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## **The Dialectics of Godhead in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam: Philosophical and Historical Perspectives**

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### **Abstract**

The issue of Godhead is a principal ideological problem, so historical-theological and philosophical studies are necessary to clarify scientific positions to strengthen arguments. The study in this paper is an attempt to trace the three Samawi religions (Abrahamic religions), which in its findings, it turns out that several conclusions have basic similarities. This paper is the result of qualitative research with literature studies from various literature to reveal historical problems that try to reduce unilateral claims based on the theological tendencies of each religion. With a historical-philosophical approach, the author attempts to provide descriptions and arguments regarding the fusion of human belief systems. The findings obtained in this paper are to understand the ideological-historical aspect, where it turns out that among Samawi religions, there is an evolution of belief systems in God. Then, they are used as theological and ideological systems.

[Masalah ketuhanan merupakan masalah ideologis utama, sehingga kajian sejarah-teologis dan filosofis diperlukan untuk memperjelas posisi ilmiah guna memperkuat argumentasi. Kajian dalam makalah ini merupakan upaya menelusuri tiga agama samawi (agama Abrahamik), yang dalam temuannya, ternyata beberapa kesimpulan memiliki kesamaan mendasar. Makalah ini merupakan hasil penelitian kualitatif dengan kajian pustaka dari berbagai pustaka untuk mengungkap permasalahan sejarah yang mencoba mereduksi klaim sepihak berdasarkan tendensi teologis masing-masing agama. Dengan pendekatan historis-filosofis, penulis berupaya memberikan gambaran dan argumentasi mengenai perpaduan sistem kepercayaan manusia. Temuan yang diperoleh dalam makalah ini adalah untuk memahami aspek ideologi-historis, dimana ternyata di antara agama samawi terdapat evolusi sistem kepercayaan pada Tuhan, kemudian dijadikan sebagai sistem teologis dan ideologis.]

**Keywords:** God; theology; oneness

### **Introduction**

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the pattern of human activity, one of which is a change in the paradigm of worship. Prohibitions and restrictions from the government to carry out activities in places of worship have closed many worship places. It gives rise to different responses from various religious groups and will influence one's faith. Some people think that doing worship activities but not in a place of worship will eliminate solemnity and even lead to speculation that God will not be present if it is not in a place of worship. In fact, when many altars in churches (read, parishes, chapels) are closed, it

turns out that more and more “altars” at home are used as places to feel the presence of God, even though virtually.<sup>1</sup> God is believed to be dynamic, moving in progressive worship, showing that worship is not limited by space (location) and time.<sup>2</sup> In the teachings of Islam itself, the instructions from the Qur'an related to the teachings of monotheism from the verses inform that Allah is close to His creatures, and even Allah Himself is with His creatures wherever they are.<sup>3</sup> Hence, the COVID-19 pandemic is like two opposite sides of a coin. On the one hand, it can increase belief in Godhead, but on the other hand, it can actually decrease it.

Belief in God is the most important factor in human life. It is where the role of religion explains aspects of the Godhead to humans, especially to their followers. In explaining God, the task of religion is to explain not only by revelation but also how God can be understood rationally. Thus, theologians provide arguments based on Scripture and, at the same time, can be accepted rationally.

The discussion of the form of God is also a major problem in every religion with a theological approach that comes from their respective holy books. In addition, it is also a discussion of philosophy with a metaphysical-ontological perspective. Also, the problem of Godhead is a universal problem that has always existed in human history, so the problem of Godhead is still considered a major theme in the history of philosophy. In this case, the problem of God is at the first level of philosophical speculation.

In understanding the form of God, it is necessary to use the lens of rationalism, not empiricism, that refers more to objects. Understanding rationalism views knowledge obtained not just sensed but makes sense. Atheism does not believe in the existence of God.<sup>4</sup> In the view of Theism, God is the one who creates and regulates all events

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<sup>1</sup> Korona Dan et al., “Korona dan Iman Akan Allah (Telaah Filsafat Ketuhanan, Sebuah Teodise),” *Lumen Veritatis: Jurnal Filsafat dan Teologi* 11, no. 2 (April 2021): 139–45, <https://doi.org/10.30822/lumenveritatis.v11i2.1108>.

<sup>2</sup> Eduward Purba et al., “Redefinisi Ibadah pada Masa Pandemi Covid-19,” *Jurnal Teologi Berita Hidup* 4, no. 1 (September 2021): 36–46, <https://doi.org/10.38189/jtbh.v4i1.108>.

<sup>3</sup> Purba et al., 37.

<sup>4</sup> Akhmad Ali Said, “Rasionalisasi Wujud Tuhan,” *Jurnal Ilmiah Spiritualis: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam dan Tasawuf* 4, no. 2 (August 2018): 153–75, <https://doi.org/10.53429/spiritualis.v4i2.50>.

in the universe. According to Deism, God only creates the universe but does not interfere. According to Pantheism, God is part of the universe itself. Meanwhile, adherents of monotheism believe that there is only one (single) God, has no partners, has a personality, is the source of all moral obligations, and is the greatest thing that can be contemplated.<sup>5</sup>

The concept of Godhead in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam is based on unitarian monotheism based on belief in one God. The Hebrew Bible says, "Listen to Israel, God is our God, God is one." The Bible (Deuteronomy 32:39) says, "Behold I am the one God, there is no God but me." Moreover, the Qur'an (Al Ikhlas) 1) says, "Say: He is Allah, the One and Only." Based on the three books, it is inferred that Allah is the God of the three Samawi religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. On the other hand, along with the times, the principle of truth is developed independently, especially in Sharia. However, in the field of faith, the principle is to believe in a single God, namely Allah.<sup>6</sup> According to Trueblood, Christianity and Islam are two religions sent down by God through Abraham's descendants and given the Holy Scriptures revealed by Allah. Both religions believe in Allah, the One and Only, as the creator of this universe. Christianity and Islam are also monotheistic religions, which assume that God is the creator of the universe. It exists and becomes a transcendent reality with an immanent purpose.<sup>7</sup>

The reality happening today is the difference in understanding God in Islam and Christianity, which is a sensitive matter of debate in interpreting the concept of God as One. Muslims admit that "There is no god but Allah." Christianity also recognizes the same thing: "There is no other God than the one God" (1 Corinthians 8:4). However, apart from this confession, Christians also recognize that God the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are also God, who is still one entity but has three personalities. This kind of understanding raises arguments from society, especially Muslims, who consider it a form of denial of the

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<sup>5</sup> Muhammad Noor, "Filsafat Ketuhanan," *Jurnal Humaniora Teknologi* 3, no. 1 (2018): 28–32, <https://doi.org/10.34128/jht.v3i1.31>.

<sup>6</sup> Amaliyah, "Satu Tuhan Tiga Agama (Yahudi, Nasrani, Islam di Yerusalem)," 2017 1, no. 2 (2017): 185–90, [https://journal.uinsgd.ac.id/index.php/religious/article/view/1395/pdf\\_15](https://journal.uinsgd.ac.id/index.php/religious/article/view/1395/pdf_15).

<sup>7</sup> Milton Thorman Pardosi and Siti Murtiningsih, "Refleksi Konsep Ketuhanan Agama Kristen dan Agama Islam dalam Pandangan Filsafat Perennial," *Jurnal Filsafat Indonesia* 1, no. 3 (March 2019): 91–103, <https://doi.org/10.23887/jfi.v1i3.16130>.

oneness of Allah.<sup>8</sup> The same is true for the teachings of Judaism. Prophet Musa called on the Israelites to worship the One God, but indirectly, Judaism did not fulfill the characteristics of a monotheistic religion but was more monolatry. This monolatry concept is a chosen nation concept, where religion based on nation and ethnicity should not be classified as monotheism. Judaism is also more recognized as monolatry because monolatry calls for the worship of one God and, at the same time, justifies the worship of other Gods and the worship of the one God but in different forms and ways.<sup>9</sup>

From the differences in views, the more extreme conditions on the field are that people cannot close their eyes; until now, the turmoil of conflict in the Middle East has also seemed to be incessant. Disputes in the name of religion claim that they are fighting in the name of religion. The conflict between Israel and Palestine symbolizes the war between Islam and Judaism. A thousand years earlier, there was also a crusade between Muslim and Christian armies. Thus, the above conditions result in the gap between religious adherents because the history created in the past seems as if there has always been competition between religions, and it is risky to live side by side. The intolerant and discriminatory actions that have occurred recently are also due to ignorance and unwillingness to tabayun, doing history tracking in search of bright spots from the early history of the three Samawi religions.

The long journey in the thousands of years since the birth of these heavenly religions certainly traverses various dimensions of space and time, which are vulnerable to the fading of the purity of religious teachings since they were firstborn. The intelligence of human thought, which is essentially always dynamic, actually uses it to change the purity of religious teachings so that they support and do not conflict with the will of individuals and groups. As a result, from antiquity to the present in the modern era, feuds/wars between groups, organizations, or states are often heard of fighting in the name of religion.

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<sup>8</sup> Pardosi and Murtiningsih, 5.

<sup>9</sup> Nurhanisah Binte Senin, Mustafa Kamal bin Amat Misra, and Nazneen Binti Ismail, "Sorotan Awal Konsep Monoteisme Yahudi," *E-Journal of Islamic Thought & Understanding (E-JITU)*, no. 2 (November 2021): 94–111.

These global problems can be solved through diplomacy or negotiations using humanist approaches without discriminating between religions. Here, history tracking needs to be done to find a common thread that historically, the three religions have gone through several phases, from polytheistic primitive beliefs to the present monotheistic ones.

All religious people agree in interpreting Allah (God) as the Highest, but the Highest's meaning is different. There are at least three forms of acknowledgment of the Highest: pantheism, polytheism, and monotheism. However, broadly speaking, Semitic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) are more on understanding monotheism.<sup>10</sup> Meanwhile, it is challenging to determine apart from the three religions, such as Buddhism, Hinduism, and others, because they are not a unity other than Semitic religions.

Research conducted by Indriana stated that Ibrahim or Abraham became a common thread on the issue of existing differences and discriminatory fluctuations in the name of religion. The common word among Judaism, Christianity, and Islam includes the theological teaching of faith that Allah is the One and Only by prohibiting all forms of association, including the worship of idols. The justification for each teaching is to explain several stories of the prophets and messengers of Allah to find the basis for the connection regarding the truth of Allah's religion.<sup>11</sup> However, prophetic historical stories are starting to be forgotten and are no longer even stories listened to by parents to children at this time. If studied and observed, there is a relationship between the three heavenly religions to build an attitude of tolerance and bury discriminatory attitudes.

Meanwhile, Romli expressed that the Samawi religions have a meeting point with each other. Based on history, Prophet Ibrahim is the father of the Samawi religions (Abrahamic religions) because his descendants will bring these religions.<sup>12</sup> The three religions adhere to monotheistic theology based on continuous revelation until it ends with the Prophet Muhammad SAW.

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<sup>10</sup> Theo Huijbers, *Manusia Mancari Allah; Suatu Filsafat Ketuhanan*, Cet. Ke2, (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 1985), 19.

<sup>11</sup> Nilna Indriana, "Common Word dalam Tiga Agama Samawi: Islam, Kristen dan Yahudi," *An-Nas* 4, no. 1 (2020): 32–44, <https://doi.org/10.36840/an-nas.v4i1.250>.

<sup>12</sup> Romli, *Masih Ibrahim*, 15.

Based on the conditions of idealism and realism above, the problem formulation in this study includes how to trace the three Samawi religions from a philosophical-historical perspective. What are the phases from the primitive polytheistic to the present-day monotheistic belief.' For this reason, this research tries to trace the three Samawi religions from a philosophical-historical perspective and discover the phases of polytheistic primitive beliefs to monotheistic ones today.

## **Methods**

This research is included in library research, using written documents as data. The library method is also conducted by reading books, magazines, journal articles, and other data sources in libraries and on the Internet.

The approach used in this research was hermeneutic. The hermeneutics used was a collaboration between the hermeneutics of Hans-Georg Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur. Gadamer's hermeneutics was a fusion of horizon and hermeneutical circle used by the author. Meanwhile, Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutics maintains hermeneutics as an art and a science, where hermeneutics is brought to life by two motivations, i.e., the will to suspect and the will to listen and the willingness to oppose and the willingness to obey. Ricoeur's hermeneutics also offers a method of interpreting texts and symbols.

The technique of collecting data and information in this research was by exploring sources from literature in the form of books, Kitab, manuscripts, articles, and other written sources and then identifying them systematically and analytically supported by various facilities in the library.

The data analysis technique used in this study was a descriptive method to describe the data obtained and a comparative method to compare one opinion with another to get a conclusion.

## **Results**

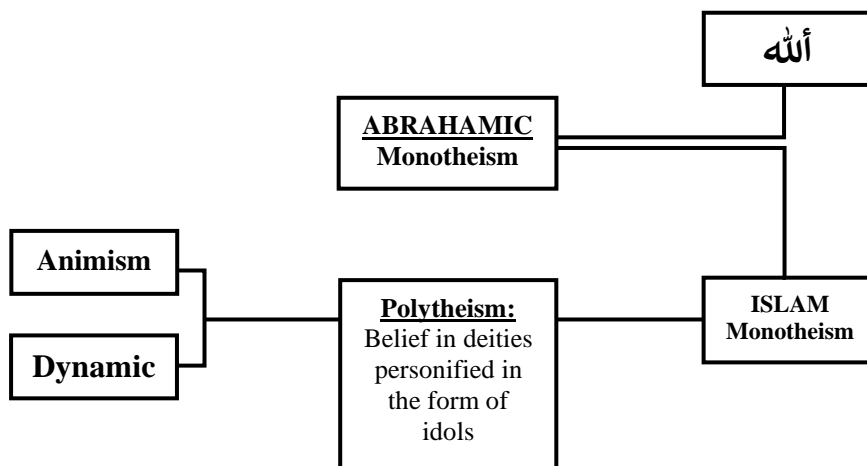
Religious problems turned to acts of discrimination and intolerance and even caused bloody conflicts between countries. In fact, if traced, all religions have a relationship, especially the Samawi religion brought by the Prophet Ibrahim. Thus, this study aims to trace the three *Samawi* religions from a philosophical-historical perspective

and find out the phases from polytheistic primitive beliefs to the present monotheistic ones.

### God in Islamic Theology

Undeniably, the journey of the Godhead of Islam has experienced a very long fusion. It is related to the history of the Godhead belief of the Arabs. Previously, the beliefs of the Arabs were very diverse, including (1) The primitive beliefs of the Arabs, namely animism and dynamism. (2) Polytheistic beliefs: belief in the gods of the Arabs personified in the form of idols/statues, such as Latta, ‘Uza, Manat, Bahal, and others. (3) The monotheistic belief in Abrahamic religion (religion brought by the Prophet Abraham) maintained from the prophetic period of Abraham to the pre-Prophet Muhammad. (4) Christian beliefs are held by a small part of the Arab nation. This is because, in the period before the birth and arrival of the Prophet Muhammad, Christianity and Judaism had spread widely throughout the world.

After the arrival of the Prophet Muhammad, the beliefs of the Arabs merged into one religion, Islam, with the belief of monotheism, namely Allah as the One God.



**Figure 1.** Islamic Godhead fusion pattern based on history



Islamic theology (Kalam science) is a science that discusses aspects of Godhead and everything related to Him rationally. In this regard, the object of theological form is the problem of Godhead and everything related to Him. Meanwhile, the methodology is an effort to understand the verses of the Qur'an and the Sunnah (hadith) in-depth, followed by the elaboration of understanding with empirical facts, and can be known as scientific, religious dialogue.

In the history of its development, theology in the Western world initially developed from a theological methodology, a way of understanding religious doctrine through its revelation approach and rational thought. The second is theology. As a science, theology is a science that discusses the problem of Godhead and everything related to Him.

In Islam, the issue of the Godhead is also the central point that became the primary basis for sending Muhammad SAW, namely, to reaffirm the Oneness of God. Thirteen years after the appointment of Muhammad in Mecca was a purification of the faith of the Arabs at that time towards the gods of their ancestors.<sup>13</sup>

### ***Asy'ariyah***

The main core of Al-Ash'ari's theology is Sunniism. It is said in his book, for example, in *al-Ibanah*, that the guidelines he adheres to are adhering to the Qur'an, the Sunnah of the Prophet, and the narrations (authentic) of the companions, *tabi'in*, and hadith figures. Asy'ariyah argues that the existence of God is based on the existence of this nature. The change and impermanence of nature are caused by the fact that it consists of indivisible parts that are constantly changing. It is why nature is new (up to date). Every new thing must have a cause, and the main cause is God because no cause does not end, and all ending causes are in God.<sup>14</sup>

Allah is the creator of the universe. He has absolute will over His creation because He can do whatever He wants and sends all humankind into heaven or hell. According to Asy'ariyah, God has certain characteristics. God knows by the nature of His Knowledge, not by His substance. Likewise, God is powerful by His Qudrah nature, not His substance.

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<sup>13</sup> Ali Jumuah, *Hasiyah Al-Baijūri 'alā Jauhar at-Tauhīd* (Kairo: Dār as-Salam, 2002), 40.

<sup>14</sup> Ahmad Daudy, *Kuliyah Filsafat Islam*, 3rd ed. (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1992), 161.

### ***Mu'tazilah***

According to the Mu'tazilah, the existence of reason has a big role in humans reaching the truth, including knowing about God. The Mu'tazilites also think that reason is sufficient for knowledge to be obligatory. It includes the obligation to know about God. Thus, there is no reason for a reasonable person not to believe in Allah.

Concerning God, especially about monotheism, the Mu'tazilah interprets monotheism more specifically, namely that God (Allah) must be purified from everything that can reduce the meaning of the oneness of Allah. Allah is the only One; therefore, He alone is the Qadim. Meanwhile, to purify the Oneness of God, the Mu'tazilah rejects the concept that God has attributes, as believed by the Asy'ariyah. Because nature is something inherent, Baṣar, Sama,' Qudrah, and others are not attributes but the substance of Allah itself, it is what is then called the concept of tanzih.

According to the Mu'tazilites, there is nothing like Him; neither body nor shadow, neither matter nor form, neither flesh nor blood, neither self nor element, neither color, taste, smell, heat, cold, dry, wet, long, wide, nor high, neither mixed nor fused, neither moving nor stationary, not divided, no beak and parts, nither body parts nor limbs, no direction, so it is not right, left, front, back, up, down, not in the environment of the place and not limited by tempo, does not apply to Him touch, isolation, incarnation in any place, is not characterized by the characteristics of every event that shows novelty, is not characterized by limited, wide, going in one direction and so on, with the properties possessed by beings.<sup>15</sup>

### ***Hashwiyah***

This group bases the argument for the existence of God Almighty only on revelation (naqli) and does not believe in reasoning (aqli).<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Analiansyah, "Peran Akal dan Kebebasan Bertindak dalam Filsafat Ketuhanan Mu'tazilah," *Substantia: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin* 15, no. 1 (April 2013): 92–103, <https://doi.org/10.22373/substantia.v15i1.4886>.

<sup>16</sup> Daudy, *Kuliyah Filsafat Islam*, 161.

### ***Sufiyyah or Bathiniyah***

The group argues that the experience of the soul (spiritual) or al-kashfu is a gift from God to His servant, who has cleansed his soul from the touch and stimulation of lust.<sup>17</sup>

### **God in Jewish Theology**

The discussion of God in Judaism cannot be separated from the history of the Jewish belief system. At least, there are two phases in the Jewish belief system: the belief system before the revelation of the Old Testament and the period after the revelation of the Old Testament. It relates to the pattern of belief and worship of the Jewish community.

In Jewish history, the nation of Israel before the revelation of the Old Testament was made up of certain clans, and each clan had different gods, but there was one supreme God of the Jewish nation, "Jehovah."<sup>18</sup>

Nations and religions came into the world at the same time. Although the tribes and clans maintained their respective gods and religious observances, each had a cult, i.e., the bond that formed the Jews into one nation and capable of collective action was stronger than before. Prophet Musa, who was proclaimed as the caliph of the Israelites, aroused enthusiasm in them that they did not have before. His name is Yahweh, and he is said to have a metaphysical meaning. He refers to God and is actually more accurate than the other gods. What is certain is that Musa stated that Yahweh promised to be with the tribes and that they would make him their Lord. Jehovah (Yahweh) is perhaps the most powerful God, and Jehovah is felt to be watching over the behavior of His people and being their helper and guide.

### ***Is Judaism the National Religion of the Israelites?***

From a group of tribes, Israel had become a nation and thought of itself as a unit. It has a national history and national rulership like other countries have. It is undeniable that Israel has much to be proud of in their nationality. Once they have their leader, they also have their God. Jehovah is the God of Israel. Israel is Jehovah's people; about this,

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<sup>17</sup> Daudy, *Kuliyah Filsafat Islam*, 162.

<sup>18</sup> Allan Menzies, *History of Religion: A Sketch of Primitive Religious Beliefs and Practices*, Charles Scribner's Sons (New York, 1985), 176–77.

they all agreed. Jehovah is, of course, the greatest, highest, and strongest, and every Israelite must worship Him.

Jehovah is the Special God of Israel. There is no doubt about that. Jehovah does not have and will not recognize any other people except the nation of Israel. Jehovah is completely tied to Israel. He (Jehovah) must help His people for His honor. He will not let Israel suffer.

On the other hand, the prophets of the Israelites conveyed that God is not only for the benefit of the nation, politics, and rituals that are very exclusive. Jehovah is above all things. He is the true God who loves justice and mercy, and those who cannot do justice and mercy cannot continue to be Jehovah's people.<sup>19</sup> The prophets also stated that Jehovah had decided about the rejection of His people. It indicates that they have advanced to a new concept of who Jehovah is. They (the prophets of Israel) stated that Jehovah had relations with nations other than Israel and could make races other than Israel His people. Jehovah has a position far above that of Israel's national mind. He is God, not just one nation, but all nations in the world. The position given to Yahweh is clearly one that elevates Him high above the position of the national God.

The Prophets understood more and more clearly that Jehovah is the creator of the world and the owner of all glory, both in heaven and on earth. This concept of the Prophets brought the Jewish God to the concept of monotheism. The only God is Jehovah. He is the owner of everything that exists and everything that happens in the universe. One God has revealed himself whom all creatures glorify and which all the nations of the earth can be called upon to praise him.<sup>20</sup>

### ***Jews After the Old Testament***

In its journey through a very long fusion process, the idea of Jewish Godhead, from polytheistic beliefs to monotheism, which believes in Jehovah as the One God, cannot be separated from the political intrigues of race and nation. The existence of the Israelite prophets who brought "God's Revelation" changed the concept of Jewish polytheism into monotheism. Jehovah, originally considered the

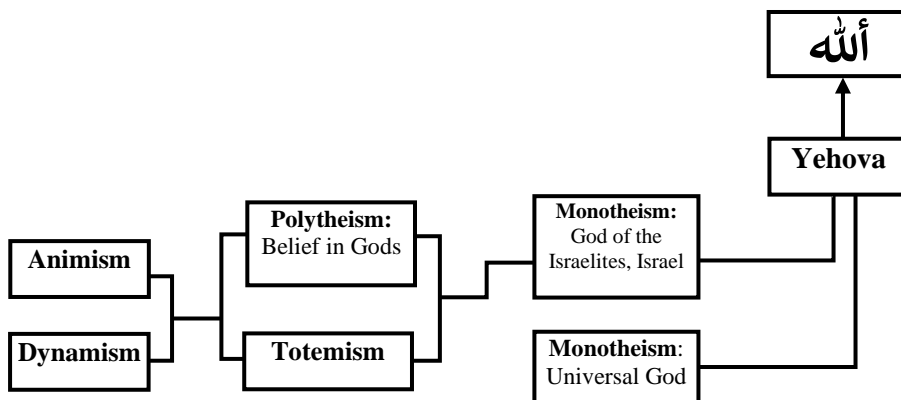
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<sup>19</sup> Allan Menzies, *History of Religion*, 176-177.

<sup>20</sup> Allan Menzies, *History of Religion*, 176-177.

supreme God of the Israelites, became the One God for all nations and humans.

The concept of Jewish monotheism peaked when the Prophet Musa was sent with his treatise. The Old Testament is a product (revelation) of God, which is then directed to the monotheistic and spiritual Jews. Judaism, which was originally a cultural product, becomes strong when it is justified by the prophets of the Israelites, especially when the Old Testament is revealed. In the Old Testament, the fusion of God's name took place from Jehovah to Allah. It is due to several reasons: (a) The term Jehovah seemed exclusive to the nation of Israel, while the prophets used Allah's name to introduce God's name. (b) Jehovah is more of a connotation of the supreme God of the nation of Israel, while Allah has the universal meaning of God for the Samawi religions. (c) In the books of Samawi religions, the name of God is called Allah, as is stated in the Torah or the Old Testament, while Jewish monotheism is written in the Torah/Old Testament.



**Figure 2.** Jewish Godhead fusion pattern based on history

The essence of belief in Judaism is the existence of God, One and Only. In the Old Testament, Prophet Musa (as) said in the book of Deuteronomy chapter 6, verse 4, “Shama Israelu Adonai Ila Hayno Adna Ikhad.” The sentence above is a quote in Hebrew, which means, “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.” It means the One God. Then, in the book of Isaiah, chapter 43, verse 11, “I, I am Lord, and there is no savior but Me.” It is also stated in the book of Isaiah, chapter 45, verse 5, “I am Lord, and there is no other; except Me, there

is no God.” In the book of Isaiah, chapter 46, verse 9, it is stated, “Remember the ancient things from time immemorial, that I am God and there is no other, I am God, and there is no one like me...” In the book of Exodus, chapter 20, verses 3 to 5, Allah says, “You shall have no other God before me. Do not make for yourself an image in the likeness of anything in the heavens, under the earth, or in the water under the earth. Do not bow down, worship him or worship him, for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God...”<sup>21</sup>

Several verses in the Old Testament mention the concept of God's monotheism in Judaism:

a. Musa in the Old Testament Bible as follows:

*“Shama Israelu Adonai Ila Hayno Adna Ikhad”*

*“Hear, O Israel, our God is the One God.”*<sup>22</sup>

b. In the Book of Isaiah, it is stated:

*“I, I am Lord, and there is no savior but Me.”*<sup>23</sup>

c. *“I am God; there is no other. There is no God but Me.”*<sup>24</sup>

d. *“I am God; there is no other. I am God; there is no one like Me.”*<sup>25</sup>

e. *“God is merciful and merciful, long-suffering, and abundant in lovingkindness.”*<sup>26</sup> *“Therefore, God is waiting for the time to show His love for you; Therefore, He rose to love you. For the Lord is a just God; happy are all who wait for Him!”* (Isaiah 30:18).<sup>27</sup>

f. Judaism does not allow idolatry:

*“You shall have no other God before Me. Do not make for yourself an image in the likeness of anything in the heavens above, on the earth below, or in the water under the earth. Do not prostrate to him or worship him. For I am the Lord, your God is jealous.”*<sup>28</sup>

God is love, just, and merciful. Therefore, it is impossible for God to do anything against love, justice, and mercy because these are the essence of God. From the evidence of the Bible/Old Testament, it is

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<sup>21</sup> Yesaya, pasal 43 ayat 11.

<sup>22</sup> Bible, Deuteronomium/Ulangan 6:4.

<sup>23</sup> Bible, Isaiah/Yesaya 43:11

<sup>24</sup> Bible, Isaiah/Yesaya 43:11

<sup>25</sup> Bible, Isaiah/Yesaya 45:5

<sup>26</sup> Bible, Isaiah/Yesaya 46:9

<sup>27</sup> Mazmur 103:8

<sup>28</sup> Bible, Isaiah/Yesaya 30:18

<sup>29</sup> Bible, Exodus/Keluaran 20:3-5

clear that Allah only commands humans to worship only Him in the Torah.

Based on the opinions of the sources above, it can be concluded that there has been a change in the pattern of Jewish belief from polytheism to monotheism. This change was marked by the sending of the Prophet Musa to the Jews to ensure that the God who must be worshiped is the One God. Experts generally think that the teaching of monotheism in Israel is developed from the previous understanding, from the henotheistic monolatry understanding, where God is believed to be in power and dwells in one place, to a monotheistic understanding, where God is believed to be in power over the whole place.<sup>29</sup> In referring to Allah, the development of monotheism in the Old Testament results from religious evolution. However, on the other hand, Freud<sup>30</sup> gave a different argument that he rejected the fact that the Prophet Musa was the originator of monotheism against the Jews from a psychological point of view. With evidence, the Prophet Musa was Egyptian (not of Jewish descent) and said that his monotheism originated from Akhnaten, one of the Egyptian Pharaohs who called for the worship of one God. The opinion above illustrates that after the Old Testament, Prophet Musa brought new religious teachings because he came from Egypt. However, regardless of where Musa came from, what is clear is that the teachings brought by Musa were intended for the Israelites.

### **God in Christian Theology**

In the Christian faith, there is a long-expected relationship between God and man in the new theme of covenant and perfect sympathy, which was later incarnated in Jesus. This relationship is depicted between God and Jesus; Jesus represents man in that intimacy. God is the Father in heaven, while humans are children, and all man has to do is realize this: enter the circle and start to live with God.<sup>31</sup> Christianity also has the concept of unity between God and man; Jesus represents the man who has become one with God. He was caught up because God had descended upon him; divine power had entered his life, capable of doing all things within him.

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<sup>29</sup> Heiser dalam Silalahi, *Monotheisme dalam Perjanjian*, 15.

<sup>30</sup> Senin et al., *Sorotan Awal*, 15.

<sup>31</sup> Allan Menzies, *History of Religion*, 437.

Christians believe that there is only one God, but there are three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and the Holy Spirit within that one essence of God. The three persons are commensurate and co-eternal but different in Person. In fact, in the Bible, the Christian holy book itself is not found at all Jesus' claim that he is God. Jesus never once said, "I am God," or said, "Worship me." What Jesus himself said is completely contrary to the general belief of Christians today, where the clear message of monotheism is what Jesus said.

Jesus is actually none other than a messenger from God Himself. In some Bible explanations, it is clear that Jesus is not God. It includes that Jesus was the messenger of God to the Israelites (Jews) to re-align and perfect the teachings that Musa conveyed in the Torah, which at that time had been widely distorted by the Jews; Jesus was sent only to the nation of Israel.

- a. *"And this is eternal life that they will know the real God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent."*<sup>32</sup>
- b. *"I can do nothing about myself. I judge according to what I hear, and my judgment is just because I do not obey my will but the will of Him who sent me."*<sup>33</sup>
- c. *"I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."*<sup>34</sup>
- d. *"Jesus sent the twelve disciples, and he said to them," Do not stray into the ways of the Gentiles or enter the cities of the Samaritans but go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."*<sup>35</sup>

### ***Christian Theology with Old Testament***

Amid the unity of theology in the Old Testament, there are distinct elements. Different theological forms look at God's actions differently.

The first form of theology was salvation theology. Many passages of Scripture that describe Yahweh as a God of savior, shepherd, leader, or ruler make up this material. This form of theology is found in hymns, prophecy, and historical writings. This form of theology emphasizes faith in a saving God and is founded on knowledge of His past saving

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<sup>32</sup> Bible, John/Yohanes 17:3.

<sup>33</sup> Bible, John/Yohanes 5:30.

<sup>34</sup> Bible, Matthew/Matius 15:24.

<sup>35</sup> Bible, Matthew/Matius 10:5-6.



acts. However, He expressed the power of saving him in a different way and time.

Unbelief in a saving God is evident in disobedience to His commandments, bringing judgment sermons from the prophets. The message of destruction is meant to instill faith before it is too late. Thus, God's reputation as a God who saves continues to be brought into crisis. God's reputation as a God who saves could have ended if it were not for the ancestors' prophecies to renew old promises. They declared that in addition to the condemnation of the Israelites, a day of spiritual and physical salvation would come. Sometimes, the crisis is caused by mechanization. Israel began to depend on God without faith. Judgment must occur to make people realize that God is indeed a God who saves, but only if people believe. Therefore, one form of theology is that which declares God as a powerful savior for those who believe.

The second form of theology is cultic theology, which is part of the revelation that deals with sacrificial worship and all related to it. The same cycle develops here. Original cultic theology declared God the Holy One, who resided in the Holy Place and could only be reached by redemption through prescribed rituals. Empty worship takes over faith. Hence, the big reaction came. As theologians who did not see unity, the prophets did not oppose the ritual sacrifice itself, would say. However, they are against worship without faith; they wanted to renew the intent and Spirit of cultic theology, not the victims themselves. Obedience is better than sacrifice; a broken heart is a true victim. The holiness of God is paramount in this theology, and without faith, one cannot draw near to God that way.

The third form of Old Testament theology is order theology. Here, the texts describe God as the creator and sustainer of heaven and earth, guarantor of life, order, society, justice, and nature. It is not present so much in the writings of saving acts or the law of Leviticus as in the wisdom writings. However, it also deals with a crisis of unbelief, an unbelief that makes theology automatically predictable. The dogmatic systematics of the old wisdom did not allow God to govern the universe through His sovereign will freely. The rules set a pattern so that legalism makes life predictable (God blesses the righteous, so the absence of blessings is a sign of sin). Books such as Job and Ecclesiastes show that such a rule cannot bind God. Faith in God's sovereignty is a constant requirement of such writings.

It is a brief overview of the three main themes of the biblical writings of the Old Testament, how their messages were challenged by popular religion from paganism and unbelief, and how their theologians regenerated the Spirit of faith through each crisis.

### ***Oneness and Trinity in Christianity***

God in the Bible is stated clearly and unequivocally as the One God. He is the only eternal, true, and living God, and no one is equal and can equal Him. As stated in the Westminster creed, it is evidenced that “there is only one true, living and true God.”<sup>36</sup> The oneness of God here is interpreted as follows: “There is only one God, and that the nature or disposition of God cannot be separated or divided.”<sup>37</sup> Here are some biblical facts that prove the Oneness of God.<sup>38</sup>

Belief in God One and Only One is the most important part of the concept of Godhead in the Semitic religions, whether Judaism, Christianity, or Islam. In Christianity, the recognition of the oneness of God is also a basic doctrine, but the interpretation of the books, both from the Old Testament, New Testament, and other books, as part of Christian teachings then develops into theological differences among Christians themselves, plus the development of gospel writing. Some

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<sup>36</sup> Iman Westminster, *Bab II.1 Yang Diseleksi Oleh Th, Van Den End, Enam Belas Dokumen Dasar Calvinis* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2000).

<sup>37</sup> Henry C Thiessen, *Teologi Sistematis*, 5th ed. (Malang: Gandum Mas, 2000).

<sup>38</sup> The evidence for the unity of God from the Old and New Testaments, according to James P. Boyce, is divided into eight sections of evidence: (1) Passages that state God explicitly that God is One: Deuteronomy 6:4; Malachi 2:10; Mark 12:19, 32; 1 Timothy 2:5; Ephesians 4:5, 6, and James 2:19. (2) Passages stating that there is no other but Him: Deuteronomy 4:35, 39; 1 Samuel 2:2; 2 Samuel 7:22; 1 Kings 8:60; Isaiah 44:6, 8; 45:5, 6, 21, 22; 46:9, and Joel 2:27. (3) The passages that say there is none like Him and comparable to Him: Exodus 8:10; 9:14; 15:11; 2 Samuel 7:22; 1 Kings 8:23; 1 Chronicles 6:14; Isaiah 40:25; 46:5, and Jeremiah 10:6. (4) Passages that claim that He Himself is God: 2 Samuel 22:32; Nehemiah 9:6; Psalm 18:32; 86:10; Isaiah 37:16; 43:10, 12; 46:9; John 17:3, and 1 Corinthians 8:4-6. (5) Passages claiming that He alone is worthy of worship: Exodus 20:5; 34:14; 1 Samuel 7:3; 2 Kings 17:36; Matthew 4:10; Romans 1:25; and Revelation 19:10. (6) The passages that state that it is forbidden for anyone to be accepted as God: Exodus 20:3; Deuteronomy 6:14-15; Isaiah 42:8; Hosea 13:4. (7) The passages declaring Him supreme among all that can be called Gods: Deuteronomy 10:17; Joshua 22:22; Psalm 96:4-5; Jeremiah 14:22; 1 Corinthians 8:4-6. (8) The passages that claim that He is the true God: Jeremiah 10:10; 1 Thessalonians 1:9. (See James P. Boyce, *Abstract of Systematic Theology* (Louisville: Chas. T. Dearing, 2006), 59-60.

statements explain that Allah is God, the One and Only One, and Jesus is His messenger.

Gregory of Nazianzus said, “As soon as I think of the One, I am enlightened by the splendor of the Three; as soon as I discern the Three, I am immediately brought back to the One. When I think of it as a whole, and my eyes are full, and the greater part of what I think escapes me.”<sup>39</sup>

Biblical theology must be about God. However, when looking at the Old Testament, some things that seem ambiguous will be found in various places regarding the identity of God. In many places, not much difference is God. However, theological considerations, especially when looking at the New Testament using the Old Testament, are found there. In systematic theology, Christians usually say the Father determines, the Son runs and reveals the Father, and the Spirit can do God's will. The three are involved because they are indivisible, one in essence. Also, for example, creation is God's decree. Thus, it can be said that God the Father created all things. However, the New Testament explains that the Son created all things, and this is through the Holy Spirit.

Dealing with passages where God is actively involved in human activity is theological; it is justified and generally safe to see the second Person of the Trinity in mind (though technically, not called Christ until the New Testament). It is confirmed through its use because there are many indications in the Bible that Christ is indeed God, the center of revelation.

According to Dylfard Pandey, in the Bible, God reveals himself to be the only living, true, and eternal God. God who reveals Himself as the One God with Three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These three Persons in the One God can be distinguished but are not mixed and cannot be separated; different but not divided. It is equal in nature, position, power, and glory. God is absolute and perfect. One God, not three Gods. Three Persons but one being, namely God.<sup>40</sup> According to

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<sup>39</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration 40:41 in Karen Amstrong, History of God, Print XIII* (Bandung: Mizan, 2013).

<sup>40</sup> Allah Tritunggal and Sebuah Risalah Teologis Alkitabiah tentang Keesaan dan Ketritunggalan Allah Dylfard Edward Pandey Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Sangkakala Jakarta, “Allah Tritunggal: Sebuah Risalah Teologis Alkitabiah Tentang Keesaan dan Ketritunggalan Allah,” *Davar: Jurnal Teologi* 1, no. 1 (June 2020): 43–64, <https://doi.org/10.55807/davar.v1i1.2>.

him, the doctrine of the Trinity is a very amazing, unique, and special doctrine that is confusing. It is a special doctrine because it deals with the mystery and uniqueness of God. It is a revealing doctrine because God introduces and reveals to Himself what and who He is. The doctrine of the Trinity is a basic teaching that is very difficult to understand and digest by a limited human ratio. The Eternal is trying to be understood by the mortal, or the Infinite is trying to be understood by the finite.

The term Trinity was first used in Latin terms; Trinity by Tertullian<sup>41</sup> and, in Greek terms, Triassic by Theophilus of Antioch.<sup>42</sup> The term Trinity is not a term that comes from the Bible, but the concept of the One God in His plurality is clearly expressed in it. This term is adopted from what has been provided by the philosophical, scientific environment. The use of the term Trinity is a concise form to explain the fact of the Bible that the God worshiped is the Triune God<sup>43</sup> and is only an attempt to explain the fullness of God, both in terms of His Oneness and in terms of His multiplicity.<sup>44</sup>

Moreover, the "I believe" creed states that the central secret of the Christian faith is the Mystery of the Triune God. Thus, the Trinity is the primary<sup>45</sup> foundation of the Christian faith, which was revealed in Jesus. As noted above, faith in the Triune God has existed since the time of the early Church because it was based on the words of Jesus himself, which His disciples reiterated. Thus, it is not true that this doctrine was only discovered and established at the First Council of Constantinople in 359. The truth is that the First Council of Constantinople included the teaching of the Triune God in writing as a continuation of the Council of Nicaea (325).<sup>46</sup> The dogma of the Holy Trinity, according

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<sup>41</sup> Thiessen, *Teologi Sistematika*, 138; Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus, Prolific writer (first to use Latin in his writings) in the early church of Carthage, Territories of the Roman Empire in Africa. Born in 160 AD and died in 220 AD

<sup>42</sup> Henry C. Thiessen, *Teologi Sistematika*, cet. ke-5 (Malang: Gandum Mas, 2000), 138.

<sup>43</sup> Amir Hanna, *Doctrinal Theology According to the Coptic Orthodox Church* (Sydney: Coptic Theological College, 1998), 29.

<sup>44</sup> R. C. Sproul, *Kebenaran-Kebenaran Dasar Iman Kristen, Alih Bahasa: Rahmiati Tanudjaja*, 3rd ed. (Malang: Departemen Literatur SAAT, 2000), 43.

<sup>45</sup> Gereja Katolik, *Katekismus Gereja Katolik, Edisi Indonesia.*, 234, 261.

<sup>46</sup> Konsili Nicea (325): Credo Nicea "We believe in one God, the Father almighty, creator of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, born of the Father, single-born, that is, of the essence of the Father, God from God, light from

to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, has its roots in the time of the early Church:

1. The Trinity is one God. This Person does not divide the Godhead as if each one into a third, but they are “wholly and wholly.” The Father is the same as the Son; the Son is the same as the Father; the Father and the Son are the same as the Holy Spirit, one God with the same nature. Because of this unity, the Father is wholly in the Son and wholly in the Holy Spirit; the Son is wholly in the Father and wholly in the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit is wholly in the Father and wholly in the Son.
2. These three Persons are really different from each other, namely in terms of their original relationship, namely God the Father who is “begotten”, God the Son who was born, and the Holy Spirit who was breathed out.
3. These three Persons are related to one another. This difference in origin does not divide the divine unity but instead shows the reciprocal relationship between the Persons of God. The Father is associated with the Son; the Son is associated with the Father and the Holy Spirit is associated with both. Their essence is one, namely Allah.<sup>47</sup>

Looking at oneself, the "substance" (sometimes translated as nature) of self is "human." This human nature is the same for everyone. However, if said "person," one cannot equate one person with another because each person is unique. In everyday language, each self is represented by the word “I,” where the “I” is different from the other 'I.' Meanwhile, the self's substance is represented by the word “human.” The most similar analogy (although, of course, not fully explaining this mystery of God) is the union between soul and body within the self. Without a soul, man is not human; a person is also not a human without a body. The union between soul and body forms the essence of oneself

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light, true God of the true God, born not made, of one substance with the Father, through Him all things were made, both in heaven and on earth. He came down for us and for our salvation, and He became flesh and became man, died of tribulation and rose on the third day, ascended into heaven and will come to judge the living and the dead and of the Holy Spirit...”

<sup>47</sup> “Trinitas: Satu Tuhan Dalam Tiga Pribadi – Katolisitas.Org,” accessed November 2, 2024, <https://www.katolisitas.org/trinitas-satu-tuhan-dalam-tiga-pribadi/>.

as a human being and forms oneself as a person with certain characteristics.<sup>48</sup>

With the same principle, in the Trinity, the substance that exists is one, namely God, while in that unity, there are three Persons: there are three 'I': the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Three human persons cannot equal the meaning of the Trinity because, in three human persons, there are three "instances" of human nature, while in the three divine Persons, there is only one nature of God, which is identical to the three Persons. Thus, the three Persons of God have in common the perfect nature of God so that all three form a perfect unity. What distinguishes one Person from another lies only in the reciprocal relationship between the three.

## Discussion

The conception of God in Islamic theology is a complex evolution that reflects the historical beliefs of pre-Islamic Arabia and the transformative teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW). Initially characterized by animism and polytheism, the Arab landscape underwent a significant shift with the introduction of monotheistic traditions from Judaism and Christianity. Clear the way for Islam's central doctrine of Tawhid, emphasizing the oneness of God. Various theological schools emerged, such as Asy'ariyah, which balances divine attributes with the uniqueness of God's essence, and Mu'tazilah, which champions human reason in understanding God, advocating for a purer interpretation of monotheism. In contrast, Hashwiyyah relies solely on textual revelation, while Sufiyyah emphasizes mystical experience and spiritual purification.<sup>49</sup> Collectively, these schools contribute to a rich dialogue about the nature of the divine, reflecting the dynamic interplay between faith, reason, and spiritual practice within the Islamic tradition.

This shift in religious thought cleared the way for Islam's central doctrine of Tawhid, which asserts the absolute oneness of God, rejecting any form of association (shirk) with the divine. Tawhid is not

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<sup>48</sup> "Trinitas: Satu Tuhan dalam Tiga Pribadi – Katolisitas.Org," accessed November 2, 2024, <https://www.katolisitas.org/trinitas-satu-tuhan-dalam-tiga-pribadi/>.

<sup>49</sup> Fuad Noor Zeha and Agus Sutono, "The Philosophy of Madhazab Mu'tazilah and Asy'ariyah In Interpreting the Personality of God: Rationalism In the Tradition of the Kalam Philosophy," *Religia* 25, no. 1 (April 2022): 1–22.

merely a theological statement but a comprehensive worldview that shapes the Islamic understanding of the divine, ethics, and the universe. As a central tenet of Islamic faith, it underscores the belief that God (Allah) is unique and incomparable, with no partners or equals (Qur'an 112:1-4).

In examining the course of Islamic theology and the concept of Godhead in the pre-Islamic Arab world, it is important to look at the history of diverse Arab beliefs, culminating in the unification of monotheistic beliefs under Islam. As already explained, pre-Islamic Arab society believed in various forms of deities, from animism to polytheism, characterized by the worship of statues of deities such as Latta, 'Uza, and Manat. These beliefs reflected the need to understand and control the natural world through the concept of supernatural powers, which in many cases were linked to aspects of the universe they considered sacred. As Al-Ghazali argues, these beliefs can be seen as human attempts to reach an understanding of God in a way that is still very limited and not systematically structured in rational thought.<sup>50</sup>

However, a major shift occurred when Islam came with the teaching of Tawhid (oneness of God), which replaced polytheistic beliefs with a more universal monotheistic understanding. Research by Al-Suyuti, as he cited from Gerhard, shows that Islam not only brought a clearer concept of divinity but also abolished the idolatrous practices that had been so dominant in Arab society.<sup>51</sup> This change affected not only the spiritual, but also the social and political aspects, as Islam emphasized that only Allah is the God who deserves to be worshipped, so this ideology demanded a major transformation in the social and religious structure of Arab society at the time.

According to Ahmad S. al-Hashimi, this transition process can be understood within the framework of the rational theology developed by early Islamic scholars. Kalam Science, which developed as a discipline of Islamic theology, sought to combine revelation from the Qur'an and Hadith with rationality in order to answer profound questions regarding the essence of God and man's relationship with

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<sup>50</sup> S. H. Rizvi, "Gods and Humans in Islamic Thought: LhringAbd Al-Jabbar, Ibn Sina and Al-Ghazali by Maha Elkaisy-Friemuth," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 19, no. 1 (February 1, 2007): 97–100, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jis/etm074>.

<sup>51</sup> Gerhard Bowering, "Islamic Political Thought: An Introduction" (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 304, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1287ksk>.

Him. According to recent research by Al-Qudah as he cited from Abrahamov, Kalam Science in the second century AH flourished, with figures such as Al-Ash'ari establishing a system of thought that allowed Muslims to understand God with a rational and scientific approach.<sup>52</sup>

Theological debate within Islam has been dynamic, particularly with the emergence of various theological schools that sought to interpret and understand the nature of God. Among these, the Ash'ari school, founded by the theologian Abu al-Hasan al-Ash'ari (d. 935), represents a middle path between the extremes of rationalism and textual literalism. The Ash'ariyah balanced divine attributes with the uniqueness of God's essence by asserting that while God possesses attributes such as knowledge, power, and will, these attributes are not separate from His essence but are subsumed within it. This view sought to protect God's absolute oneness while affirming His active engagement with the world.

In contrast, the Mu'tazilah school, which flourished in the early centuries of Islam, emphasized human reason as a key tool for understanding God's nature. The Mu'tazilites posited that human rationality should guide theological reasoning, and they advocated for a more rationalistic and humanist approach to understanding divine justice, particularly in matters like free will and accountability. Their assertion that the Qur'an was created rather than co-eternal with God marked a significant departure from Ash'ari's thought and contributed to a broader debate about God's nature in Islamic theology. According to the Mu'tazilah, reason is the primary guide to understanding God's will and ensuring a just and moral order in the world. As El-Bizri explains, "the Mu'tazilah conceptualized the divine as fundamentally rational and morally consistent, with the belief that human beings have the capacity to understand divine justice."<sup>53</sup>

One important aspect that must be understood in this context is how Muslims interpret Tawhid in the social and political context of the Prophet Muhammad's time. Muir, in his work, reveals that the Prophet Muhammad's preaching journey in Mecca for 13 years focused on cleansing the people's creed from idol worship and making Allah the

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<sup>52</sup> Binyamin. Abrahamov, *Islamic Theology: Traditionalism and Rationalism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2022).

<sup>53</sup> Nader El-Bizri, *Islamic Philosophy: A Beginner's Guide* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2013), 67.



only God worthy of worship. This process took a long time and was full of challenges, given the strong social ties built by the Arab community through idol worship and their deep-rooted traditions.<sup>54</sup>

On the other end of the spectrum, the Hashwiyyah school rejected speculative theology and philosophy, focusing purely on textual revelation (the Qur'an and Hadith). Adherents of Hashwiyyah held that the divine attributes of God should be accepted as they are, without attempting to interpret or rationalize them. Many scholars criticized this approach for its perceived lack of intellectual rigor, yet it remains influential in certain circles of Islamic thought that prioritize the preservation of orthodoxy and tradition. As noted by Nasr, the Hashwiyyah "stressed a literalist interpretation of scripture, leaving aside all rationalist speculation."<sup>55</sup>

Another important dimension in the Islamic understanding of God is the mystical tradition represented by Sufism. Sufis emphasize an experiential and personal relationship with God, often seeking direct knowledge of the divine through mystical practices, such as dhikr (remembrance of God) and muraqabah (spiritual vigilance). Sufism's focus on inner purification and the transcendent experience of God's presence presents a more subjective interpretation of God's nature, emphasizing God's immanence in the world and the heart of the believer. As Chittick states, "The Sufi tradition teaches that the ultimate purpose of human existence is to realize God's presence within the self."<sup>56</sup>

Kalam is basically the method used to build a rational understanding of the teachings of Tawhid. As pointed out by Salahuddin as he cited from Abrahamov, scholars in the early era of Islam did not only rely on revelation but also used logical arguments in theological discussions to defend and clarify the concept of Godhead in Islam in order to be accepted by a society that had been accustomed to a more empirical and polytheistic way of thinking.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> W. Muir. *The Early Life of Muhammad: The Transformation of Arabian Faith*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022).

<sup>55</sup> Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Islamic Philosophy from Its Origin to the Present: Philosophy in the Land of Prophecy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), 100.

<sup>56</sup> William C. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn al-'Arabi's Metaphysics of Imagination* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 25.

<sup>57</sup> Abrahamov, *Islamic Theology: Traditionalism and Rationalism*.

The interplay between these schools of thought represents a rich theological dialogue within Islam, where faith, reason, and spirituality converge to address fundamental questions about God's nature. While these diverse theological schools differ in their interpretations, collectively, they contribute to a broader understanding of the divine, shaped by both historical and philosophical contexts. The ongoing discussions on Tawhid, divine attributes, and the role of human reason reflect the dynamic nature of Islamic thought and its continuous engagement with the complexities of the Godhead. This intellectual legacy continues to inform contemporary Islamic discourse on theology, philosophy, and mysticism.

The ongoing discourse surrounding God's nature in Islamic theology not only shapes the moral and spiritual framework of the faith but also engages with broader existential questions.<sup>58</sup> As scholars and believers navigate these discussions, they underscore the relevance of understanding the divine in both historical and contemporary contexts, inviting continuous reflection on the relationship between humanity and the transcendent. This rich tapestry of thought illustrates the profound depth of Islamic theology, affirming its capacity to address the complexities of belief and spirituality in an ever-evolving world.

The concept of God in Jewish theology reveals a significant evolution from polytheistic beliefs to a robust monotheism centered around Jehovah (Yahweh). Initially, the tribes of Israel worshipped various deities, but the emergence of a singular, supreme God fostered a unified national identity. Leaders like Prophet Musa (Moses) played a crucial role in this transformation, framing the covenant relationship between Yahweh and the people. This relationship emphasized Jehovah's guidance and protection over Israel, reflecting a deep intertwining of faith and national identity.<sup>59</sup> Prophets further expanded this understanding, asserting that God's love for justice and mercy extended beyond Israel, suggesting a more universal perspective of divinity.

The discussion of the concept of God in Judaism is closely related to the history of the Jewish belief system, which developed in

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<sup>58</sup> Kasno, Ahmad Fata, and Nazar Wibawa, "From God to Humanity: Reconstruction of Islamic Theology in Contemporary Era" 48, no. 4 (December 2023): 429–48.

<sup>59</sup> David L. Petersen, *The Prophetic Literature: An Introduction* (Kentucky: Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, 2002).

two phases: before and after the revelation of the Old Testament. In the early phase, before the revelation, the Israelites consisted of several tribes, each of which had their own gods. However, there was one God who was considered the supreme God for the Jewish people, namely "Jehovah" or "Yahweh." This is in line with Al-Ghazali's thoughts, who emphasized that monotheistic beliefs in the Jewish tradition emerged and developed from the belief in various tribal gods to one God who is greater and more powerful than the others. Al-Ghazali explains that initially, God in the Jewish tradition was seen more as a God associated with a particular group or tribe, but over time, this understanding evolved towards a more universal monotheism on the scale of the Jewish nation as a whole.<sup>60</sup>

On the other hand, the concept of a more real and more metaphysical Yahweh, as expressed in this paper, is also discussed by Al-Suyuti. In his research, Al-Suyuti shows that in the history of Judaism, there is a realization that Yahweh is a God who is closer and more powerful than the other deities believed in by individual tribes. As explained, in the understanding of Yahweh as a God who is present in the lives of His people, it also manifests in the great influence of this God in the lives and actions of the people of Israel.<sup>61</sup> This thinking reflects the unity between Jewish theology and the social structure of the Israelites, which further strengthens their collective bond as a people chosen by God. In this sense, the emphasis on the metaphysical aspect of Yahweh reveals a deeper dimension of the closeness between God and His people in Judaism.

As Jewish theology continued to develop, particularly post-Old Testament, it transitioned from a henotheistic view to a strict monotheism. The prophetic literature, especially the writings of Isaiah, articulated Yahweh not only as the God of Israel but also as the creator and ruler of the universe, establishing a moral framework that demanded ethical conduct from the people. Historical and cultural realities influenced this shift as the Israelites navigated their identity amid external challenges. Contemporary discussions around these themes highlight the complexity of Jewish theology, inviting a deeper

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<sup>60</sup> Rizvi, "Gods and Humans in Islamic Thought: LhringAbd Al-Jabbar, Ibn Sina and Al-Ghazali by Maha Elkaisy-Friemuth."

<sup>61</sup> Bowering, "Islamic Political Thought: An Introduction."

exploration of the nature of divinity and the moral imperatives that arise from our understanding of God.

Christian theology presents a profound relationship between God and humanity, epitomized in the concept of covenant and the incarnation of Jesus Christ. In this framework, Jesus is the bridge between God and man, embodying perfect unity with the divine while representing humanity's longing for connection with God. Christians affirm a belief in one God expressed in three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and the Holy Spirit.<sup>62</sup> This Trinity is a complex doctrine that underscores the unity of God's essence while acknowledging the distinct roles of each person. Notably, Jesus himself never claimed divinity in the conventional sense; rather, he emphasized his role as a messenger sent to the Israelites to restore and fulfill the teachings of the Torah, positioning himself within a monotheistic framework.

In the Christian faith, the relationship between God and man is emphasized through the concepts of covenant and perfect sympathy, which are then embodied in the incarnation of Jesus as the redeemer of mankind. This theology illustrates that Jesus, as a representation of humanity in union with God, teaches that humans can enter into communion with God through this recognition and understanding. This is in line with Al-Qudah's explanation, which shows how the understanding of divinity manifested in the incarnation as a bridge between humans and God, creates a deeper unity between the two in the context of Christianity.<sup>63</sup> Al-Suyuti from Gerhard's book also highlights the importance of this unity in the teaching of Christianity, describing how God, through Jesus, touches the lives of humans and brings them to a higher understanding of the divine relationship.<sup>64</sup>

However, it should be noted that the Christian teaching of the Trinity, i.e. one God in three persons-Father, Son, and Holy Spirit-presents a more complex and often questionable view in theological studies. Meanwhile, as Muir points out, Jesus' claim that he was only a messenger of God and did not declare himself to be God contradicts mainstream Christian interpretations that consider him to be part of the Trinity. Biblical quotations stating that Jesus came to fulfill the revelation given to Prophet Moses and was only sent to the people of

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<sup>62</sup> "I'm a Oneness Pentecostal Who Used to Be Trinitarian - Leanna Mae.Org," n.d.

<sup>63</sup> Bowering, "Islamic Political Thought: An Introduction."

<sup>64</sup> Bowering.

Israel are closer to the perspective taught by scholars like Muir, who emphasize that Jesus' role was as a messenger of revelation and not as God himself.<sup>65</sup>

The exploration of God in Christianity also draws heavily from the Old Testament, where various theological themes emerge, such as salvation, cultic practices, and the nature of God as creator and sustainer. Salvation theology reflects God's character as a redeemer, emphasizing faith and the historical acts of divine deliverance. Cultic theology focuses on the importance of sincere worship and the dangers of empty rituals, while order theology hig

hlights God's sovereignty over creation and the necessity of faith amid challenges. These themes illustrate a complex interplay between God's nature and human response, reinforcing that true worship must be rooted in faith and obedience. Ultimately, the doctrine of the Trinity encapsulates the mystery of God's nature, asserting that while God is one, he exists in a relational dynamic that transcends human understanding, emphasizing the depth of the divine relationship established through Jesus Christ.

## **Conclusion**

This paper concludes that to understand the ideological-historical aspect, where it turns out that among the same religions, there is an evolution of belief systems in God. Then they are used as theological and ideological systems. In the evolution of belief in Samawi religions, whether Judaism, Christianity or Islam, it cannot be separated from the journey of Godhead history through several phases, from the primitive phase to the modern/contemporary phase. The common thread found in this paper is that, historically, the three religions went through these phases, from polytheistic primitive beliefs to the present monotheistic ones. Ultimately, the author explains several substantial and principal issues related to the Oneness of God.

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<sup>65</sup> W. Muir. *The Early Life of Muhammad: The Transformation of Arabian Faith* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022).

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