

God is incomparable and unique: As the verses on the front say, God is not like anyone or anything else. The Bible says the same: "I am God, and there is none like me." Isaiah.46:9; 45:5; 43:11 . God asks: "To whom will you compare me or count me equal? To whom will you liken me that we may be compared? Isaiah 46:5; 40:18

Our problem: One of our problems is that we are limited by our human language and human thoughts when we are speaking about an infinite and majestic God. Can we speak about God at all and do Him justice?

The solution: Both the Qur'an and the Bible tell us that God reveals to humanity the things they could not discover for themselves. 'It is not granted to any mortal that God should speak to him except through revelation or from behind a veil, or by sending a messenger to command what He will: He is exalted and wise.' [Q.42:51] "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever." (Deuteronomy 29:29)

God's self-description: In the Qur'an God speaks about Himself in different ways. He refers of Himself in singular & plural ways, and in the first, second and third person. In Q.2:30-40, God speaks of Himself as:

- (i) "I" or "me" e.g. Q.2:30, 33, 38, 40
- (ii) "We" or "our" e.g. Q.2:34, 35, 36, 39
- (iii) "He" or "him" e.g. Q.2:31, 33
- (iv) "You" or "your" e.g. Q. 2:30,32

He tells people to refer to Him by his beautiful names (Q.7:180; 17:110; 20:8; 59:22-24) According to Hadith al-Bukhari 3:894, God has ninety-nine names. Many of these are given in the Qur'an. The Bible has over 240 names and titles of God. God is clearly multifaceted and complex.

God is One: Both the Qur'an (Q.112:1) and Bible (Deuteronomy 6:4; Mark 12:28) declare that 'God is one'.

The Bible has two words in Hebrew which mean 'one'. '*yachid*' means a mathematical unit, a simple unity. '*echad*' is etymologically related to the Arabic word '*ahad*' (used in Q.112:1). It means a complex unity, a combination of different elements into one entity. When Adam and Eve are joined in marriage, it is said that 'the two become one (*echad*)' (Genesis 2:24). Ezekiel was told to join two sticks together in his hand so they became one (*echad*) (Ezekiel 37:17). This word for 'one' is used in Deuteronomy 6:4 'The Lord your God is one (*echad*).' This implies that God is a complex unity, not a simple unity like a mathematical number.

Complex Unity: There are many examples of simple and complex unities. In biology, an amoeba is a simple unity. It is the simplest living thing, consisting of a single cell. But a human body is a complex unity.

A human body, like an amoeba, is a single living organism but it consists of many differentiated and specialised cells. In geometry, a straight line is a simple unity – it exists in only one dimension, but a cube or sphere are complex unities, for they exist in three dimensions. In social terms, complex unities include a family, a team or a nation. Each of these has a common element or essence. This could be their origin (as in a family), or goal (as a team) or location (as a nation). But they all consist of individuals who exhibit some variety amongst themselves. It is the concept of unity with diversity.

The concept of 'Three –in-One':

The Trinity or Tri-Unity is described as 'Three divine Persons with the one Divine Essence.' There are many examples of three-in-one in our world. Time exists in three modes: past, present and future, but it is the same chronological element. Space is made up of three dimensions: length, width and height. Matter occurs in three states: solids, liquids and gases. An atom, long thought to be the smallest indivisible particle, is found to contain protons, neutrons and electrons.

Some people reject the Trinity on the basis of primary school sums, saying that $1+1+1 = 3$. But higher levels of mathematics show different results: $1 \times 1 \times 1 = 1$ or $\infty + \infty + \infty = \infty$. But God is personal and relational, not simply a mathematical equation.

The Trinity as a Complex Unity:

Jesus told his followers to baptize others “in the name (singular) of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.” (Matthew 28:19). There is a single divine essence shared by God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. When Jesus said: “The Father and I are *one*” (John 10:3), he used the neuter ‘one’ *hen* not the masculine *heis*. The ‘one’ is not one person (masc.), but one essence (neut.). The Father, Son and Spirit are three Persons, but each Person is fully God. There are three eternal distinctions within the one divine essence. A diagram shows this:



The Father, Son and Holy Spirit each reveal the actions and attributes of God.

Divine Action or Attributes	FATHER	SON	HOLY SPIRIT
Eternal	Rom.16:26,27	Rom.1:17	Heb.9:14
Creator	Ps.100:3	Col.1:16	Ps.104:30
Omnipresent	Jer.23:24	Eph.1:23	Ps.139:7
Omniscient	1.Jn.3:20	Jn.21:17	1.Cor.2:10
Wills and acts supernaturally	Eph.1:15	Mt.8:31	1.Cor.12:10
Gives life	Gen.1:11-31; Jn.5:21	Jn.1:4; 5:21	Rom.8:10, 11; Jn.3:8
Strengthens us	Ps.138:9	Phil.4:13	Eph.3:16
Is Light	Jam.1:17	Jn.8:12	2.Cor.4:6
Is Love	Jn.16:27	Jn.14:21	Rom.5:5

Why is the Trinity important?

Over 60 verses or passages in the Bible refer to ‘Father’, ‘Son’ and ‘Spirit’ together

The Trinity helps us understand God: who He is, and how He works.

1) God is about relationship, and always has been. The Bible says that “God is love” (1.John.4:8). But love always requires an object or person to be loved. Before any people were ever created, love existed among the three Persons of the Trinity. Jesus said to His Father: “You loved me before the foundation of the world” (John.17:24).

2) God saves us by entering our world through divine teamwork and cooperation. The Three Persons take on different roles. The Father sends the Son (John 3:16). Jesus, the Word of God, becomes a man (John1:14) and is enabled by the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:18). The Qur’an says: “We (God) supported him (Jesus) by our Holy Spirit.” (Q.2:87, 253). Jesus, the Son of God, entered our world so that he could die for the sins of the whole world. Only the Trinity can exhibit such flexibility and love.

3) In the Trinity, God meets us in every way. The Father is ‘God for us’. He commences our rescue (salvation) by sending Jesus. Jesus is ‘God with us’ (Emmanuel). He carries out our rescue by giving himself and dying for us. The Holy Spirit is ‘God in us’. He applies the rescue, by giving us new life and transforming us from within (2.Corinthians 3:18).

For further information, see www.answering-islam.org/Trinity/index.html
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Explaining the Trinity

How to respond to Muslim misunderstandings



Many Muslims misunderstand the Trinity. They think that Christians believe in three gods, or that God had sexual relations with Mary.

Both these views are wrong. The Trinity, as revealed in the Bible, shows the complex majesty and mystery of God and how God saves us.

The Qur’an says:
“There is nothing like Him (God)... there is no-one comparable to Him”
(The Qur’an 42:11 & 112:4)

لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ ...

وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ