dialogues like the *Phaedo*, *Symposium*, and *Republic*, presents a hierarchical ontology where the transcendent realm of perfect, eternal Forms

stands in contrast to the imperfect, changing world of physical particulars. Yet Plato also conceived of immanence through the doctrine of participation (*methexis*), whereby material objects “participate in” or “share in” the Forms. The famous allegory of the cave in the *Republic* illustrates this relationship: the shadows on the cave wall (imperfect particulars) derive their limited reality from the objects outside the cave (Forms), which in turn derive their reality from the Form of the Good, the ultimate divine principle. The *Timaeus* develops a cosmological narrative where the divine craftsman (*demiourgos*) shapes primordial matter using the Forms as patterns, creating a world that reflects divine intelligence while remaining distinct from it. Plato’s student Aristotle offered a different approach to divine immanence through his concept of the unmoved mover, presented in the *Metaphysics*. Unlike Plato’s transcendent Forms, Aristotle’s deity is fully actualized pure thought (*noesis noeseos*) that moves the cosmos not through direct intervention but as an object of desire and imitation. The unmoved mover is transcendent in its perfect actuality yet immanently present through its causal influence on cosmic motion. Aristotle’s concept of immanent causation, where form actualizes potential within matter, provides another framework for understanding divine presence within the natural world, as the divine serves as the ultimate cause of actualization in all things.

Neoplatonism, particularly as developed by Plotinus in his *Enneads*, synthesized and transformed Platonic thought into a more systematic account of divine immanence through emanation. Plotinus envisioned a hierarchy of being flowing from the ultimate One (*hen*), which is beyond all being and knowledge. From this ineffable source emanates Intellect (*nous*), which contains the Platonic Forms, and from Intellect emanates Soul (*psyche*), which in turn generates the material world. This emanationist framework maintains the transcendence of the One while accounting for divine presence throughout creation, with each lower level participating in the higher. The material world, while the lowest level of emanation, nevertheless contains traces of the divine through its participation in Soul, Intellect, and ultimately the One. Plotinus’ student Porphyry and later Proclus further developed this system, with Proclus creating an elaborate hierarchical structure in his *Elements of Theology* that balanced divine transcendence with immanence through multiple levels of mediation. Proclus’ triadic structure of remaining (*mone*), procession (*proodos*), and return (*epistrophē*) describes how divine causes remain within themselves while proceeding forth and ultimately returning to their source, providing a dynamic model for understanding divine immanence that would influence both Christian and Islamic thought.

The early modern period witnessed significant philosophical developments in conceptualizing divine immanence, often in response to changing scientific worldviews and religious controversies. Baruch Spinoza, writing in the 17th century, developed perhaps the most radical philosophical articulation of divine immanence in his *Ethics*, identifying God or Nature (*Deus sive Natura*) as the single, infinite substance constituting all reality. Spinoza’s pantheism eliminated any distinction between divine transcendence and immanence, as God is not separate from the world but identical with it. His famous proposition that “God is the immanent, not the transitive, cause of all things” (*Ethics*, Part I, Proposition 18) encapsulates this understanding, with divine causation operating within rather than outside creation. Spinoza’s system faced fierce opposition from religious authorities but offered a philosophical foundation for understanding the sacred within a mechanistic universe, influencing subsequent pantheistic and panentheistic thought. Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, Spinoza’s contemporary, proposed a different model of divine immanence through his concept of monads—

simple, immaterial substances that constitute all reality. Each monad reflects the entire universe from its unique perspective, with God as the supreme monad who harmonizes all others through pre-established harmony. Leibniz's monadology preserves divine transcendence while accounting for immanence through the idea that each created monad "expresses" or represents the divine, making God present throughout creation in a differentiated manner. The Cambridge Platonists of the 17th century, including Benjamin Whichcote, Henry More, and Ralph Cudworth, sought to reconcile Platonic philosophy with Christian theology, emphasizing divine immanence through concepts like the "Spirit of Nature"—an intermediary principle that carried out God's will in the natural world while remaining distinct from both

## 1.6 Divine Immanence in Modern Religious Movements

...the material world and the transcendent deity. This philosophical exploration of divine immanence laid the groundwork for modern religious movements that would reimagine and revitalize these ancient concepts in response to contemporary spiritual needs and cultural transformations.

The emergence of New Age and contemporary spirituality in the latter half of the 20th century represented a significant shift in how divine immanence was conceptualized outside traditional religious frameworks. Drawing from diverse sources including Eastern religions, Western esotericism, psychology, and quantum physics, these movements often emphasized direct personal experience of the divine within everyday reality. The concept of "cosmic consciousness," popularized by writers like Richard Maurice Bucke in his 1901 book of the same name, described an evolutionary leap in human awareness where individuals perceive the underlying unity of all existence—a clear expression of divine immanence. This idea gained renewed traction in the 1960s counterculture movement, with figures like Timothy Leary suggesting that psychedelic experiences could reveal the immanent divine unity underlying apparent separation. Channeling practices, where individuals claim to receive wisdom from spiritual entities or higher dimensions, became increasingly popular, with figures like Jane Roberts allegedly channeling an entity named "Seth" who taught that consciousness creates physical reality and that divine energy permeates all existence. The Findhorn Foundation in Scotland, established in 1962, became a prominent center for exploring the immanent divine presence in nature, with founders Peter and Eileen Caddy and Dorothy Maclean claiming direct communication with nature spirits or "devas" that guided their remarkable gardening practices in seemingly impossible conditions.

New Age thought frequently incorporated concepts of universal energy as expressions of divine immanence, drawing from various cultural traditions. The Chinese concept of qi or prana from Indian yoga traditions was reframed as a universal life force that could be tapped through practices like Reiki, developed by Japanese Buddhist Mikao Usui in the early 20th century but popularized globally in the 1970s. The human potential movement, exemplified by the Esalen Institute founded in 1962, blended psychological growth with spiritual exploration, often emphasizing the immanent divine potential within each person. Perhaps most significantly, New Age spirituality frequently attempted to bridge scientific concepts with spiritual immanence, as in Fritjof Capra's 1975 book "The Tao of Physics," which drew parallels between quantum physics and Eastern mystical traditions, suggesting that modern science was rediscovering the immanent unity underlying all reality. This scientific-spiritual synthesis reached millions through films like "What the Bleep Do

We Know!?” (2004), which presented quantum phenomena as evidence for consciousness creating reality and the immanent divine nature of the universe.

While New Age spirituality flourished outside traditional religious institutions, contemporary Christian theologians were also reimagining divine immanence in ways that spoke to modern concerns. Process theology, emerging from the work of Alfred North Whitehead and Charles Hartshorne in the early 20th century but gaining significant influence in the 1960s and 1970s, reconceived God as dipolar—both transcendent and immanent, changing and unchanging, affected by creation while also affecting it. This perspective, developed by Christian theologians like John B. Cobb Jr. and David Ray Griffin, emphasized God’s persuasive rather than coercive power, working within natural processes to lure creation toward greater complexity and beauty. Process theology provided a framework for understanding divine immanence that was compatible with evolutionary science and ecological awareness, influencing many contemporary Christian thinkers.

Creation spirituality, articulated by former Dominican priest Matthew Fox in his 1983 book “Original Blessing,” emphasized the immanence of the divine in all creation and the goodness of the material world. Fox contrasted what he called “fall-redemption theology” (focused on human sin and salvation) with “creation spirituality” (focused on the sacredness of all existence), drawing heavily on medieval mystics like Hildegard of Bingen and Meister Eckhart who had experienced divine immanence in nature and the human soul. This approach resonated with growing environmental awareness and led to the development of ecological theology, which found divine presence in the web of life and emphasized human responsibility as participants in rather than masters of creation. Liberation theology, which emerged in Latin America in the 1960s and 1970s through figures like Gustavo Gutiérrez and Leonardo Boff, emphasized God’s “preferential option for the poor,” locating divine immanence among the oppressed and in struggles for justice. Boff’s later work in ecological theology connected liberation of the poor with liberation of the Earth, seeing both as expressions of the same immanent divine concern for all creation. The emerging church movement, beginning in the late 20th century, sought to reimagine Christian practice for postmodern culture, often emphasizing divine immanence in everyday life, community relationships, and creative expression rather than in doctrinal adherence or institutional authority.

The growing ecological crisis of the late 20th and early 21st centuries gave rise to ecological spirituality and ecotheology as powerful expressions of divine immanence. Deep ecology, developed by Norwegian philosopher Arne Næss in 1973 and later articulated by figures like Joanna Macy and David Abram, rejected anthropocentrism in favor of biospherical egalism—the view that all living things have equal right to live and flourish. This perspective often incorporated spiritual dimensions, with Abram’s “The Spell of the Sensuous” (1996) arguing that modern alienation from nature stems from forgetting the immanent sacredness of the more-than-human world. Creation spirituality, mentioned earlier in Christian contexts, found broader expression in movements like Creation Spirituality founded by Matthew Fox, which drew from multiple religious traditions to celebrate the sacred immanent in the cosmos. Thomas Berry, a Catholic priest and cultural historian, developed a “New Story” that synthesized scientific understanding of cosmic evolution with spiritual insight, seeing the universe as a “psychic-spiritual” reality where the divine is immanently present in the unfolding of cosmic history. His ideas influenced many through works like “The Dream of the Earth” (1988) and “The Great Work” (1999).

Indigenous spiritual traditions have increasingly influenced contemporary ecological understandings of divine immanence, as their worldview of sacred interdependence with nature offers alternatives to exploitative approaches. The work of Lakota theologian Vine Deloria Jr., particularly in “God is Red” (1973), contrasted indigenous spatial sacredness (where the divine is immanent in particular places and landscapes) with

## 1.7 Scientific Perspectives on Divine Immanence

The scientific exploration of divine immanence represents one of the most fascinating intersections of empirical inquiry and metaphysical speculation in contemporary thought. While science operates within methodological naturalism, seeking explanations through observable phenomena and testable theories, certain scientific discoveries and frameworks have nonetheless resonated with, challenged, and sometimes inspired theological concepts of divine presence within the material world. This resonance emerges not from science proving theological claims, but from certain scientific phenomena revealing layers of reality that parallel or echo traditional intuitions about sacred immanence. The dialogue between these domains remains complex and often contentious, yet undeniably provocative, as scientific frameworks increasingly engage with questions once considered exclusively theological or philosophical territory.

Quantum physics has perhaps generated the most extensive discussions about potential parallels with mystical conceptions of divine immanence, though these interpretations remain controversial within the scientific community. The phenomenon of quantum entanglement, famously described by Einstein as “spooky action at a distance,” demonstrates that particles can remain instantaneously connected regardless of spatial separation, suggesting an underlying unity that transcends conventional notions of separation. This has led some theologians and philosophers to draw parallels with concepts of non-dual consciousness or divine omnipresence, where all existence participates in an indivisible whole. The participatory universe interpretation, stemming from the observer effect in quantum mechanics where the act of measurement influences the observed system, has particularly intrigued those exploring divine immanence. Physicist John Wheeler’s concept of a “participatory anthropic principle” suggests that the universe requires observers to bring it into concrete reality, echoing certain mystical traditions where consciousness and creation are interdependent. Danish physicist Niels Bohr’s complementarity principle, showing that light can behave as both wave and particle depending on experimental context, has been analogized to theological paradoxes where the divine manifests as both transcendent and immanent. Yet prominent physicists like Stephen Hawking and Lawrence Krauss have sharply criticized these mystical interpretations as unwarranted extrapolations beyond empirical evidence, emphasizing that quantum phenomena operate at scales far removed from human experience and do not inherently support theological conclusions. The double-slit experiment, where particles create interference patterns when unobserved but behave as discrete particles when measured, has been particularly fertile ground for speculation about consciousness influencing reality, with figures like Fritjof Capra drawing parallels to Eastern mystical traditions in “The Tao of Physics.” While most physicists maintain such interpretations represent category errors, the persistence of these discussions reveals how quantum mechanics has expanded conceptual possibilities for understanding interconnectedness and the relationship between observer and observed in ways that resonate with immanence frameworks.



Consciousness studies have emerged as another significant scientific domain engaging with concepts of divine immanence, particularly through the revival of panpsychism—the philosophical position that consciousness is fundamental and ubiquitous in nature. Once considered a fringe view, panpsychism has gained academic credibility through philosophers like David Chalmers, Galen Strawson, and Annaka Harris, who argue that consciousness cannot be explained as an emergent property of non-conscious matter alone. This perspective resonates with immanence traditions that perceive divine presence or sacred awareness permeating all existence. Integrated Information Theory, developed by neuroscientist Giulio Tononi, proposes a mathematical framework for measuring consciousness in any system, potentially extending awareness beyond biological organisms to include sufficiently complex structures throughout the universe. Non-dual consciousness research, conducted by scientists at institutions like the University of Wisconsin-Madison under the guidance of Richard Davidson, has examined neurological correlates of meditation-induced experiences where practitioners report dissolving boundaries between self and other, perceiving an underlying unity in all phenomena. Studies using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) and electroencephalography (EEG) have documented measurable changes in brain activity during such states, including decreased activity in the default mode network associated with self-referential thinking. These findings intrigue researchers exploring the neuroscience of mystical experiences, including those described as encounters with divine immanence. The Hard Problem of Consciousness—why and how subjective experience arises from physical processes—remains perhaps the most profound challenge to materialist explanations, leaving room for philosophical perspectives that see consciousness as fundamental rather than derivative. This has led some scientists, like Christof Koch, to seriously consider panpsychism as a viable framework for understanding consciousness in nature, creating an unexpected bridge between empirical neuroscience and ancient intuitions about sacred presence throughout the cosmos.

Systems theory and the study of emergent properties offer additional scientific frameworks that resonate with concepts of divine immanence. Self-organizing systems, from chemical reactions that form complex patterns to ant colonies exhibiting collective intelligence, demonstrate how order and complexity can arise spontaneously without external direction, suggesting an inherent capacity for organization within nature itself. This has been interpreted by some theologians as evidence of an immanent divine principle working through natural processes rather than from outside them. The concept of emergence, where simple components interact to produce novel properties at higher levels of complexity, provides a scientific language for understanding how the divine might be present within but not reducible to material components. Biologist Stuart Kauffman’s work on “order for free” shows how complex systems naturally evolve toward states of greater organization and complexity, echoing theological concepts of creation moving toward fulfillment through immanent divine activity. The Gaia hypothesis, proposed by James Lovelock and developed with microbiologist Lynn Margulis, posits that Earth’s biosphere functions as a self-regulating complex system maintaining conditions suitable for life. While originally framed metaphorically, the strong Gaia hypothesis suggests the planet as a whole exhibits properties of a living organism, with some interpretations extending this to include consciousness—a perspective that resonates with immanence traditions perceiving sacred presence in the natural world. Integral theory, developed by Ken Wilber, synthesizes insights from multiple disciplines to propose a framework where evolution proceeds through increasing complexity and conscious-



ness, with divine immanence understood as the creative force driving this unfolding. Wilber’s concept of “holons”—entities that are simultaneously wholes and parts—parallels theological notions of divine presence at every level of reality while transcending any particular level. These systems-based approaches offer language and concepts for understanding how immanence might operate not through supernatural intervention but through the inherent dynamics of complex systems, providing bridges between scientific and theological ways of understanding the world.

Evolutionary biology has generated particularly rich discussions about divine immanence, as the scientific narrative of cosmic and biological evolution offers new frameworks for understanding how the sacred might be present within natural processes. Evolutionary theologies, developed by thinkers like John Haught and Karl Rahner, perceive divine immanence working through evolutionary mechanisms, with God understood as the source of novelty and complexity emerging over cosmic time. Haught’s concept of “information theology” suggests that the universe is being drawn toward an ever-deeper future by divine promise, with immanence experienced as the presence of this future pulling creation forward. The concept of emergent divinity, explored by theologian Arthur Peacocke, proposes that God emerges from the evolutionary process while simultaneously being its transcendent source—a complex dialectic that attempts to reconcile immanence with transcendence within an evolutionary framework. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin’s omega point concept remains perhaps the most influential evolutionary vision of divine immanence, proposing that cosmic evolution is moving toward an ultimate convergence in Christ-Omega, where all consciousness unites in divine fullness. Teilhard, both a Jesuit priest and paleontologist, saw evolutionary processes as the means by which divine immanence gradually unfolds and manifests throughout creation, with human consciousness

## 1.8 Artistic and Cultural Expressions of Divine Immanence

...playing a crucial role in this cosmic unfolding. These scientific frameworks for understanding divine immanence have not merely remained in the realm of abstract theory but have profoundly influenced how humans express, represent, and experience the sacred presence within the material world through artistic and cultural forms. Across civilizations and throughout history, art has served as a complementary language to science and theology for exploring the immanent dimensions of existence—revealing aspects of sacred presence that cannot be captured by empirical measurement or doctrinal formulation alone.

Visual arts and architecture have provided perhaps the most tangible expressions of divine immanence across cultures, creating spaces and images that make the sacred present to human perception. Sacred architecture particularly embodies this principle, as structures designed to house or manifest divine presence often become physical expressions of immanence theology. Gothic cathedrals of medieval Europe exemplify this synthesis, with their soaring vaults and stained-glass windows transforming light into a medium of divine revelation. The Abbey Church of Saint-Denis, pioneered by Abbot Suger in the 12th century, was explicitly designed according to the principle of “lux nova” (new light), with Suger writing of how the precious gems and colored glass created a “heavenly” or “divine” light that seemed to dissolve the material boundaries between earthly and heavenly realms. This architectural vision reached its zenith in the Chartres Cathedral in France, where the labyrinth on the floor and the famous stained-glass windows work together to create a

holistic experience of divine presence within physical space. Hindu temple architecture similarly expresses divine immanence through its very structure, with temples designed as cosmic mountains or bodies of the deity, where worshippers move from outer realms toward the inner sanctum (garbhagriha or “womb chamber”) containing the divine image (murti). The Kandariya Mahadeva Temple in Khajuraho, India, built in the 11th century, features intricate sculptures depicting deities in various aspects of creation, preservation, and dissolution, expressing the belief that the divine permeates all aspects of existence. Islamic mosque architecture, while avoiding representational imagery, creates spaces of divine immanence through geometric patterns and calligraphy that reflect the infinite nature of Allah. The Alhambra in Spain, with its interlacing arabesques and flowing water features, embodies the Quranic concept of divine presence permeating all creation, with water symbolizing the life-giving presence of God in the world.

Iconography and religious art have similarly served as vehicles for expressing divine immanence across traditions. Byzantine icons, such as those at Saint Catherine’s Monastery in Sinai, are understood not merely as representations but as windows to the divine presence, with the icon itself participating in the reality it depicts. The practice of venerating icons in Eastern Orthodoxy reflects the belief that divine immanence can be encountered through material objects properly consecrated. Tibetan Buddhist thangkas, intricate paintings on cotton or silk, serve similar functions as meditation aids and representations of enlightened beings whose qualities practitioners seek to cultivate within themselves. Chinese landscape painting traditions, particularly during the Song Dynasty, expressed Taoist and Chan Buddhist concepts of divine immanence through depictions of mountains, rivers, and mist that revealed the underlying unity and sacredness of nature. The artist Fan Kuan’s masterpiece “Travelers Among Mountains and Streams” (c. 1000 CE) creates a sense of the immense, living presence of nature in which human figures appear small yet intimately connected. Modern abstract art has found new ways to express divine immanence without representational imagery, as seen in the works of Wassily Kandinsky, who believed colors and shapes could evoke spiritual states. Mark Rothko’s chapel paintings in Houston, with their luminous floating rectangles of color, create a meditative space where viewers can experience a sense of transcendent presence within the physical environment. Similarly, Agnes Martin’s subtle grid paintings invite contemplation of the infinite within minimal forms, expressing a Quaker-influenced spirituality that finds the divine in ordinary simplicity.

Music, literature, and poetry have offered equally powerful expressions of divine immanence, engaging the imagination and emotions in ways that complement visual and architectural forms. Sacred music across traditions creates sonic environments where divine presence becomes palpable through sound. Gregorian chant, with its flowing, unaccompanied melodic lines, developed as music that could elevate the soul toward God while recognizing divine presence in the very act of singing. The Indian classical music tradition, particularly its system of ragas associated with specific times of day and seasons, expresses a profound connection between musical sound and natural cosmic order, with each raga believed to embody particular divine qualities. Sufi qawwali music, exemplified by performers like Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, creates ecstatic musical experiences where participants seek union with the divine through repetitive phrases and intensifying rhythms, expressing the immanence of divine love. Mystical poetry has perhaps been the most direct literary expression of divine immanence, with poets across cultures attempting to articulate experiences of sacred presence within ordinary reality. The 13th-century Persian poet Rumi wrote extensively of divine im-

manence in works like the Mathnawi, using metaphors of lovers, wine, and everyday experiences to express the presence of the beloved within all creation. His famous lines “I am neither Christian nor Jew, neither Zoroastrian nor Muslim” express a spirituality that transcends religious boundaries while finding the divine immanent in all forms.

## 1.9 Psychological Dimensions of Divine Immanence

I’m writing Section 9 of the Encyclopedia Galactica article on “Divine Immanence,” focusing on the psychological dimensions. I need to build naturally upon the previous section (Section 8 on artistic and cultural expressions), maintain the same authoritative yet engaging tone, and cover the four subsections: mystical experiences and consciousness, depth psychology approaches, cognitive science of religion, and therapeutic applications.

Let me start by transitioning from Section 8, which discussed artistic expressions of divine immanence, to Section 9 on psychological dimensions. I’ll need to create a smooth transition that connects artistic expression with psychological experience.

The previous section concluded with examples of mystical poetry across cultures, particularly mentioning Rumi’s expressions of divine immanence. This provides a natural bridge to the psychological dimensions of such experiences.

I’ll structure my response to cover all four subsections in approximately 1,000 words total, with rich detail, specific examples, and flowing narrative prose.

Let me begin drafting:

### 1.10 Section 9: Psychological Dimensions of Divine Immanence

The artistic expressions of divine immanence explored in the previous section reveal how humans have sought to make the sacred presence tangible through creative forms. Yet beneath these cultural expressions lie profound psychological dimensions—experiences of consciousness, patterns of belief, and therapeutic applications that illuminate how divine immanence manifests within the human psyche. The psychological investigation of immanence spans from extraordinary mystical encounters to everyday religious experiences, from depth psychology’s exploration of archetypal imagery to contemporary neuroscience’s documentation of spiritual states. This psychological examination reveals that experiences of divine immanence are not merely theological constructs or artistic metaphors but lived realities that shape human consciousness, behavior, and well-being across cultures and throughout history.

Mystical experiences represent perhaps the most direct psychological encounter with divine immanence, characterized by feelings of unity, sacredness, and profound connection to all existence. William James, in his pioneering work “The Varieties of Religious Experience” (1902), identified mysticism as one of the four characteristics of genuine religious experience, noting its ineffable quality, noetic quality, transiency, and passivity. Modern researchers like Ralph Hood Jr. have developed the Mysticism Scale to systematically

measure these experiences across cultures, finding remarkable consistency in reports of divine immanence despite different religious frameworks. The famous Good Friday Experiment conducted by Walter Pahnke in 1962 demonstrated that psychedelic substances could reliably induce mystical experiences characterized by profound feelings of unity and sacredness—experiences that participants often described as encounters with divine presence within themselves and all creation. Longitudinal studies of such experiences, conducted by researchers at Johns Hopkins University and New York University, have documented their lasting positive effects on psychological well-being, with many participants reporting sustained increases in meaning, purpose, and connection to others. Neuroimaging studies of experienced meditators by Andrew Newberg and others have documented decreased activity in the parietal lobe during states of deep meditation, which correlates with reports of dissolved boundaries between self and other—a neurological correlate of the experience of divine immanence. Cross-cultural studies of mystical experiences show remarkable similarities despite different religious frameworks, suggesting common psychological mechanisms underlying experiences of sacred presence. For instance, Buddhist practitioners describing experiences of “non-dual awareness,” Christian mystics reporting “union with God,” and Indigenous individuals experiencing “oneness with nature” all describe similar psychological states despite different theological interpretations.

Depth psychology approaches have provided rich frameworks for understanding divine immanence as a psychological phenomenon rooted in the structure of the unconscious mind. Carl Jung, perhaps the most influential psychological thinker on this subject, developed the concept of the Self as the central archetype representing wholeness and the unification of conscious and unconscious elements. Jung saw religious symbols and experiences as manifestations of this archetypal Self, writing that “the self is not only the centre but also the whole circumference which embraces both conscious and unconscious; it is the centre of this totality, just as the ego is the centre of consciousness.” For Jung, experiences of divine immanence represented encounters with this deeper psychological reality, making the sacred psychologically present rather than merely metaphysically distant. Jung’s concept of synchronicity—meaningful coincidences that suggest an underlying connection between mind and matter—further articulated his understanding of how the divine might manifest immanently within the fabric of everyday life. James Hillman, founder of archetypal psychology, expanded these ideas through his concept of the *anima mundi* or world soul, suggesting that the divine is not merely within the human psyche but immanent throughout the natural world, with psychological health requiring reconnection to this sacred dimension of existence. Hillman’s “re-visioning” psychology criticized what he saw as modern psychology’s tendency to pathologize spiritual experiences, arguing instead for recognizing encounters with the sacred as potentially transformative rather than symptomatic. Transpersonal psychology, developed by Abraham Maslow, Stanislav Grof, and others, explicitly explores spiritual dimensions of human experience, with Maslow’s concept of “peak experiences” describing moments of intense joy and ecstasy where individuals feel more whole, alive, and connected to the world. Grof’s work with holotropic breathwork and psychedelics documented how non-ordinary states of consciousness often reveal experiences of sacred immanence, with individuals reporting encounters with what they describe as divine presence within themselves and throughout creation. Roberto Assagioli’s psychosynthesis approach similarly integrates spiritual dimensions into psychological work, with his concept of the Higher Self representing an immanent divine principle within each person that can guide psychological development and

healing.

The cognitive science of religion has emerged as a significant field examining the psychological mechanisms underlying beliefs about divine immanence. Researchers like Justin Barrett have proposed that humans possess natural cognitive tendencies that make belief in immanent divine forces more intuitive. The hyperactive agency detection device (HADD) theory suggests that humans evolved to attribute agency to ambiguous events, making it natural to perceive purposeful divine presence in natural phenomena. This cognitive predisposition might explain why animistic beliefs, which see divine forces immanent in natural objects and phenomena, represent one of the most widespread forms of religious expression across cultures. Pascal Boyer's theory of religious concepts as "minimally counterintuitive" suggests that ideas about divine immanence are memorable and transmissible precisely because they violate some intuitive expectations while confirming others—an immanent god who is present yet invisible, for instance, captures attention while retaining enough familiarity to be comprehensible. Experimental studies by Deborah Kelemen have demonstrated that children across cultures naturally exhibit "promiscuous teleology," attributing purpose and design to natural objects, a cognitive tendency that may underlie later beliefs about divine immanence in nature. Developmental research by Olivera Petrovich has shown that young children naturally develop concepts of divine immanence even without explicit religious instruction, suggesting that such beliefs may arise from inherent cognitive structures rather than solely cultural transmission. Neuroscience research has identified specific brain regions associated with religious experiences of immanence, with studies by Mario Beauregard documenting decreased activity in the medial prefrontal cortex during mystical experiences, which correlates with reports of loss of self-boundaries and feelings of unity with all creation. These cognitive and neuroscientific approaches do not validate or invalidate theological claims about divine immanence but illuminate the psychological mechanisms that may make such experiences and beliefs particularly compelling and widespread.

Therapeutic applications of divine immanence perspectives have gained increasing recognition in contemporary psychology and mental health practice. Psychedelic-assisted therapy, experiencing a renaissance after decades of suppression, has demonstrated remarkable efficacy in treating conditions like depression, anxiety, and addiction, with many patients reporting transformative experiences of sacred immanence during treatment. Studies at Imperial College London and other institutions have shown that psilocybin therapy often induces mystical experiences characterized by profound feelings of unity and sacredness, with the intensity of these experiences correlating strongly with therapeutic outcomes. Patients frequently describe encountering what they experience as divine presence within themselves and throughout nature, experiences that researchers suggest may help recontextualize their suffering and foster greater acceptance and meaning. Mindfulness-based approaches, while secular in presentation, incorporate elements derived from Buddhist practices that emphasize awareness of the sacred immanence in ordinary experience. Jon Kabat-Zinn's Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program, though explicitly non-religious, helps participants develop present-moment awareness that many describe as encounters with a deeper, more meaningful dimension of existence. Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), developed by Steven Hayes, similarly draws on contemplative traditions to help clients connect with values and meaning that transcend immediate psychological distress, implicitly invoking a sense of connection to something larger than the individual self.

The concept of “spiritual emergency,” articulated by Stanislav and Christina Grof, recognizes that experiences of divine immanence can sometimes be overwhelming or destabilizing, requiring therapeutic support rather than pathologization. Their Spiritual Emergency Network provides resources for therapists trained to distinguish between potentially transformative spiritual experiences and clinical conditions requiring different approaches. Integrative meaning-centered therapies, developed by researchers like William Breitbart for cancer patients, explicitly help individuals find connection to transcendent dimensions of existence, with many patients reporting that experiences of divine immanence help them face mortality with greater peace and acceptance. These therapeutic applications suggest that experiences of divine immanence, when properly integrated, can contribute significantly to psychological healing and well-being.

The psychological dimensions of divine immanence reveal how experiences of sacred presence shape human consciousness, belief, and behavior in profound ways. From mystical encounters that dissolve boundaries between self and other to cognitive mechanisms that make belief in divine immanence naturally compelling, psychology illuminates the human capacity for experiencing the sacred within the material world. Therapeutic applications further demonstrate how these experiences can contribute to healing and wholeness when properly understood and integrated. As we turn to the ethical

### **1.11 Ethical and Social Implications of Divine Immanence**

The psychological dimensions of divine immanence reveal how experiences of sacred presence shape human consciousness, belief, and behavior in profound ways. From mystical encounters that dissolve boundaries between self and other to cognitive mechanisms that make belief in divine immanence naturally compelling, psychology illuminates the human capacity for experiencing the sacred within the material world. Therapeutic applications further demonstrate how these experiences can contribute to healing and wholeness when properly understood and integrated. Yet beyond their psychological significance, experiences and beliefs about divine immanence carry profound ethical and social implications, shaping how humans relate to the natural world, organize their communities, pursue justice, and structure their political systems. The recognition of divine presence within creation transforms not only individual consciousness but collective action, providing foundations for environmental ethics, social justice frameworks, relationship models, and political applications that address some of humanity’s most pressing challenges.

Environmental ethics represents one of the most significant areas where concepts of divine immanence have generated practical frameworks for addressing ecological crisis. Deep ecology, developed by Norwegian philosopher Arne Næss in 1973 and further articulated by thinkers like George Sessions and Bill Devall, draws directly on immanence perspectives to challenge anthropocentric approaches to nature. Næss distinguished between “shallow” environmentalism (concerned primarily with pollution and resource depletion for human benefit) and “deep” ecology (recognizing the intrinsic value of all living beings), with the latter grounded in an intuitive experience of the immanent sacredness of the natural world. The deep ecology platform’s first principle—that “the well-being and flourishing of human and nonhuman life on Earth have value in themselves”—reflects this immanence-based respect for all existence as manifestations of divine presence. This perspective has influenced environmental movements worldwide, from the Chipko move-



ment in India, where villagers hugged trees to prevent deforestation, to contemporary climate activism that recognizes Earth's sacred dimensions. Ecofeminist theologians like Sallie McFague have developed models of "the body of God" that extend Christian incarnational theology to include the entire planet, providing religious foundations for environmental protection. McFague's metaphor of the world as God's body transforms how humans relate to nature, suggesting that environmental destruction constitutes violence against the divine. Indigenous environmental ethics provide perhaps the oldest and most sustained expressions of immanence-based environmental ethics, as seen in the Seventh Generation Principle of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, which requires considering impacts on descendants seven generations into the future. The Standing Rock Sioux's resistance to the Dakota Access Pipeline, framed as protection of sacred water and land, exemplifies how immanence perspectives can mobilize environmental action. Animal ethics have also been transformed by immanence perspectives, with figures like Albert Schweitzer developing an ethic of "reverence for life" that recognizes divine presence in all sentient beings. Schweitzer's philosophy, articulated in his 1923 book "Civilization and Ethics," influenced later animal rights movements by suggesting that compassion for all creatures represents a moral response to the sacred immanence within them. Climate change responses informed by immanence ethics have emerged across religious traditions, from the Green Patriarch Bartholomew I of the Eastern Orthodox Church, who has described environmental destruction as sin against God's creation, to Pope Francis's 2015 encyclical "Laudato Si'," which calls for "integral ecology" recognizing the interconnectedness of all creation.

Social justice frameworks grounded in divine immanence have profoundly influenced how communities address inequality and oppression. Liberation theology, emerging in Latin America in the 1960s through figures like Gustavo Gutiérrez, Leonardo Boff, and Jon Sobrino, emphasized God's "preferential option for the poor," locating divine immanence among the oppressed and in struggles for justice. Gutiérrez's seminal work "A Theology of Liberation" (1971) reinterpreted biblical concepts through the lens of Marxist analysis, arguing that God is particularly present among those suffering from economic exploitation and political oppression. This perspective inspired base ecclesial communities throughout Latin America, where small groups of poor Christians read the Bible through their experience of marginalization, developing collective action informed by their belief in God's immanent presence among them. Black liberation theology, developed by James Cone in works like "Black Theology and Black Power" (1969), similarly identified God with the liberation struggle of African Americans, with Cone famously stating that "God is black" in the sense of sharing in the oppression of black people. Womanist theology, articulated by scholars like Delores Williams and Katie Cannon, expanded this framework to address the intersection of race, gender, and class oppression, recognizing divine immanence in the experiences of black women. These justice-oriented theologies have contributed to broader concepts of human dignity grounded in immanent divinity, as articulated in documents like the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which echoes religious sentiments about the sacred worth of each person. Community building based on immanence principles has taken diverse forms, from the Catholic Worker Movement founded by Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin in 1933, which established houses of hospitality for the poor based on the belief in Christ's immanent presence in those served, to contemporary faith-based community organizing networks like the Industrial Areas Foundation, which builds power among marginalized communities through relational practices that recognize divine presence in each



person. Economic systems have also been reimagined through immanence ethics, with movements like fair trade and ethical consumption emerging from religious communities that recognize the divine immanence in both producers and consumers, creating economic relationships based on justice rather than exploitation.

Relationship and community models informed by divine immanence have transformed how humans understand their connections to one another and the sacred dimensions of social bonds. Sacred relationships in immanence frameworks recognize the divine presence within interpersonal connections, as seen in Martin Buber's philosophy of dialogue articulated in "I and Thou" (1923), which describes the sacred dimension that emerges in genuine relationships where each person encounters the other in their full humanity rather than as an object. Buber's concept of the "eternal Thou" suggests that in authentic relationships, humans encounter not merely another individual but a dimension of transcendence immanent within the relational space itself. Family structures have been profoundly influenced by immanence perspectives, as seen in Jewish practices that make the home a mikdash me'at (small sanctuary) through rituals like Shabbat and Passover that recognize divine presence within family life. The Hindu concept of grahastha ashrama (householder stage) similarly sanctifies family life as a legitimate path for spiritual development, with relationships understood as arenas for encountering the divine. Intentional communities based on immanence principles have emerged across religious traditions, from Christian monastic communities like Taizé in France, which emphasize God's presence in community life through prayer and shared work, to contemporary ecovillages like Findhorn in Scotland, which combines ecological sustainability with spiritual practices recognizing divine immanence in nature and human relationships. Confucian traditions have long emphasized the sacred dimensions of social relationships through the concept of li (ritual propriety), which transforms ordinary interactions into occasions for recognizing the immanent heavenly order within human affairs. Confucius's teaching that "it is man who can make the Way great, not the Way that can make man great" emphasizes human responsibility in realizing the immanent sacred potential within social life. Conflict resolution approaches informed by immanence have been developed in various contexts, from Mennonite peacebuilding practices that recognize Christ's

## 1.12 Critiques and Challenges to Divine Immanence

I need to write Section 11 of the Encyclopedia Galactica article on "Divine Immanence," focusing on critiques and challenges to divine immanence. I'll need to build upon the previous section (Section 10 on ethical and social implications), maintain the same authoritative yet engaging tone, and cover the four subsections: theological objections, philosophical criticisms, scientific materialist perspectives, and practical and ethical concerns.

First, let me analyze where the previous section (Section 10) left off. It appears that the previous section was discussing conflict resolution approaches informed by immanence, particularly mentioning Mennonite peacebuilding practices. I'll need to create a smooth transition from this topic to the critiques and challenges of divine immanence.

I'll structure my response to cover all four subsections in approximately 1,000 words total, with rich detail, specific examples, and flowing narrative prose.

Let me draft the section:

### 1.13 Section 11: Critiques and Challenges to Divine Immanence

The transformative ethical and social frameworks derived from divine immanence, as explored in the previous section, demonstrate how this concept has inspired movements for environmental protection, social justice, and community building. Yet despite its profound influence and intuitive appeal, divine immanence has faced substantial criticism and challenges from multiple perspectives throughout history. These objections have emerged not only from theological, philosophical, and scientific quarters but also from practical and ethical concerns about how immanence frameworks function in real-world contexts. Examining these critiques reveals significant tensions within religious traditions, philosophical debates about the nature of reality, scientific challenges to metaphysical claims, and practical warnings about potential pitfalls of immanence-based worldviews. These challenges do not necessarily negate the value of divine immanence concepts but highlight the complexity and contested nature of this fundamental idea across human thought and practice.

Theological objections to excessive emphasis on divine immanence have emerged within virtually all religious traditions that have developed sophisticated theological systems. In orthodox Christian theology, for instance, the charge of pantheism has historically been one of the most serious theological errors, as it appears to eliminate the crucial distinction between Creator and creation. The early Christian church vigorously defended divine transcendence against various forms of immanentism, with theologians like Irenaeus of Lyon combating Gnostic tendencies that blurred the boundary between God and the material world. The Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 formally declared that God is “utterly one” and “wholly other” from creation, establishing orthodox boundaries that emphasized transcendence over immanence. Protestant reformers like John Calvin similarly warned against confusing the creature with the Creator, emphasizing God’s absolute sovereignty and otherness. Calvin’s critique of Catholic sacramental theology, for example, accused it of overly emphasizing divine presence in material elements at the expense of God’s transcendence. Within Islamic theology, the concept of *tashbih* (anthropomorphism or comparing God to creation) has been vigorously criticized by orthodox theologians who emphasize God’s absolute transcendence (*tanzih*). The Ash’ari school of Sunni Islam, representing mainstream Islamic theology, carefully balanced assertions of God’s attributes with warnings against making God comparable to creation. The Mu’tazila school went even further in emphasizing divine transcendence, arguing that the Quran was created rather than uncreated to avoid compromising God’s absolute unity and transcendence. Jewish theology has similarly maintained boundaries around divine immanence, with Maimonides’ “Guide for the Perplexed” carefully distinguishing between God’s essence and God’s actions in the world, warning against any conception that would compromise divine unity. The Kabbalistic concept of *zimzum* (divine contraction) itself emerged as a way to explain how a transcendent God could create a world distinct from itself while still maintaining some presence within it. These theological objections collectively warn that excessive emphasis on divine immanence risks idolatry—the worship of creation rather than Creator—and diminishes the sense of awe and otherness that many religious traditions consider essential to proper worship and understanding of the divine.

Philosophical criticisms of divine immanence have emerged from multiple schools of thought, challenging both the logical coherence and practical implications of immanent conceptions of the divine. Logical positivism, prominent in the early 20th century through philosophers like A.J. Ayer and the Vienna Circle, dismissed all theological language as literally meaningless, arguing that statements about divine immanence cannot be empirically verified or falsified and therefore fail the verification criterion of meaning. Ayer's "Language, Truth, and Logic" (1936) notoriously classified all religious statements as "nonsensical," including claims about divine presence within the material world. Materialist philosophies, building on the legacy of thinkers like Ludwig Feuerbach and Karl Marx, have argued that concepts of divine immanence represent projections of human qualities onto nature rather than discoveries of actual divine presence. Feuerbach's "The Essence of Christianity" (1841) contended that God is merely a human abstraction, with divine immanence representing the unconscious projection of human values onto the natural world. Marx extended this critique by arguing that religion, including immanence frameworks, functions as an ideological tool that diverts attention from material conditions of oppression. Postmodern and deconstructionist thinkers have challenged the very possibility of coherent discourse about divine immanence. Jacques Derrida's concept of "différance" suggests that language constantly defers meaning, making any definitive statements about divine presence inherently unstable. Jean-François Lyotard's characterization of postmodernity as "incredulity toward metanarratives" challenges the grand claims often associated with divine immanence, which purport to explain the fundamental nature of reality. Deconstructionist theologians like Mark C. Taylor have applied these insights to religious language, suggesting that attempts to articulate divine immanence inevitably involve presuppositions that undermine their own claims. Feminist philosophers like Luce Irigaray have criticized traditional immanence frameworks as implicitly patriarchal, noting that associations of immanence with nature, emotion, and the body have historically been devalued in comparison to transcendent, rational, masculine qualities. Irigaray calls for a rethinking of divine immanence that would not reproduce these gendered hierarchies. These philosophical criticisms collectively challenge divine immanence on logical, linguistic, and political grounds, questioning both its coherence and its social implications.

Scientific materialist perspectives present perhaps the most fundamental challenge to traditional concepts of divine immanence in the contemporary world. Methodological naturalism, the principle that scientific explanations must appeal only to natural causes and mechanisms, has become the standard framework for investigating reality across disciplines from physics to biology to psychology. This approach leaves no room for divine presence within natural processes, as it assumes that all phenomena can eventually be explained through natural laws without recourse to supernatural agency. Richard Dawkins, in "The God Delusion" (2006), explicitly argues that the universe reveals "precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil, no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference." This perspective directly contradicts immanence frameworks that discern purpose, intelligence, or sacred presence within natural processes. Evolutionary explanations for religious beliefs about divine immanence have been developed by researchers like Pascal Boyer and Scott Atran, who suggest that such beliefs emerge from cognitive adaptations rather than actual encounters with divine presence. Boyer's "Religion Explained" (2001) argues that concepts of gods and spirits are byproducts of cognitive mechanisms that evolved for other purposes, such as detecting agency and understanding social interactions. Neuroscience has challenged subjective experiences

of divine immanence by documenting the neural correlates of mystical and religious experiences. Michael Persinger's work with the "God helmet" demonstrated that electromagnetic stimulation of the temporal lobe can induce experiences of a sensed presence, suggesting that such experiences may have neurological rather than supernatural origins. Andrew Newberg's neuroimaging studies of meditating monks and praying nuns have documented specific patterns of brain activity associated with spiritual experiences, leading some researchers to conclude that these experiences represent brain states rather than encounters with actual divine presence. These scientific materialist perspectives collectively suggest that experiences and beliefs about divine immanence can be adequately explained through natural processes without appealing to actual divine presence in the world.

Practical and ethical concerns about divine immanence frameworks have been raised by critics from various perspectives, warning about potential psychological, social, and political pitfalls. Psychological critiques have focused on the potential for narcissism and grandiosity in immanence frameworks that suggest humans are divine or contain divine essence. Carl Jung himself warned against what he called "inflation"—the psychological danger of identifying the ego with the Self or divine archetype, which can lead to delusions of grandeur and loss of healthy boundaries. Transpersonal psychologists like Stanislav Grof have documented cases of spiritual emergencies where experiences of divine immanence become overwhelming or destabilizing, requiring therapeutic intervention rather than validation. Social critics have warned about the potential for exploitation in immanence-based spiritual movements, where charismatic leaders may claim special access to divine presence or exploit followers' spiritual experiences. The history of new religious movements contains numerous examples of such exploitation, from Rajneeshpuram in Oregon to various cult leaders who have used claims of divine immanence to justify abusive practices. Political applications of divine immanence have sometimes led to totalitarian systems where political leaders claim to embody divine will or presence. Nazi ideology, for instance, contained elements of a perveted immanence in its concept of the "Volk" or people's soul, which was used to justify racial supremacism and genocide. Marxist critics have argued that otherworldly immanence frameworks can discourage political engagement by suggesting that divine

### 1.14 Contemporary Relevance and Future Directions

Marxist critics have argued that otherworldly immanence frameworks can discourage political engagement by suggesting that divine presence is primarily accessible through private spiritual experience rather than collective action. Yet despite these substantial challenges and critiques, concepts of divine immanence continue to evolve and adapt in our rapidly changing global context, finding new expressions and applications that speak to contemporary concerns and possibilities. The ongoing relevance of divine immanence demonstrates its remarkable resilience as a fundamental human intuition about the sacred dimensions of existence, even as it transforms in response to new scientific discoveries, technological developments, ecological crises, and cross-cultural encounters.

Global religious syncretism represents one of the most significant contemporary developments in how divine immanence is understood and expressed across cultural boundaries. The unprecedented connectivity of our

globalized world has facilitated the blending of religious concepts and practices in ways that would have been unthinkable in previous eras. This syncretic process often centers on immanence frameworks, as they tend to be more immediately accessible and experiential than highly abstract transcendent concepts. The rise of spiritual but not religious (SBNR) identity, particularly among younger generations in Western countries, reflects this trend, with surveys indicating that approximately 27% of Americans now identify as SBNR. Many of these individuals draw selectively from multiple traditions, combining elements of Buddhist mindfulness, Hindu yoga, Taoist nature spirituality, and Indigenous animism to create personal spiritual frameworks that emphasize divine presence in everyday experience. The phenomenon of “dual belonging”—where individuals maintain connections to multiple religious traditions—has become increasingly common, with figures like Catholic monk Brother Wayne Teasdale articulating an “interspiritual” perspective that recognizes divine immanence as a common thread running through all religions. Teasdale’s *“The Mystic Heart”* (1999) proposed that contemplative practices from various traditions can lead to similar experiences of sacred presence, suggesting a universal immanence that transcends particular religious formulations. Hybrid religious movements explicitly built on syncretic immanence concepts have emerged worldwide, from Brazil’s Santo Daime religion, which combines Amazonian shamanism with Christianity and esoteric traditions, to Japan’s Shinshūkyō (new religions) like Tenrikyō, which emphasizes divine presence in daily life and mutual assistance. Globalization has accelerated this process through both physical migration and digital connectivity, with diaspora communities creating new syntheses of traditional beliefs and host culture practices. The internet has facilitated the global spread of immanence concepts through social media platforms, online courses, and virtual communities, allowing ideas about sacred presence to circulate beyond their cultural contexts of origin. This contemporary syncretism presents both opportunities and challenges: while it can foster greater cross-cultural understanding and highlight universal aspects of spiritual experience, critics warn that it sometimes risks superficial appropriation of sacred traditions without sufficient understanding of their cultural contexts and ethical frameworks.

Technological and transhumanist implications represent another frontier where divine immanence concepts are being reimagined in response to rapid technological change. Artificial intelligence has prompted profound questions about the nature of consciousness and whether machine minds might participate in or manifest divine presence. Theologians like Ilia Delio have begun exploring whether AI might represent a new form of cosmic incarnation, extending the Christian concept of the Logos into the digital realm. Virtual reality technologies create new contexts for sacred presence, with VR meditation experiences and virtual pilgrimage sites offering novel ways to encounter the divine within digitally constructed environments. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated this trend, with religious communities worldwide turning to virtual platforms to maintain spiritual connections during lockdowns, effectively creating new forms of digital immanence where sacred presence is experienced through online interfaces. Transhumanist perspectives, which advocate using technology to enhance human capabilities and potentially overcome biological limitations, engage with divine immanence in complex ways. Some transhumanists like Ray Kurzweil, in *“The Singularity Is Near”* (2005), suggest that technological evolution represents the continuation of cosmic evolution toward greater complexity and consciousness—echoing theological concepts of divine immanence working through natural processes. Kurzweil’s concept of the “Singularity,” where human and machine intelligence merge, has been

interpreted by some commentators as a technological version of Teilhard de Chardin's omega point, with technological advancement representing the immanent divine impulse toward greater unity and complexity. Other transhumanists explicitly reject religious frameworks while pursuing goals that resemble traditional religious aspirations, such as overcoming death and achieving higher states of consciousness through technological means. The prospect of mind uploading and digital immortality raises questions about whether consciousness divorced from biological embodiment could still participate in divine immanence, challenging traditional associations of sacred presence with physical existence. These technological developments create unprecedented ethical questions about the nature of sacred presence in an increasingly digital world, forcing religious traditions to reconsider how divine immanence might manifest through and be mediated by technology.

Ecological crisis responses represent perhaps the most urgent contemporary context where divine immanence concepts are being reimagined and applied. The accelerating climate crisis, biodiversity loss, and widespread ecological degradation have prompted religious communities worldwide to develop new theological frameworks and practical responses grounded in immanence perspectives. Pope Francis's 2015 encyclical "Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home" marked a significant moment in this development, articulating an integral ecology that recognizes divine presence throughout creation and calls for "a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all." The encyclical's emphasis on "everything is connected" reflects a deeply immanence perspective that has resonated across religious traditions. The Global Catholic Climate Movement, founded in 2015, has mobilized Catholics worldwide to respond to climate change through advocacy, lifestyle changes, and theological reflection on creation care. Similar movements have emerged in other traditions, from the Green Mosque initiative in Indonesia to the Hindu Eco-Villages movement and the Eco-Sikh program promoting environmental stewardship as an expression of Sikh teachings. Indigenous spiritual traditions, with their longstanding emphasis on sacred immanence in nature, have increasingly influenced mainstream environmental discourse, with figures like Robin Wall Kimmerer bringing Indigenous wisdom to broader audiences through works like "Braiding Sweetgrass" (2013). Kimmerer, as both a scientist and member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, articulates an "ecology of reciprocity" that recognizes the animate presence and inherent value of all beings, challenging the extractive worldview that has led to ecological crisis. Younger generations are particularly drawn to these immanence-based environmental frameworks, as seen in the vibrant global networks of Young Evangelicals for Climate Action, Hindu Climate Action, and Muslim Eco-Villages. These movements often combine traditional theological concepts with contemporary scientific understanding, creating hybrid frameworks that can address complex ecological challenges while honoring spiritual values. The growing field of eco-theology represents an academic dimension of this trend, with theologians from multiple traditions developing sophisticated theoretical frameworks for understanding divine immanence in relation to ecological systems. Sallie McFague's model of the world as God's body, Norman Habel's concept of "Earth Bible" hermeneutics, and Rosemary Radford Ruether's ecofeminist theology all contribute to this evolving discourse, providing intellectual foundations for environmental action grounded in immanence perspectives.

Interfaith dialogue and cooperation increasingly center on divine immanence as common ground for build-



ing relationships and addressing shared global challenges. The Parliament of the World's Religions, first held in 1893 and revived in 1993, has increasingly emphasized ecological issues and social justice as areas where diverse traditions can collaborate based on shared recognition of sacred presence in the world and in all human beings. The 2018 Parliament in Toronto featured numerous programs on “Indigenous traditions and ecological wisdom,” highlighting how immanence perspectives from Indigenous traditions can inform broader interfaith environmental action. The United Religions Initiative, founded in 1995, has created a global network of interfaith “cooperation circles” that work on community projects including environmental protection, peacebuilding, and poverty alleviation—often grounded in shared recognition of divine immanence as the basis for human dignity and environmental stewardship. Educational approaches to teaching about divine immanence across traditions have developed significantly in recent decades, with universities and seminaries offering courses in comparative theology that explore immanence concepts across religious boundaries. The Global Covenant of Religions, drafted by scholars from multiple traditions in 2017, explicitly recognizes “the sacred immanence in all life” as a foundation for interfaith cooperation on global challenges. Successful collaborative projects based on immanence principles have demonstrated the practical value of